Global Protection Cluster

GLOBAL PROTECTION UPDATE
JUNE 2023

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PROTECTION AND FOOD SECURITY:

TOWARDS COLLECTIVE ANALYSIS AND ACTIONS TO ADDRESS AND MITIGATE PROTECTION RISKS LINKED TO FOOD INSECURITY

CONTEXT UPDATE

Crises are lasting longer, driven by conflict, climate change, food insecurity and economic turmoil, and highlighting the need to link humanitarian work with development and peacebuilding efforts. Violations of international law, attacks on hospitals, schools and critical infrastructure and rampant human rights violations are being committed, including against women and children.

Civilians continue to bear the brunt of conflict-related violence and destruction, and during the Protection of Civilians (PoC) Week 2023, observed from 22 to 25 May, the UN and partners gathered towards finding the best ways to protect them. As highlighted by the Report of the Secretary General on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, armed conflict led to death, injury, enforced disappearance, torture, rape and other suffering and loss. Civilians accounted for 94% of victims of explosive weapons deployed in populated areas, with women, children and people with disabilities affected by conflict in different ways. In 2022, women and girls accounted for at least 95% of victims of documented sexual violence. The destruction of critical infrastructure had far-reaching consequences, including disruptions to electricity, health care, water, and sanitation services, and deprived many of the essentials to live. The Secretary-General Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict highlighted that children were abducted, recruited, and used in hostilities, and deprived of an education. Last year, 27,180 grave violations were committed against children caught up in war – the highest number ever verified by the UN.

In addition, conflict and insecurity were the most significant drivers of high levels of acute food insecurity for around 117 million people in 19 countries and territories in 2022. Crops were destroyed, livestock stolen, land spoiled, roads blocked, and farmers driven from their fields. Livelihoods were lost while food prices increased sharply. In **Myanmar**, Cyclone Mocha further worsened humanitarian needs in areas already experiencing displacement, violence, and severe protection risks, including in Rakhine state. Protection concerns are growing around the lack of shelter, post-cyclone hazards, loss of documents, suicide/attempted suicide, loss of income sources, and a lack of information for communities across the country. In **Ethiopia**, the floods have caused widespread destruction and displacement in Somali, Oromia, SNNP, SWEP and Afar regions, exacerbating humanitarian needs and resilience capacities already impacted by drought and conflict.

While the conflict may have started to fade from international news headlines, humanitarian needs have soared among people displaced by fighting in **Sudan**, with the number of those fleeing expected to surpass projections while aid access remains extremely uncertain. A high-level pledging conference for the humanitarian response in Sudan and the region saw countries step forward and collectively commit nearly $1.5 billion. While those pledges are generous, they total only half of what the UN estimates is required to address humanitarian needs in the country.

The annual Humanitarian Affairs Segment of the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in June 2023 brought together UN Member States, UN agencies, humanitarian and development partners, the private sector and affected communities to find solutions to pressing humanitarian aid issues. Following the publication of the Report of the Secretary General on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance, the Economic and Social Council adopted Resolution E/2023/L.19 to continue to strengthen coordination, preparedness and response efforts and to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian action. With more than 110 million people displaced and 260 million facing daily difficulties getting food, it is the most vulnerable that are hit hardest by unresolved conflict, the climate crisis, and global economic turmoil. Grand Bargain signatories met to find new ways to provide emergency aid around the world and agreed on a more streamlined focus on improving how funding works, localisation, and making aid more accountable to the people who use it.

In terms of the peace, security and human rights agenda, the Security Council unanimously approved the complete withdrawal of UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in **Mali** by 1 January 2024. This withdrawal is occurring at a time of fragility in the Sahel region and may put at risk the protection of civilians in regions such as Menaka. The UN General Assembly voted on 29 June to create an independent body to determine the fate and whereabouts of more than 130,000 people who have gone missing during the conflict in Syria. On 10 July, the Security Council resolution on cross-border assistance to northwest **Syria** will expire. Unless a new resolution has been adopted by that date, the Bab al-Hawa border gate from Türkiye to northern Syria will be closed to UN agencies, with potentially devastating consequences for the more than four million people who live in the region. The Human Rights Council adopted a resolution in which it decided that the mandate of the designated Expert of the High Commissioner on human rights in **Sudan** should, with immediate effect, also include detailed monitoring and documentation of, and reporting to the Human Rights Council on, all allegations of human rights violations and abuses since 25 October 2021, including those arising directly from the current conflict.

According to the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Global Protection Risks Tracker, in the second quarter of 2023, 13 Protection Cluster operations (44%) reported a combined severity of 15 protection risks as high. The population in the majority of the territory of Afghanistan, Cameroon, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, South Sudan, Sudan, oPt, Syria and Ukraine is extensively exposed to simultaneous sources of harm directly related to human actions. Similarly, in these countries the populations face serious barriers in accessing protection services. The role of perpetrators, authorities and non-state armed groups is increasing the magnitude of the threats to populations, causing a spiral of increasing needs and an erosion of coping capacities. The forced recruitment and association of children with armed forces has risen across operations, in correlation with child, early and forced marriage, presence of mines and other explosive ordnance, and trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices. An increase in insecurity and hostilities as a barrier to access affected populations has been recorded (84% of operations compared to 77% in March 2023), and as barrier affecting ability of affected populations to access protection services (80% of operations compared to 73% in March 2023).

Protection Risks in Cluster Operations

The map below illustrates the percentage (out of the maximum value) of the aggregated severity of the 15 protection risks collected by Protection Cluster operations.
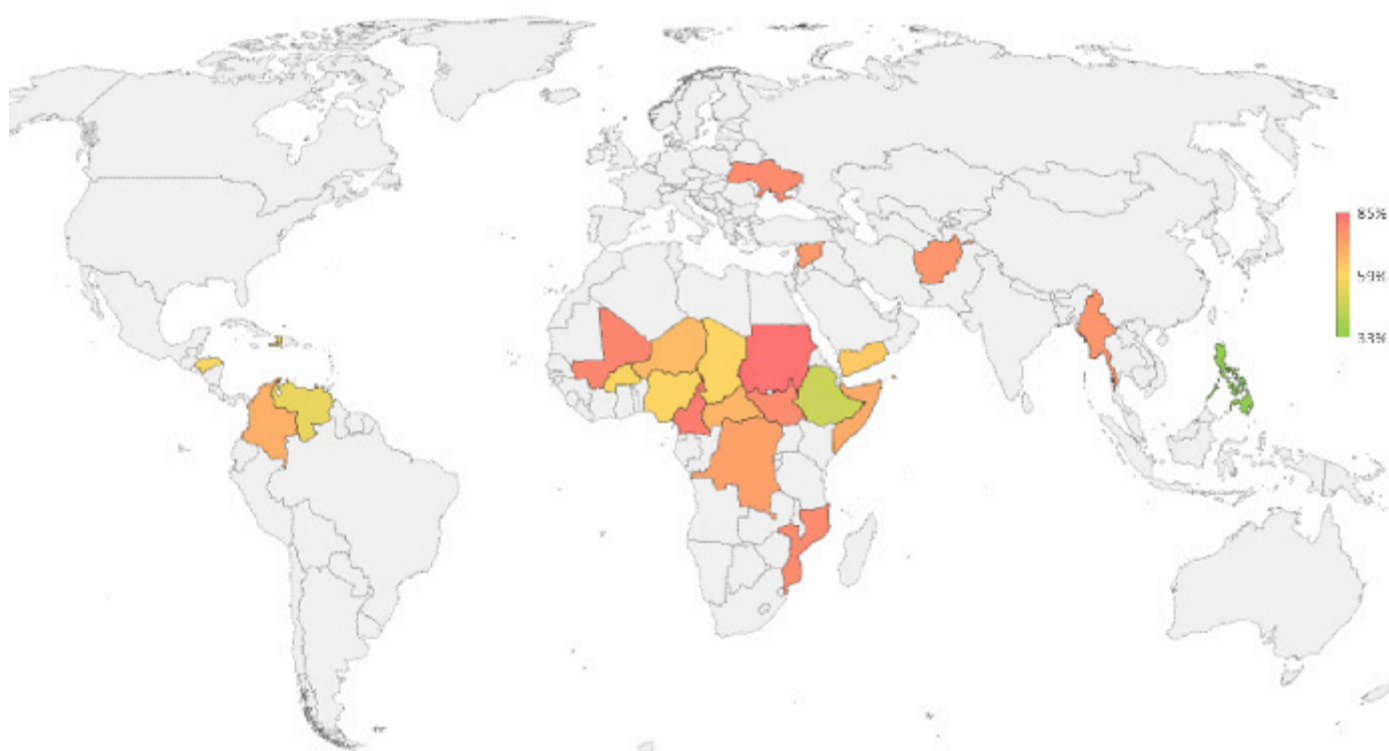
PROTECTION ANALYSIS UPDATES

86% of **29** Protection Clusters have produced **56** Protection Analysis Updates, including **36** national, **18** sub-national and **1** thematic since the 1st of January 2022. The PAUs are produced regularly on the basis of the Protection Analytical Framework.

PAU PUBLISHED IN 2023*					
Venezuela	FEBRUARY	**Burkina Faso**	MARCH	**Afghanistan**	MARCH
El Salvador	APRIL	**DR Congo**	JUNE	**Ukraine**	JUNE

* Click on the country to access the latest PAU
* The approach to PAUs have been revised during the 1st quarter of 2023, please see here the latest guidance.

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EMERGING PROTECTION TRENDS

CRISIS WATCH	ALARMING SITUATIONS

SUDAN	MYANMAR	ETHIOPIA
Sudan is currently experiencing active conflict, including violent urban warfare and attacks against civilians, leading to a significant increase (+57%) in the number of people needing urgent humanitarian aid (24.7 million). The conflict has spread to various regions, with intense violence in West Darfur. The Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces have initiated heavy bombardments and clashes, resulting in civilian casualties. Indiscriminate attacks on civilian infrastructure and widespread looting have further destabilized the situation. Deteriorating socio-economic conditions have fuelled intercommunal tensions, leading to increased violence and displacement. Spill-over effects are felt in neighbouring countries, including South Sudan, putting immense pressure on already scarce resources and infrastructure, and exacerbating protection concerns.	Myanmar continues to witness a deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Numbers of displaced people increased by almost 37%, from 1.2 million to nearly 1.9 million by the end of June 2023. Meanwhile, Cyclone Mocha hit Rakhine state in the North-West region, leaving 1.6 million people with humanitarian needs (among them 1.2 million for protection). The unexpected retraction of the cyclone response (distribution and transportation) plans and the temporary suspension of existing travel authorizations for humanitarian partners by the de facto authorities has impacted the humanitarian response. This sudden decision has exacerbated the already dire living conditions of the cyclone-affected population. Meanwhile, the RC/HC a.i released a statement on 12 June, urging the State Administration Council to re-instate access to allow life-saving assistance to resume.	Since the suspension of food aid announced in June by WFP, the situation in Tigray, where the majority of IDPs rely on food aid, is of increasing concern. There has been an increase in spontaneous returns and family separations, with 1,357 children separated from their primary caregivers due to lack of food. In Abergele Yechila Woreda, children and women are engaged in collecting metals, including explosive remnants of war, to be sold. This resulted in at least 4 deaths and 8 people severely injured. Increasing cases of anxiety and distress have also been described in Adigrat, following the food aid suspension. An increase of cases of transactional sex as a negative surviving strategy has already been reported, together with begging, displacements, risks of exploitation and selling of the humanitarian aid received.

PROTECTION RISKS

OF CONCERN	HIGHLIGHTS ON PROTECTION RISKS

TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, FORCED LABOUR OR SLAVERY-LIKE PRACTICES	28% of cluster operations (7) report the risk as high or very high.
44% of cluster operations report this risk as high or very high. The risk is the 9th top reported for a total of 11 countries, confirming the negative trend registered in March 2023.	DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMATIZATION, DENIAL OF RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND/ OR HUMANITARIAN ACCESS
CHILD AND FORCED FAMILY SEPARATION	32% of cluster operations report this risk as high or very high. This represents a slight reduction compared to the last period, with a reduced severity reported by 2 countries compared to March 2023.

The Global Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility monitor and track 15 protection risks[1] across crises with active Protection Cluster operations. In the last quarter, the **Global Protection Risk Tracker** has been revised, including through elaborating common definitions of the 15 protection risks guiding collective protection analysis. Additional information is available in the methodology (p.21).

PROTECTION RISK		VERY LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
ABDUCTION & DETENTION	Abduction, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention	2	1	6	13	3
ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS	Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects	2	0	7	10	6
FAMILY SEPARATION	Child and forced family separation	0	7	10	6	2
MARRIAGE	Child, early or forced marriage	1	2	12	7	3
DISCRIMINATION	Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access	2	1	11	7	4
DISINFORMATION	Disinformation and denial of access to information	4	6	11	4	0
FORCED RECRUITMENT	Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups	1	5	7	10	2
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	Gender-based violence	0	1	5	9	10
LEGAL IDENTITY	Impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies and justice	2	1	10	11	1
PRESENCE OF MINE	Presence of Mine and other explosive ordnance	4	2	4	14	1
PSYCHOSOCIAL	Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress	0	3	7	11	4
THEFT & EVICTION	Theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property	2	2	11	7	3
TORTURE & CRUELTY	Torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment	5	5	9	5	1
TRAFFICKING & LABOUR	Trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices	2	6	10	7	0
MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT	Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement	2	3	3	14	3

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[1] GPC Protection Risks Explanatory Note, March 2023

MONITORING AND ANALYSIS FINDINGS

During the monitoring period, **44% of operations** reported the aggregated median of the 15 protection risks as **4 (high).**

In relation to individual protection risks, the following **6 protection risks** were found to have a median of **4 (high)** in all Protection Clusters, illustrating an elevated level of harm and exposure to the affected population, and/or an important negative role of human activities in the magnitude of threat´s effects on the population[2]:

ABDUCTION & DETENTION | ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS | GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE
PRESENCE OF MINE | PSYCHOSOCIAL | MOVEMENT AND DISPLACEMENT

An initial trend analysis covering the period March 2022 – June 2023 shows how the combined presence of the 15 protection risks has been reported by Protection Cluster operations.

The table right illustrates the percentage of operations reporting on each protection risk at a severity level between **2 (low) to 5 (very high).**

It is noticeable that **'gender-based violence'** and **'psychosocial'** protection risks have been constantly reported by all operations. **'Family separation'** has been reported by all operations since the beginning of 2023.
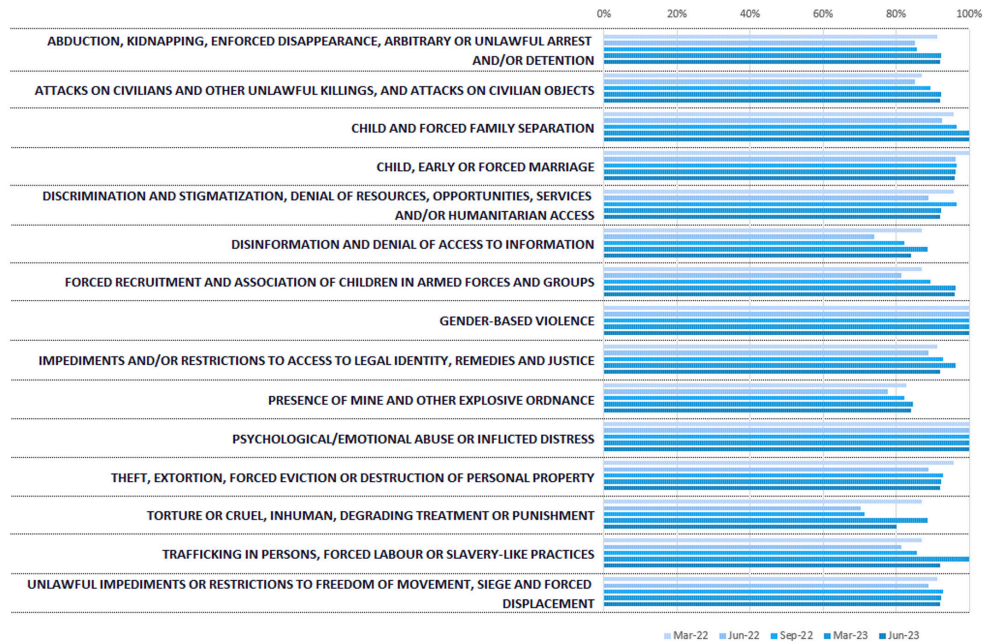
The trends from Protection Cluster operations reporting protection risks as **4 (high)** or **5 (very high)** show 10 protection risks that are particularly critical.
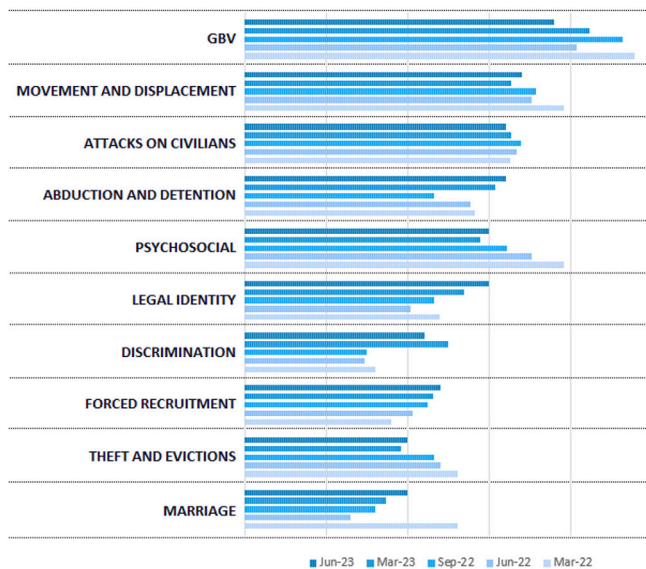
While **'gender-based violence'** is always reported, it is noticeable that since September 2022 there has been a reduction in the highest levels of severity, with fewer countries reporting it as either 4 or 5.

The protection risks related to **'movement and displacement'** and **'attacks on civilians',** although affecting populations on average less severely, remain areas where significant levels of harm and/or magnitude of the threat´s effects on populations remain consistently high.

In the last three quarters, a significantly steady increase of the severity of **'legal identity', 'forced recruitment'** and **'marriage'** risks has been reported.

In 2023, the harm related to **'discrimination'** associated risks has seen a significant increase, when compared with the whole of 2022. **'Abduction and detention'** were seen to be decreasing at the end of 2022, while increasing again in the first two reporting periods of 2023, beyond the levels registered for the same period in 2022.

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[2]The explorative analysis is based on the median values of the severity (4 = high) of the 15 protection risks monitored. The goal is to illustrate the overall tendency of protection risks situation and effects across crises and not to provide a measuring of the population affected or resulting needs.

AT A GLANCE | MOST SEVERE PROTECTION RISKS REPORTED IN THE LAST QUARTER

Since March 2023, protection risks related to 'forced recruitment and association of children with armed forces' are among the 8 most severe risks as reported by Protection Cluster operations (12). The other 7 risks reported as most severe in March 2023 remain stable, with a slight reduction in impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies, and justice (-6%) and attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings and attacks on civilian objects (-1%). Gender-based violence remains the highest reported risk but the last quarter has seen a -9% decrease in severity across operations, returning to the levels of September 2022.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

100% of operations report gender-based violence as being the most concerning. 76% describe the risk as high or very high.

ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS

Attacks on civilians or infrastructures are occurring in 92% of operations. 64% describe the risk as high or very high.

MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT

92% of operations report forced displacement and impediments to freedom of movement as a risk. 68% describe the risk as high or very high.

ABDUCTION & DETENTION

92% of operations highlight abduction, forced disappearance, arrest and/ or detention as a major concern. 64% describe the risk as high or very high.

PSYCHOSOCIAL

100% of operations report psychological/ emotional abuse or inflicted distress amongst the affected populations. 60% rate the risk as high or very high.

LEGAL IDENTITY

92% of operations impediments and/or restrictions to access to documentation, remedies and justice. 48% describe the risk as high or very high.

PRESENCE OF MINES

Presence of mines and other explosive ordnance is a risk across 84% of operations. 60% describe the risk as high or very high.

FORCED RECRUITMENT

Forced Recruitment and association of children with armed forces is a risk across 96% of operations 48% describe the risk as high or very high.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE					
AFGHANISTAN	CAMEROON	DR CONGO	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	OPT
SOMALIA	SOUTH SUDAN	SUDAN	SYRIA	CAR	CHAD
COLOMBIA	HAITI	HONDURAS	MYANMAR	NIGER	UKRAINE
VENEZUELA	BURKINA FASO	ETHIOPIA	NIGERIA	PACIFIC	YEMEN
PHILIPPINES		^			

The ban on female workers in **Afghanistan** continues to push more people to resort to negative coping mechanisms, including forced marriage. Cases of femicides (48 registered in the reporting period) and sexual violence increased drastically across **Venezuela**. This is fueled by economic instability, as well as limited provision of PEP kits in hospitals, and low capacity for inter-state transfers of GBV survivors to access services. The GBVIMS in **Somalia** indicates a 7% increase in intimate partner and 14% increase in rape. Reporting of cases remains low because of a lack of trust in existing reporting systems. **Honduras** has the highest rate of femicide in Latin America (its estimated that 90% go unpunished). In June 2023, 84 violent deaths of women were reported (including the horrific case of the 46 women murdered in the penitentiary center on June 20). There is an increase in sexual violence against girls, particularly those linked to armed groups in **Colombia**. Patriarchal structures and traditions expose women and girls in particular to SGBV, violence and abuse in **South Sudan**. The ongoing armed conflicts in **DR Congo** has led to an alarming increase in GBV, involving women and girls being sexually assaulted outside of the IDPs camps while collecting firewood and water. 133 cases of conflict-related sexual violence were confirmed in **Ukraine** last year, 109 of which occurred in locations under the temporary military control and 24 of which took place in Government of Ukraine controlled territories. Gangs continued to use sexual violence, including collective rape, in **Haiti** to terrorize and inflict pain on populations. Sexual slavery was reported as being used by gangs.

UNLAWFUL IMPEDIMENTS OR RESTRICTIONS TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, SIEGE AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT					
AFGHANISTAN	OPT	UKRAINE	BURKINA FASO	CAR	CAMEROON
COLOMBIA	DR CONGO	HAITI	HONDURAS	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE
MYANMAR	NIGER	NIGERIA	SUDAN	YEMEN	CHAD
SOMALIA	SYRIA	ETHIOPIA	PACIFIC	SOUTH SUDAN	PHILIPPINES
VENEZUELA					

De facto authorities have started issuing orders to close IDP camps or asking people to return in different locations across **Myanmar**. The execution of the order remains largely inconsistent. In Rakhine, IDPs have apparently moved following pressure and threats of camp closure, as well as the demolishing of shelters in the current IDP sites. According to the Protection and Returns Monitoring Network in **Somalia**, 345,000 internal displacements were recorded in May due to the combined effects of floods, drought, and conflict/insecurity, bringing the total number of internal displacements in 2023 to more than 1.25 million. In **Colombia**, confinement has increased, impeding freedom of movement and denying access to cultivation areas, with has direct effects on food security. In **Cameroon**, 98% of IDPs wish to return home, but fear a of lack of security. Lack of livelihoods led to repeat displacements and negative coping mechanisms in **South Sudan**. IDPs in **Nigeria** are confronted with government camp closures and relocations. Significant movement restrictions imposed by Israel around Jericho, Nablus and Hebron are affecting tens of thousands of **Palestinians**.

ABDUCTION, KIDNAPPING, DISAPPEARANCE, ARBITRARY ARREST, DETENTION					
NIGERIA	SOUTH SUDAN	SUDAN	AFGHANISTAN	BURKINA FASO	CAR
CAMEROON	HAITI	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NIGER
OPT	SOMALIA	SYRIA	UKRAINE	CHAD	COLOMBIA
DR CONGO	HONDURAS	VENEZUELA	YEMEN	ETHIOPIA	PACIFIC
PHILIPPINES					

Niger reported a significant increase of incidents of physical assaults, abductions and murders, which led to inter-communal conflicts that have caused forced displacement of thousands of people. Women and girls in search of livelihoods are increasingly at risk of abduction. Abductions of women and girls who continue to be the targets for non-state armed groups in the northern and central regions of **Mali** are on the rise. 298 persons were victims of abductions/disappearances in **DR Congo** in April-May 2023. Abduction, kidnapping, and disappearance are reported as prominent risks in **Burkina Faso**. The civilian population is constantly at risk of NSAGs abducting/kidnapping and disappearing people in **Nigeria.**
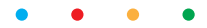
ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS AND OTHER UNLAWFUL KILLINGS, AND ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN OBJECTS

CAMEROON	DR CONGO	OPT	SOUTH SUDAN	SUDAN	UKRAINE
BURKINA FASO	CAR	COLOMBIA	HAITI	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE
MYANMAR	NIGER	NIGERIA	SOMALIA	AFGHANISTAN	CHAD
ETHIOPIA	HONDURAS	SYRIA	VENEZUELA	YEMEN	PACIFIC
PHILLIPINES					

Serious concerns over the protection of civilians and violation of IHL/IHRL in **Myanmar** are stemming primarily from artillery and mortar shelling, air and drone strikes, remote explosives/landmines, security operations, and indiscriminate attacks. Attacks on civilian and civilian infrastructures persist in Oromia (**Ethiopia**) as the conflict between NSAG and Ethiopia National Defense Force continues. **Honduras** has experienced an upsurge in violence, with 26 massacres registered between January 1 and June 26, an increase of 13% compared to the previous year, resulting in 145 people killed in these events, including 10 human rights defenders. There was a noticeable escalation of hostilities and armed confrontation causing civilian casualties in **Cameroon**, with 382 individual incidents reported in the NWSW regions. An attack in Tourou by unidentified armed groups targeted 19 households, resulting in looted property, livestock, and extortion. In **South Sudan**, competition over scarce resources catalysed inter-community clashes in May. A new trend of attacks against medical infrastructure has been noticed in **Niger**. Attacks on civilians, including attacks against IDPs camps, continue in **DR Congo**, with 12,926 incidents reported in April-May 2023, including 220 civilians killed and 1,627 wounded. Another violent attack against an IDP camp was perpetrated in the Lala site in Djugu, resulting in the death of at least 46 people including 23 children and 13 women. 67% of incidents reported in April and 44% of incidents reported in May in **Burkina Faso** pertained to attacks on civilians and infrastructure. From February 2022 to June 2023, an estimated 4,043 acts of violence targeting civilians have been recorded across **Ukraine** — rendering Ukraine the deadliest country in the world for violence in 2022. Civilian population is constantly at risk of NSAGs attacks as well as government forces attacking villages during military operations in **Nigeria**. 33 Palestinian civilian fatalities were recorded in May 2023 during the escalation in Gaza. The number of Palestinian fatalities throughout the **oPt** in the first five months of 2023 (155 fatalities) is almost three times higher than in the same period in 2022 (54 fatalities).

PRESENCE OF MINES AND OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE

UKRAINE	AFGHANISTAN	BURKINA FASO	CAR	COLOMBIA	MALI
MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NIGERIA	OPT	SOMALIA	SOUTH SUDAN
SUDAN	SYRIA	YEMEN	CAMEROON	DR CONGO	NIGER
PHILIPPINES	CHAD	ETHIOPIA	HAITI	HONDURAS	PACIFIC
VENEZUELA					

Of the 3,774 civilian casualties documented in **Afghanistan** between 15 August 2021 – the day the Taliban returned to power – and 30 May 2023, three quarters were caused by indiscriminate IEDs, mostly suicide bombings, in populated areas, including places of worship, schools, and markets. EORE awareness is essential for all partners and affected people in **Myanmar** where landmines remain a critical protection concern. The number of IEDs and other explosive objects continues to grow in **Burkina Faso**. According to the Mine Action AoR, 160,000 square kilometers of land in **Ukraine** has been exposed to conflict since 2014, placing 21.3 million people at risk of exposure to mines and unexploded ordnance. **Nigeria** reports very high explosive ordnance contamination and frequent incidents.

PSYCHOLOGICAL / EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR INFLICTED DISTRESS

CAMEROON	OPT	SOUTH SUDAN	UKRAINE	AFGHANISTAN	BURKINA FASO
CHAD	COLOMBIA	DR CONGO	MALI	MYANMAR	NIGER
SUDAN	VENEZUELA	YEMEN	CAR	ETHIOPIA	HAITI
MOZAMBIQUE	NIGERIA	SOMALIA	SYRIA	HONDURAS	PACIFIC
PHILIPPINES					

Fear of attacks on women appearing in the public sphere in **Afghanistan** has increased psychological distress and desperation. Psychological/emotional abuse or distress across **Venezuela** is caused mainly by a family member or close friend (93.20%) with less predominance from strangers (33.82%) according to protection monitoring tools. Thousands of IDPs and returnees in **Niger** remain in psychological distress characterized by high-levels of violence and a lack of access to basic services, including humanitarian assistance. Children across **Ukraine** have experienced forced displacement, family separation, loss of caregivers, disruption in education and routines and exposure to violence and abuse, resulting in deep

stress and trauma. It is estimated that 10 million Ukrainians are at risk of a conflict-related mental health disorder, leading to heightened burden for parents and caregivers as they struggle with livelihoods, meeting basic needs and providing childcare. The severe mental health crisis is exacerbated by the recent escalations in Gaza and spikes in violence across West Bank. Fear for life, loss of loved ones, physical injuries and wide-spread destruction are significantly increasing risk of psychological distress.

FORCED RECRUITMENT AND ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN IN ARMED FORCES AND GROUPS

MOZAMBIQUE	SYRIA	CAR	CHAD	COLOMBIA	DR CONGO
HONDURAS	MALI	MYANMAR	SOMALIA	SUDAN	YEMEN
AFGHANISTAN	CAMEROON	HAITI	NIGERIA	SOUTH SUDAN	UKRAINE
VENEZUELA	BURKINA FASO	ETHIOPIA	NIGER	PHILIPPINES	OPT
PACIFIC					

Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups is a widespread issue in Northeast **Syria**. The armed confrontation between NSAGs and the State in **Colombia** persists, generating cases of displacement, confinement, and forced recruitment, with impacts on indigenous people and communities. In **Mozambique**, children make up 29% of the victims of protection incidents, which include kidnappings and forced recruitment. Forced recruitment and the use of children by armed groups remains a high risk, with the creation of the new militia Azande Anikpi Gbe in **CAR**. Child recruitment by gangs has caused many children to flee, abandoning school in **Honduras**, where the average age of first contact with gangs is 13.

IMPEDIMENTS AND/OR RESTRICTIONS TO ACCESS TO LEGAL IDENTITY, REMEDIES, AND JUSTICE

SYRIA	AFGHANISTAN	CAMEROON	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR
NIGER	OPT	SOUTH SUDAN	SUDAN	UKRAINE	YEMEN
BURKINA FASO	CAR	CHAD	COLOMBIA	DR CONGO	ETHIOPIA
HAITI	HONDURAS	SOMALIA	VENEZUELA	PACIFIC	NIGERIA
PHILIPPINES					

76% of IDPs in **Cameroon** do not have any civil documentation. The lack of access to civil documentation for residents of territories in **Ukraine** under the temporary military control of the Russian Federation and IDPs remains a serious concern, primarily with regard to undocumented births and deaths. Inability to access housing, land and property rights have led to profound challenges and displacement for civilians impacted by the conflict. From February 2022 to February 2023, 1.4 million units of housing were reported as either destroyed or damaged.

PROTECTION AND FOOD SECURITY

For millions around the world, conflict perpetuates a deadly and persistent cycle of protection risks and food insecurity. Not only is the connection between hunger, protection, and conflict strong, but evidence shows it is also growing more widely. The World Food Programme reports that 70% of people experiencing hunger live in areas affected by conflict, and a Global Protection Cluster (GPC) analysis finds that in food insecurity contexts (IPC3+) there are now more people in need of protection than last year. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reported that 71.1 million people were living in internal displacement worldwide as of the end of 2022, a 20% increase from the previous year and the highest number ever recorded. Conflict and violence left 62.5 million people living in displacement across 65 countries and territories at the end of 2022, and disasters accounted for a further 8.7 million across 88 countries and territories.
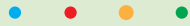
The data available on food security and internal displacement is far from comprehensive, but it reveals how the two phenomena overlap. Three quarters of the countries where food security data (as per IPC/CH) was available had internally displaced populations. Many of the countries with the largest numbers of IDPs also face crisis levels of food insecurity or higher. DR Congo, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Yemen had the largest numbers of people experiencing acute food insecurity (IPC 3+) in 2022, accounting for 53% of all acutely food insecure people across the 49 countries covered by IPC. Taken together, these five countries were home to over 26 million IDPs in 2022, nearly 37% of the global total IDPs.

Attacks on civilian and civilian infrastructures, theft, extortion, eviction, or destruction of personal property, including livestock and livelihoods, are risks that further erode food security and drive hunger. They are present to varying degrees across all Cluster operations. In some of the most severe instances, starvation is being used by parties to the conflict as a weapon of war, intentionally depriving civilians of the necessities of survival. The connection between protection and hunger is a vicious cycle, where protection risks linked with conflict and violence are driving and aggravating food insecurity, and food insecurity is in turn deepening protection risks, all with important gendered dimensions. Exclusion, denial of resources and opportunities interplays with food security capacities.

As households try to cope with conflict-related protection risks, many are forced to increasingly rely on negative coping mechanisms, including child labour, early and forced marriage, and family separation to ensure food is on the table, with these populations being increasingly vulnerable as victims of banditry, extortion or exploitation and trafficking. Negative coping mechanisms - that are themselves protection risks - are directly impacting the main drivers of food insecurity and pushing families into situations of endless coercion, deliberate deprivation, and abuse. Among people affected, those who are marginalized due to gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, or other characteristics often bear the brunt of the impacts, yet they have the fewest positive coping strategies to rely on for assistance.

Despite this clear connection, humanitarian approaches to addressing these mutually undermining needs are often siloed, and more systematic approaches to analyse and act on food insecurity and protection risks through a multisectoral lens are sorely needed. During an official ECOSOC Side-Event organized in June 2023, the Global Protection Cluster, the Permanent Mission of Sweden, the World Food Programme (WFP), CARE, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), InterAction, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Oxfam discussed the linkages between food security and protection, and how the identification of protection risks and their connections to food insecurity is fundamental to effectively reducing and addressing such needs in crisis contexts. An outcomes document was published, highlighting the need for strengthen collaboration between sectors, including concrete actions such as an agreement to work with the Global Food Security Cluster to establish a new work stream dedicated to identifying opportunities and modalities to analyse the interconnections between protection risks and food insecurity - based on respective models, tools, and guidance - and developing potential programmatic approaches to address these connections.

Protection partners are working towards identifying protection risks related to food insecurity, elaborating guidance and recommendations aimed at reducing risks, and taking forward joint strategic advocacy efforts. The following examples from South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia, Nigeria, Honduras and Somalia aim to highlight collaborative efforts, and partnerships between food security and protection sectors.

SOUTH SUDAN — CONFLICT AND FOOD INSECURITY

⊕ Increased rights violations associated with the food crisis

💡 Evidence-based advocacy addressing the critical issue of conflict and food insecurity

The Protection Cluster has recorded an increase in incidents of rights violations associated with the current food crisis that is intensifying in South Sudan. It drew attention to how protection risks aggravate food insecurity, which in turn increases protection risks and/or exacerbates existing ones. These include cattle raiding, land grabbing and intercommunal conflict that results in looting and destruction of housing, land and property and have direct implications on livelihoods and food security of communities. Women and girls are increasingly at risk of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, while searching for food or an income to support themselves and their families. The risk of forced recruitment and the use of child soldiers also increase as the humanitarian situation deteriorates and the conflict dynamics escalate. Recruitment into armed groups during periods of food insecurity and livelihood uncertainty increase as household and community resilience and coping mechanism are worn down. In addition, food distribution, other humanitarian activities, as well as agencies engaged in these efforts, are at significant risk of having their operations disrupted and their staff put in danger by sub-national and intercommunal violence, bureaucratic impediments, and physical constraints due to unprecedented flooding, combined with poor road conditions. In the lean season projection period from April to July 2023, an estimated 7.76 million people (62.7% of the population) will likely face food crisis or worse acute food insecurity. The Protection Cluster in collaboration with the Mine Action AoR published an advocacy note to highlight the critical issue of conflict and food insecurity in South Sudan. This document provides an in-depth analysis of the current situation and outlines recommended actions for the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), donors, and other actors. It emphasizes the urgent need for increased funding for protection analysis and programming, stand-alone protection activities, mine action programming, and food assistance in areas with critical protection incidents. Furthermore, it encourages collaboration with local GBV actors and the sustained presence of protection actors and services to ensure that the most vulnerable populations are reached and supported.

MYANMAR — FOOD INSECURITY IN CYCLONE-AFFECTED AREAS OF RAKHINE

⊕ Loss of livelihoods and associated protection risks

💡 Resource mobilisation and advocacy for improved access and protection of civilians

In May 2023, Cyclone Mocha severely affected Myanmar, with heavy rains and flooding hampering the recovery process for people whose coping capacities were already stretched to the limit. Farmers in cyclone-affected areas in Rakhine and the Northwest are now facing ongoing losses of crops, seeds, and viable farmland, due to the presence of floodwater. The agricultural and fishery sectors in Rakhine and the Northwest have suffered enormous losses, with more than half of production capability lost in Sittwe, impacting essential livelihood assets. This loss poses a long-term threat to food security as the lack of fisheries equipment, seeds, fertilizer, and livestock impacts the food production industry and household survival capacity. Notably, there has been increased petty crime including theft, robbery, and burglary in Cyclone Mocha hit areas in Rakhine and the North-West region. Crimes may further increase due to the loss of livelihoods and the delay in humanitarian assistance caused by access challenges. This situation is further complicated by an under-funded Humanitarian Response Plan and severely weakened governance structure. The Protection Cluster together with other clusters have put together a funding appeal and engaged the HCT, as well as donors, to increase funding for the emergency response, but most importantly advocating for improved access and protection of civilians.

SOMALIA — UNPRECEDENTED DROUGHT AND PROTECTION RISKS

⊕ Severe drought, armed conflict and access impediments

💡 In-country mission and global advocacy towards donors

Somalia has suffered five consecutive failed or below-average rainy seasons since October 2020, resulting in its worst drought in the last 40 years and pushing the country to the brink of famine. The severity of the drought has left almost no time for affected communities to adapt, while depleting and eroding their resources, means of livelihood,

social networks, and households' coping capacities. The situation is exacerbated by the effects of three decades of armed conflict, with the renewed military offensive by government forces against Al-Shabaab starting in June 2022 further heightening the severe impact on the protection of civilian populations.

Nearly 660,000 people, of whom 375,770 are estimated to need humanitarian assistance, live within territory controlled by non-state armed actors and are largely out of reach. These prolonged and extreme conditions created by the combined impact of drought and conflict are continuing to exacerbate protection risks and drive increasingly severe humanitarian needs. Nearly 5 million people were experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity through March 2023, classified as Crisis or worse (IPC Phase 3+), including close to 1.4 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4) and 96,000 in Catastrophe (IPC Phase 5). Between April and June, some 6.5 million people are expected to face high levels of acute food insecurity, including approximately 1.9 million people in Emergency and 223,000 in Catastrophe. Drought-affected populations who have been forced to move have faced numerous protection risks and violations during or after their displacement journeys. Approximately 11,000 incidents of rights violations during 2022 were reported through protection monitoring systems in districts witnessing the arrival of drought-induced displaced populations. Of these, 5,637 violations (43%) relate to sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, attempted rape, or domestic violence, predominantly affecting women and girls. An additional 2,936 violations relate to physical assaults, 1,418 to illegal arrests and detention, as well as 1,240 people reported killed – all of these affecting a significantly higher number of males.

Following a joint GPC and AoR mission in Somalia, a protection briefing note was shared with key stakeholders, including donors and Member States. Grounded in protection monitoring and joint analysis, it aims to highlight some of the most pressing dimensions of the current protection crisis in Somalia and advance recommendations to humanitarian leadership, donors, and Member States in support of the strengthened protection of affected communities.

NIGERIA

CORRELATION BETWEEN EXPLOSIVE ORDANANCES AND FOOD INSECURITY

Conflict-induced food insecurity, explosive ordnance contaminastion and relocation of IDPs

Lean season analysis and explosive ordnance risk education

Conflict-induced food insecurity is a serious ongoing humanitarian challenge in the context of the BAY states, and its root cause is a protracted armed conflict in North-East Nigeria, involving frequent NSAG attacks on people going about self-sustaining livelihood activities such as farming, fishing and firewood collection and the widespread use of explosive weapons by conflict parties, especially Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). The use of IEDs and other explosive weapons negatively affects freedom of movement, and thereby farming activities, access to markets, and the effective distribution of agricultural products to people in need in local goverment areas (LGAs). Farming is only safe in government cleared areas around garrison towns, however, a lack of space drives farmers to cultivate land in areas that are contaminated, thereby being unknowingly exposed to the risk of explosive ordnance incidents. The Protection Sector and Mine Action AoR conducted an analysis showing the correlation between LGAs with a high number of explosive ordnance incidents and conflict-induced food insecurity at Crisis level in Borno state. During the farming cycle, including harvesting, transportation and marketing, farmers face high exposures to the risk of road-use related explosive ordnance incidents caused by IEDs planted on roads. Data analysis over time shows that the lean season had lower number of explosive ordnance incidents largely due to low levels of engagement in agricultural works. In addition, there are related and mutually re-enforcing protection risks in areas of IDP relocation with explosive ordnance incidents, and high levels of food insecurity.

The above situation calls for better multisectoral and well-coordinated response to address the multidimensional causes/drivers of conflict-induced food insecurity. Mine Action AoR partners have conducted Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) for at-risk persons in IDPs camps, informal settlements, and host communities in the BAY states.
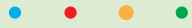
HONDURAS — RED ALERT FOR DROUGHT AND WORSENING FOOD INSECURITY

🎯 Generalised violence, impact of drought and food insecurity

💡 Joint analysis of risks and technical assistance

DR CONGO — PROTECTION RISKS AND FOOD DISTRIBUTION

🎯 Emergency response in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri

💡 Framework of cooperation between WFP and Protection Cluster

Since 16 June, 140 municipalities have been on red alert due to the drought associated with the El Niño phenomenon in ten departments of Honduras. This drought warns of a high possibility of increased food insecurity in the country. Considering the country is facing a context of generalized violence, the analysis of the impacts of drought and food insecurity requires close coordination with the Protection sector. The Protection and Food Security Clusters have coordinated actions to promote a joint analyis of risks, including the review of monitoring tools. Currently, the two clusters are providing technical assistance to the State with the objective of incorporating three key aspects: (i) A more comprehensive monitoring that includes the education and health situation within food security (incl. access to goods and services); (ii) Monitoring to identify other protection risks associated with the context, such as violence, including GBV; (iii) Monitoring to establish whether the current situation associated with climate

A framework of cooperation between the World Food Programme and the Protection Cluster (with key protection agencies) is being developed in DR Congo, in the context of the emergency response in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. The objective of the framework is to define and formalize the scope and modalities of engagement between WFP and protection agencies in terms of food distributions, as part of a holistic approach to address protection risks related to food insecurity and emergency food assistance. In the context of WFP's ongoing emergency response in the three areas most affected by the conflict, namely North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri, the Protection Cluster has been working with WFP to integrate protection considerations into emergency food assistance activities.

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ACCESS THAT PROTECTS

The past year witnessed a concerning increase in access constraints, with profound reverberations on protection actors' access to affected communities, and the access of those communities to humanitarian assistance and protection. The GPC recognized the foundational role that protection by presence plays in supporting effective protection response and pushed to better understand the linkages between access and protection. This included a Campaign on Access that Protects, culminating in the publishing of an Agenda for Change in collaboration with OCHA. In 2023, the GPC looks forward to working further with OCHA, Protection Clusters, Access Working Groups and other stakeholders to move the needle on an access that provides the critical sustained and quality space for protection.
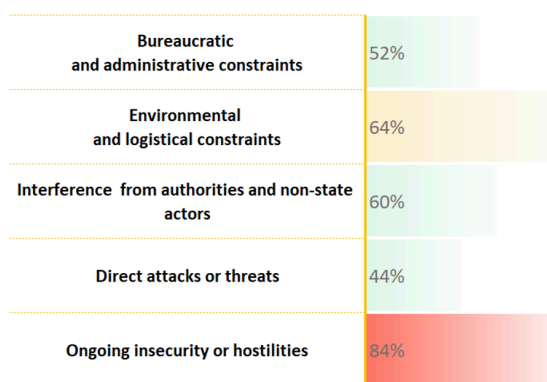
| SITUATIONAL UPDATE | ACCESS OVERVIEW FOR PROTECTION |

ABILITY OF PROTECTION ACTORS TO ACCESS AFFECTED POPULATIONS

During the reporting period, Protection Clusters reported that the ability of protection actors to access affected populations has remained similar in **72%** of operations. The situation deteriorated in **24%** of operations [Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Honduras, South Sudan and Sudan]. The situation improved only in Syria.

BARRIERS

Barrier	%
Bureaucratic and administrative constraints	52%
Environmental and logistical constraints	64%
Interference from authorities and non-state actors	60%
Direct attacks or threats	44%
Ongoing insecurity or hostilities	84%

REGIONAL OVERVIEW	Insecurity Hostilities	Attacks Threats	Interference	Environmental and logistical	Bureaucratic and administrative
Americas	100%	25%	75%	75%	0%
Europe	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
MENA	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%
Asia & Pacific	100%	50%	100%	0%	100%
West & Central Africa	100%	60%	60%	60%	40%
East & Southern Africa	80%	60%	60%	80%	100%

SITUATIONAL UPDATE

Approx. 25% or less	Between 25% and 50%	Between 50% and 75%	Approx. 75% or more	Do not know
Chad, Colombia, Haiti, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan	Afghanistan, CAR, Ethiopia, Honduras, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Ukraine	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Pacific, Philippines, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen	Palestine	Nigeria

Percentage of population that can be reached by protection actors

Access remains a challenge due to unpredictable armed clashes, landmines, checkpoints, and breakdown of telecommunication and internet services in **Myanmar**. In April, a total of 110 access constraints were recorded by OCHA from 14 states and regions across Myanmar, a 15% increase compared to the previous month mostly due to the growing number of Travel Authorizations (TA) refused by the Rakhine State de facto authorities and hampering partners to provide response to Cyclone Mocha. Access constraints associated with the military operations and ongoing hostilities continue to pose a significant barrier to relief efforts in Kayah, Chin, Southern Shan, Sagaing, and Mon states/regions, accounting for 32% of all reported events. Administrative constraints, including movement restrictions linked to TA, constituted 49% of reported incidents, ranking as the highest access impediment, while reported from 11 states/regions, with Rakhine experiencing 57% of all administrative constraints. Armed groups presence is blocking humanitarian access in **Venezuela** while clashes between criminal gangs affect the most vulnerable neighbourhoods. Access improved in Benishangul Gumuz, especially in Guba woreda in **Ethiopia** which is now mostly accessible after being hard to reach for almost 2 years. Similarly, improvements in

access have been noticed in the Somali region. The access to services by population and for humanitarian actors deteriorated particularly in Oromia and Gambella. In Amhara and Tigray, the access situation remained stable with challenges limited to the areas along the border between the two regions and in Western Tigray. In response to the wave of violence, **Honduras** has extended the state of emergency, in effect since December 2022. Humanitarian organisations have expressed concerns regarding the increase of access restrictions in areas under a state of emergency. Increased violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, bureaucratic impediments, including illegal taxation, attempted extortion, and denial of access at checkpoints was reported in **South Sudan**. Severe access constraints were reported in the eight regions of **Burkina Faso**, with more than 26 localities under blockade. In the blockaded areas, restrictions on population movements and humanitarian access have caused food shortages and eroded livelihoods. Both before and after the beginning of the June 2023 counter offensive in **Ukraine**, humanitarian organizations in areas close to the frontline in Zaporizka, Dnipropetrovska, Mykolaivska and Khersonska oblasts report stricter processes for obtaining access due to reported attempts by the Government of Ukraine to standardize its practices across all conflict-affected locations. Access has been negatively impacted in **Nigeria** by camp closures and forced displacement through government-led returns/relocations, when people are partially moved to extremely-hard-to-reach areas where humanitarian and protection partners have limited or no access. In addition, government has issued communication preventing humanitarian actors from delivering assistance to people in "resettled communities" to ensure their "self-reliance".

ABILITY OF AFFECTED POPULATIONS TO ACCESS PROTECTION SERVICES

During the reporting period, Protection Clusters reported that the access situation for affected populations to reach protection services has remained similar in **72%** of operations. The situation deteriorated in **24%** of operations [Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Honduras, Myanmar, South Sudan, Sudan]. The situation improved only in Syria.

BARRIERS

Barrier	%
Unavailability of protection services	64%
Environmental and logistical constraints	64%
Restriction and obstruction	52%
Direct attacks or threats	56%
Ongoing insecurity or hostilities	80%

REGIONAL OVERVIEW	Insecurity Hostilities	Attacks Threats	Restriction and obstruction	Environmental and logistical	Unavailability of services
Americas	75%	25%	50%	50%	50%
Europe	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
MENA	100%	50%	50%	100%	50%
Asia & Pacific	50%	50%	100%	50%	100%
West & Central Africa	100%	100%	60%	60%	60%
East & Southern Africa	100%	80%	80%	80%	80%

SITUATIONAL UPDATE

Approx. 25% or less	Between 25% and 50%	Between 50% and 75%	Approx. 75% or more	Do not know
Chad, Haiti, Mozambique, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan	Afghanistan, Cameroon, CAR, Ethiopia, Honduras, Myanmar, Niger, Ukraine	Burkina Faso, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Pacific, Syria, Venezuela, Yemen	Philippines, Palestine	Nigeria

Percentage of population that can be reached by protection actors

Heavy rainfalls in **Venezuela** have caused power outages posing mayor challenges for families to access basic services. Populations' access to protection services remains constraint by insecurity and insufficient availability of local protection services in **Niger**. Between May 2022-2023, 2,604 victims of protection incidents (sexual violence, recruitment of children, loss of home, gunshot wounds) have been recorded in **Haiti**. 70% have not received a response due to the presence of checkpoints. Armed violence has considerably hampered access to health services and medical care for people living in Port-au-Prince, including the supply of medical inputs and the movement of health workers to their health institutions, seriously affecting the operation of the few health centres and hospitals still open in the commune of Cité Soleil. Israeli measures (checkpoints, entry permit system, closures of cities, escalations of violence, coercive measures, designated 'Firing Zones') and other restrictions continue to undermine access to services across the **oPt**, with the greatest impact on the most vulnerable, including women and girls, the elderly, persons with disabilities, cancer patients in Gaza, Bedouin communities in Area C, households isolated by the West Bank Barrier and undocumented residents of East Jerusalem.

AGENDA FOR CHANGE   PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS ON PROTECTION CLUSTER COMMITMENTS

Protection Clusters reported a range of efforts in relation to access, including bringing protection considerations into access discussions and fora (88%), and bringing attention to the impact of access constraints on protection through advocacy (84%). Protection Clusters also encouraged their members to report access incidents through OCHA reporting system or other mechanisms in place at country level (76%), and to a lesser extent supported negotiation efforts undertaken by its members, OCHA or HC/HCT (32%).

TYPES OF EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN BY PROTECTION CLUSTERS

Bar chart:
- Advocacy: 84%
- Monitoring/Tracking access incidents: 76%
- Negotiation with duty bearers/armed actors: 32%
- Protection analysis: 88%
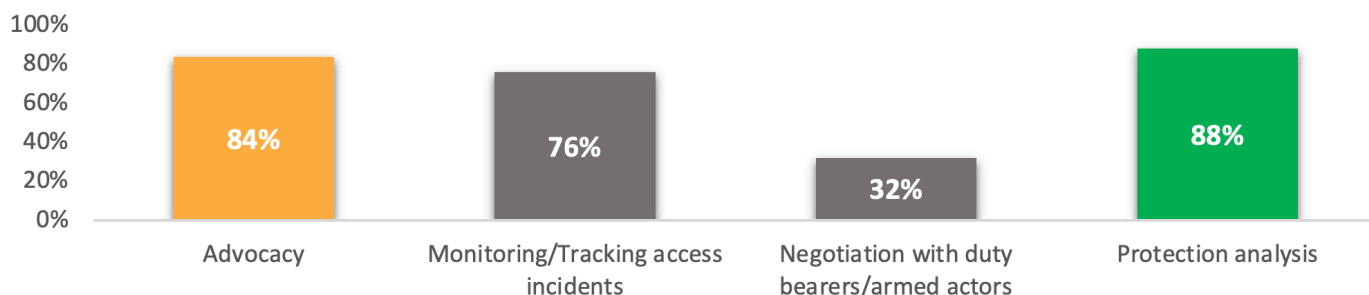
EFFORTS FROM OPERATIONS

In **Venezuela**, the sectoral WG continues to strengthen coordination and promote humanitarian access by the implementation of a multisectoral approach. The HCT advocates with the donor community, the private sector, and other relevant actors to secure funding for an integrated humanitarian response 2023 focusing on the main protection risks. In **Colombia**, the Humanitarian Access Task Force has been created to document security indicators and humanitarian access barriers. The Protection Cluster provides support in training and capacity- building at national and sub-national level. In **Ukraine**, the Humanitarian Operations Planning Cell (HOPC) has organised over 55 inter-agency convoys to communities in Luhanska, Donetska, Kharkivska, Khersonska and Zaporizka oblasts as of May 2023. The HCT has committed to ensuring that one protection actor joins each IAC to provide on-the-ground guidance and for identification of potential protection programming where safe and ethical to do so. ToRs are being developed by the ICCG for an **oPt** Access Working Group with two sub-groups (West Bank and Gaza).

PROTECTION AT THE CORE OF ACCESS MECHANISMS

▶ **COMMITMENT**: Encourage the systematic participation of Protection Clusters in Access Working Groups and other collective platforms for enhanced access coordination.

OPERATIONS WITH ACTIVE ACCESS WORKING GROUP[3]	PROTECTION CLUSTERS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN ACCESS WGs	PROTECTION CLUSTERS PARTCIPATION IN ACTIVE ACCESS WORKING GROUPS
76%	AFGHANISTAN, BURKINA FASO, CAMEROON, CAR, COLOMBIA, DRC, ETHIOPIA, HAITI, NIGERIA, SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN, SUDAN, SYRIA, VENEZUELA, UKRAINE, YEMEN	**64%**

CASE STUDY: CO-LEADING EFFORTS WITH THE ACCESS WORKING GROUP IN SOMALIA

Somalia continues to face multiple challenges associated with the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Insecurity, presence of non-state armed groups, infrastructure, and environmental challenges all restrict access to affected populations and lead to movement restrictions. For the first time since 2017, Somalia has seen a major increase in civilian casualties when compared to previous years, from January to December 2022, a total of 6,482 civilian fatalities were recorded throughout the country, doubling the number compared to 2021. The protection of civilians is increasingly at stake with an overall deteriorating security environment for civilians. The Protection Cluster jointly with the Access Working Group are leading

[3]The data refers to the operations reporting during the period cover by the GPU.

the efforts to strengthen common analysis to identify priority issues for joint action of the humanitarian community, such as location-specific access strategies, adopting tailored approaches to address challenges in negotiations, access, and advocacy and the identification of the main protection of civilian risks. These risks relate to the existing low adherence to international humanitarian law by warrying parties to the conflict, denial of freedom of movement, blockades and taxation, and increased explosive hazard contamination. Moreover, the Somalia Protection Cluster is leading the action plan related to the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) draw-dawn. The proposed plan aims at informing measures to reduce risks for the protection of civilians that might emanate during this transition process.

NEGOTIATING WITH DUTY-BEARERS

COMMITMENT: Support capacity-building and skills strengthening of frontline protection actors through partnerships with specialized agencies on negotiation.

Throughout the course of 2023, the GPC and Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) have been further developing a strategic partnership, aimed at strengthening the capacity and skills of Protection Clusters members in advancing negotiations for access and protection. CCHN aims to facilitate the capture, analysis, and sharing of experiences and practices around humanitarian negotiation and to provide a space for dialogue across organizations. They support a global community of humanitarian practitioners working at the frontlines of humanitarian action to continually enhance skills, learning and action in support of access. The GPC and CCHN have started an initiative aimed at providing tailored support on negotiation skills for Protection Clusters and their members, with a focus on the particular considerations, principles and approaches that are core to realizing protection outcomes. In 2023 and into 2024, the organizations aim to implement several capacity building initiatives with identified Protection Clusters, including a mix of online and in-person trainings and workshops focused on enhancing the negotiations skills needed to support protection efforts. Plans are underway and the protection-focused content, case studies and modules are now being developed, with a series of trainings to be rolled out starting in Q3 of 2023.

EVIDENCE-BASED, ROBUST ADVOCACY

COMMITMENT: Amplify the story of access restrictions as experienced by those most affected, building on enhanced data collection by the GPC, Protection Clusters and allies.

The Global Protection Cluster is committed to influencing understanding and action on 'access that protects' at global and country levels. As part of this effort, the GPC has engaged in a number of high-level events and briefings to date in 2023, focused on advancing narratives and influencing decision-making with the aim of strengthening the intersection between access and protection. This has included ensuring a strong focus on access and protection during briefings and engagements with Member States, including during the GPC's recent advocacy and engagement trip to New York and Washington, D.C.

The GPC also recently helped organize, together with the Norwegian, French and Belgian permanent missions to the UN, OCHA, CCHN, UNHCR and UNICEF, a Protection of Civilians week high level side event, aimed at shining a spotlight on the role of protection actors in driving access at local levels. During the event, entitled 'Scaling Impacts: How Protection Efforts are Driving Access at the Local Level' speakers shared their perspectives on the roles being played by protection actors in negotiating access and negotiating in support of protection outcomes in a range of complex operating contexts. The critical role of local actors – from local protection groups to local authorities - came out strongly across the interventions, including in the contexts of Syria, Niger, and Haiti.

Mr. Oussama Chourbagi, General Manager with the AFAQ Academy in Northwest Syria, shared more on the organization's work to engage with non-state armed groups in support of the protection of civilians, from negotiating humanitarian access to besieged villages to securing the release of children and adolescents from their ranks. He shared reflections on the importance of understanding and speaking to the underlying values and motivations of armed actors, as well as to leveraging the power of social norms by engaging with communities around respect for International Humanitarian Law. Based on access and protection considerations in Haiti, Mr. Arnaud Royer, Head of the Protection Cluster and OHCHR, highlighted that partnerships with local actors, community-based approaches and ultimately the leadership of local actors – many such actors are already present and a part of the community - are reinforcing protection capacities, including with monitoring and case management, and access to services for affected communities.

The GPC, with our partners, will continue to galvanize action on 'access that protects', amplify the ongoing efforts of Protection Clusters at the country level and pursue strategic opportunities for influencing and change at global level.

FIELD COORDINATION AND OPERATIONS

The **Global Protection Conference** was held in Amman, Jordan from 8-12 May. The Conference was attended by 200 participants, including national and subnational field cluster Coordinators, Co-coordinators, Information Management Officers and support staff, as well as regional level colleagues and few external stakeholders. The Conference was operationally oriented and provided opportunities for the GPC, field coordination teams and stakeholders to engage and exchange on a range of thematic and technical protection priorities, developments, and standards. The field coordination teams discussed the evolution of operational realities and cluster operational capacities required to respond to minimum requirements and emerging needs at field level. The Conference also provided an opportunity to facilitate knowledge and peer-to-peer exchange between operations. It was structured around key priorities including (i) shaping the future of field protection coordination; (ii) the Centrality of Protection in humanitarian response and (iii) service mapping, referrals, and case management.

KEY FIGURES

REQUIREMENTS (US$)	FUNDED (US$)	PEOPLE IN NEED	TARGET
$3.38B	$636M	165M	60.8M
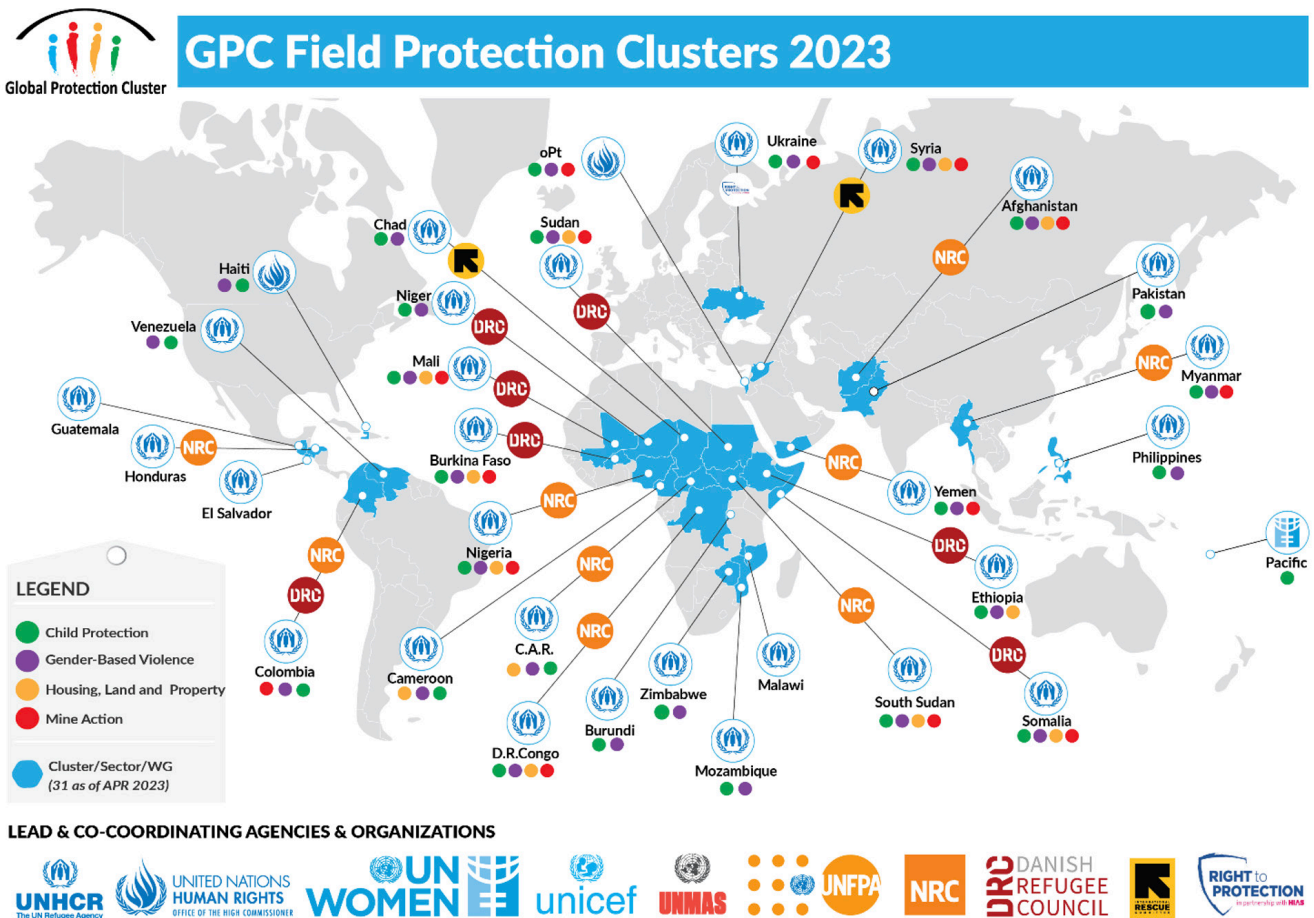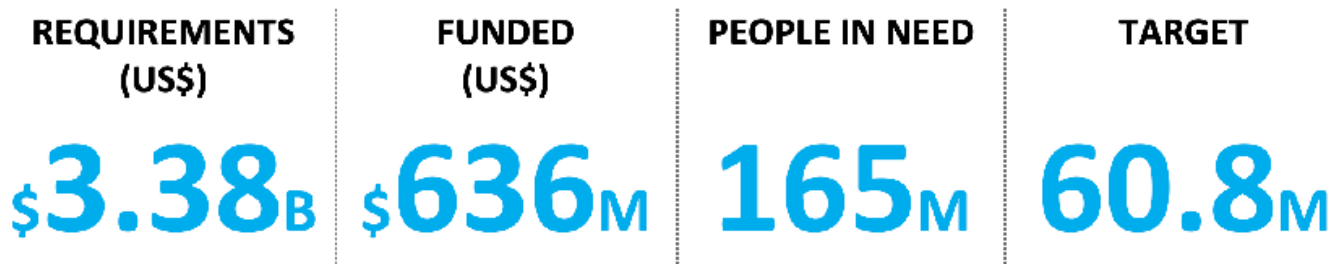
Source: FTS, HNO 2023, HRP 2023 – July 2023

METHODOLOGY NOTE

Between September and December 2022, the Global Protection Cluster carried out a **stocktaking exercise of Protection Analysis Updates across operations.** The process included more than **45 meetings** and an analysis of **197 feedbacks**. The results have been used to revise the dedicated guidance for **Protection Risks** and **PAUs elaboration**. The Global Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility, with the support of OHCHR, worked together between October 2022 and January 2023 to revise the 15 Protection Risks. The exercise aimed at having **common definitions that guide collaborative protection analysis** and a better tracking of protection risks across operations.

This **Global Protection Risks Tracker** has been revised and the following changes introduced in 2023:

AREA	2021 - 2022					2023				
SEVERITY CONCEPTS	MINOR	STRESSED	MODERATE	SEVERE	EXTREME	VERY LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
APPROACH	Value judgement survey completed each quarter by Protection Cluster operations.					Training on the 15 protection risks definitions to all operations to facilitate continuous collective analysis at country level and elaborate Protection Analysis Updates.				
						A revised value judgement survey completed each quarter by Protection Cluster operations.				
CRITERIA	Monitoring based on value judgement of Protection Cluster operations, using data, information and analysis of partners at country level.					Introduction and testing of common criteria for each level of severity.				
						Introduction of dimensions per each severity criteria to support value judgement in all situations on the basis of available data.				
SCOPE	Percentage of operations reporting severity levels per each protection risk.					Introduction of regular correlation and trend analysis.				
	The reporting from Protection Cluster operations was looking at the combination of both current and potential protection risks					The reporting from Protection Cluster operations covers current protection risks, by looking at: (i) Level of harm, (ii) Role of human activities, (iii) Exposure to harm				
	The overall results were based on the total number of Protection Cluster operations. The values of Protection Cluster operations that would not report for a specific period, were calculated on the projection of the latest monitoring provided.					A minimum threshold, corresponding to 70% of Protection Cluster operations (excluding Working Groups) is introduced. The values correspond to the Protection Cluster operations reporting in the period, ensuring the minimum threshold is achieved at all times.				
IDs.						Introduction of standard IDs for each protection risks to better visualize results and findings.				

The Global Protection Cluster is a network of NGOs, international organizations and UN agencies engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises including armed conflict and climate change related disaster. The GPC ensures well-coordinated, effective and principled protection preparedness and responses, and that protection is at the core of all humanitarian action and recognized as essential in any nexus with development and peace. The GPC unites members, partners and communities working on the full gamut of protection activities, including in four specialized Areas of Responsibility: Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence, Housing, Land and Property and Mine Action. The GPC contributes to and benefits from the broader IASC system.

Child Protection AoR
Global Protection Cluster

Gender Based Violence AoR
Global Protection Cluster

Global Protection Cluster

Housing land and Property AoR
Global Protection Cluster

Mine Action AoR
Global Protection Cluster