



Global Protection Cluster

MISSION REPORT LIBYA

09 – 12 OCTOBER 2016

A BACKGROUND

1. Based on the request of the Libya Protection Sector, the GPC Operations Cell Protection Officer undertook a mission to Tunisia from 09 to 12 October 2016 with the objective of providing support to the Libya protection sector during the 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO)
2. The GPC Operations Cell Protection Officer attended a series of key meetings and consultations with the Senior Protection Officer for the Libya Operation as part of the HNO/HRP planning process. Meetings were held with the following actors:
 - Inter-Agency HNO Planning Meeting (09 October)
 - Senior Protection Officer/Protection Sector Coordinator, UNHCR (09-11 October)
 - HNO/HRP Workshop (09-11 October)
 - UNHCR Representative (12 October)
 - Inter-Agency HNO Meeting (12 October)
 - Consultations were held with protection sector members, and members of the humanitarian country team, individually and collectively, in Tunis

B OVERVIEW

3. The armed conflict continues in Libya between forces affiliated to two rival governments as well as armed groups. The conflict is characterized by the complete disregard for International Humanitarian Law (IHL), gross violations of human rights and sectarian violence. Civilians bear the brunt of the conflict and are subjected by all sides of the conflict to serious violations of IHL and human rights.
4. The fragile security context in Libya impacts timely delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance which remains a key constraint for all humanitarian actors who have no access where the Islamic State (IS) and associated groups are present, thus making it difficult to assess needs in these areas.
5. The situation is compounded by the relocation of the majority of UN agencies and international partners from the country and the subsequent major shift in the way response is coordinated. Since the evacuation of International UN staff in July 2014, the UN programmes have been supported by national staff and key official stakeholders with remote support from international staff based in Tunis.

GPC Operations Cell
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Protection Officer

C COORDINATION STRUCTURES

6. UNHCR leads the Protection Sector as well as the Shelter/NFI Sector for the on-going IDP response. UNHCR also co-leads with IOM the Detention Task Force and the Refugees and Migrant Working Group.
7. The Protection Sector was established in August 2014 and is the primary source of protection information and coordination on the Libya Crisis. Mine action, GBV and Child Protection are included as standing items on the Protection Sector agenda. The Protection Sector meets on a bi-weekly basis in Tunis for information sharing and coordination of protection activities related to IDPs.
8. The Protection Sector gathers relevant UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, UNMAS, and WHO) as well as international NGOs and partners (DRC, IMC, DDG, DCA, CIR, CESVI, IRC, Premiere Urgence, ACTED, Mercy Corps, IMPACT/REACH, Handicap International). In addition, the Protection Sector has appointed Handicap International as Co-facilitator, given their significant operational capacity, to commit time and resources to carry out the co-facilitation of the PWG.

D PROTECTION CONTEXT

9. In 2016, continued political instability and ongoing armed conflict in Libya has restricted access to essential services, led to forced displacement, deteriorating living conditions, and impacted people's safety and security. Across Libya civilians lack effective protection amidst grave violations of IHL and human rights. The protection crisis in Libya is defined by targeted attacks on civilians, rising civilian casualties, restricted access to safety and freedom of movement. There are alarming levels of gender-based violence (GBV), grave violations of child rights and an increasing number of civilian accidents caused by landmines and explosive hazards (such as Explosive Remnants of War and Improvised Explosive Devices). Women, children, the elderly and the

disabled are the most vulnerable to violence and exploitation. Children are not spared in the armed conflict, facing recruitment and use by armed groups, killing and maiming, sexual violence and other grave violations.

10. While the security situation improved in certain parts of the country, continued military activities in Sirte, Benghazi and Adjabya led to new displacement across Libya. Further, the on-going conflict and difficult socio-economic situation impose a situation of protracted and ongoing displacement across the country. Recent needs assessments carried out by humanitarian organisations show that urban centres are more affected by the conflict than rural areas. This is particularly the case in Tripoli, Benghazi, Derna, Zintan, Ubari and Sabha. Spontaneous returns across the country, in particular to Benghazi, Derna, Gwalesh and Kikla, raise serious protection concerns including threats caused by landmines and explosive hazards.

E HUMANITARIAN NEEDS OVERVIEW (HNO)

11. The GPC Protection Officer provided support to the Senior Protection officer and Protection Sector members, in the drafting process and finalisation of the HNO statement;
12. In the 2017 HNO, the PWG aims to mitigate the protection consequences of the crisis in a sequenced response by:
 - Ensuring safe access and freedom of movement for as many people in need as possible across Libya through, among others, reducing the impact of ERW and Small Arms (SA) and mines;
 - Providing immediate-life saving assistance to newly displaced persons, regardless of location; immediately address the urgent protection needs of the most vulnerable among the population (including women, children, the elderly, disabled, and survivors of torture and sexual violence), as well as inform and improve the overall humanitarian response through protection monitoring and assessments;

- Establish efficient identification, referral and adequate response to cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV);
- Ensure that children feeling conflict are protected from grave human rights violations, enhance identification and referral for specialized protection assistance;
- Advocating for safe and dignified returns and helping vulnerable returnee families where return areas are secure;
- Mainstreaming protection in all areas of the humanitarian response;
- Delivering specialized protection support through direct and community-based provision of information, as well as psychosocial support to women, men, girls and boys affected by the conflict;
- Strengthen preventive, responsive, and remedial capacity of authorities, communities and humanitarian actors, especially national ones, to deliver protection sustainably and in line with international standards.

F WAY FORWARD/ RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 13. PUTTING PROTECTION ON THE AGENDA:** The Protection sector plans to include protection as a standing item on the HCT agenda. A Protection Note that focuses on the most critical protection priorities and recommendations will be brought to the attention of the HC/HCT.
- 14. STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP:** The PWG will continue to consider strategic methods of engagement that would influence the Libya Operation and how it is driven. By way of example, the Protection Sector will continue working closely with the Shelter/NFI sector to ensure a stronger protection response.
- 15. PROTECTION SECTOR STRATEGY:** The need for a Protection Sector Strategy document to guide the work of the Protection Sector was

identified as a priority action for the early quarter of 2017. The strategy would respond to the changing reality on the ground and will aim to focus on the protection of the affected population in a complex, ever-changing environment; bring greater clarity and focus on key concerns and priority actions; and prioritizes a number of areas requiring urgent protection interventions.

To facilitate this process, a GPC Protection Cluster Coordination training is planned early 2017 to help develop a Protection Strategy document.

- 16. PROTECTION MAINSTREAMING:** Given the access constraints plaguing the humanitarian actors in Libya, Protection mainstreaming is a tool that can be further utilised to help mitigate some of the problems related to access. With support from the GPC Operations Cell, the PWG will continue to build protection mainstreaming capacity of humanitarian actors with the objective of incorporating protection principles into sector-wide humanitarian programming and assistance delivery.

In coordination with the GPC Task Team on Protection Mainstreaming (TTPM) and the Senior Protection Officer for the Libya Operation, a workshop will be organized in Tunis, with the objective of increasing the understanding of other humanitarian actors of what protection mainstreaming means in their operations and strengthening their ability to integrate protection mainstreaming in their activities.

- 17. Build on the stakeholders' mapping exercise** carried out in 2016 which would inform response planning as well as the establishment of referral pathways in 2017.

