



Global Protection Cluster

GLOBAL PROTECTION UPDATE

OCTOBER 2023



IN THE HOUR OF NEED:

**BRINGING PROTECTION TO THE FOREFRONT OF
PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

CONTEXT UPDATE

The third quarter of 2023 was a particularly dire moment for so many civilians caught up in renewed conflicts, political instability and new large-scale emergencies. On 7 October 2023, Palestinian armed groups in Gaza launched thousands of rockets toward Israel and breached through the perimeter fence of Gaza at multiple locations, entering into Israeli towns and killing and capturing Israeli forces and civilians. The Israeli military declared “a state of war alert,” and began extensive air strikes, with thousands of civilians across Gaza killed and civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, destroyed. The Government of Israel also ordered a “total siege” on Gaza, cutting off water and electricity connections, with subsequent cuts to communications and access to fuel. The Secretary General has described the situation as a ‘humanitarian catastrophe’ given the staggering impacts of the conflict on civilians and an updated Flash Appeal identified 3.1 million people in need.¹ As of 13 November 2023, 102 UNRWA staff members have been killed in the hostilities. UN officials, international and national NGOs continue to stress the urgency of respecting International Humanitarian Law and ensuring the protection of civilians. Calls for an immediate ceasefire and full, unimpeded humanitarian access to deliver life-saving assistance are mounting.

Starting early October, new attacks in densely populated areas in North-West Syria, including IDPs camps, and resulting displacement have put civilians at increased risk across 91 communities in Idlib and western Aleppo. The attacks also damaged critical civilian infrastructure, including 23 health facilities and hospitals and 17 schools. Amidst worsening humanitarian crises unfolding in the region, these attacks and their humanitarian and protection consequences have received limited public attention. While protection partners are providing safe transportation and cash to help families relocate to safer areas, and psycho-social and family reunification services, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons and the Global Protection Cluster Coordinator have called for an immediate halt to attacks affecting civilians and civilian infrastructure, urgent life-saving aid and protection.²

A series of earthquakes in Herat have had profound impacts on already vulnerable communities grappling with decades of conflict and under-development in Afghanistan. The earthquakes have destroyed homes and shelters, leaving people with very little. The earthquakes came at the start of the lean season and immediately before winter, when families’ food resources are most constrained or depleted. The Humanitarian Coordinator announced a new [Response Plan](#) targeting 114,000 people, focusing on those whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged.

In West Africa, a coup d’état occurred on July 26 in Niger, leading to economic sanctions imposed by ECOWAS and the closure of international borders. Analysis of available protection monitoring data showed that the protection situation in Niger deteriorated further during the third quarter of 2023, marked by an increase in kidnapping, sexual exploitation, inter-community conflicts, livestock extortion and forced displacement, further impacting the communities’ capacity to cope with these multiple, simultaneous shocks.

The scale, complexity and urgency of several ongoing humanitarian crises is surpassing the capacity of humanitarian actors, in collaboration with national authorities and civil society, to respond to the needs of affected populations. On June 16, a [IASC System-Wide Scale-Up](#) was initiated in the eastern DR Congo (for the Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces) and extended until 31 December, reflecting the continued increase in humanitarian needs, with more than 5.6 million people displaced. Since the declaration, humanitarian and protection actors have sought to increase their operational capacity for a strengthened emergency response in targeted provinces.

Similarly, a [IASC System-Wide Scale Up](#) was activated on 29 August 2023 until 28 February 2024 for the situation in Sudan. A High-level Ministerial side event on the margins of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly was organized by the United Nations, the Governments of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Qatar and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the European Union and the African Union. The [Cost of Inaction](#) event aimed to raise awareness on the humanitarian crisis in Sudan and its impact on the region, address operational challenges with solutions regarding humanitarian access, and support response plans with timely and flexible funding. However, despite these and other efforts to mobilize political, humanitarian and financial support, response efforts continue to face major operational challenges and funding constraints while protection risks and violations continue to rise in Sudan and other contexts with ongoing crises. As an illustration, gender-based violence is at the heart of the protection crisis in three active IASC Scale-up (DRC, Sudan³, and Haiti), where sexual violence is used as a tactic of war to terrorize people and a spike in violence against women and girls is reported.

¹ Flash Appeal for the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), 6 November 2023. Available [here](#).

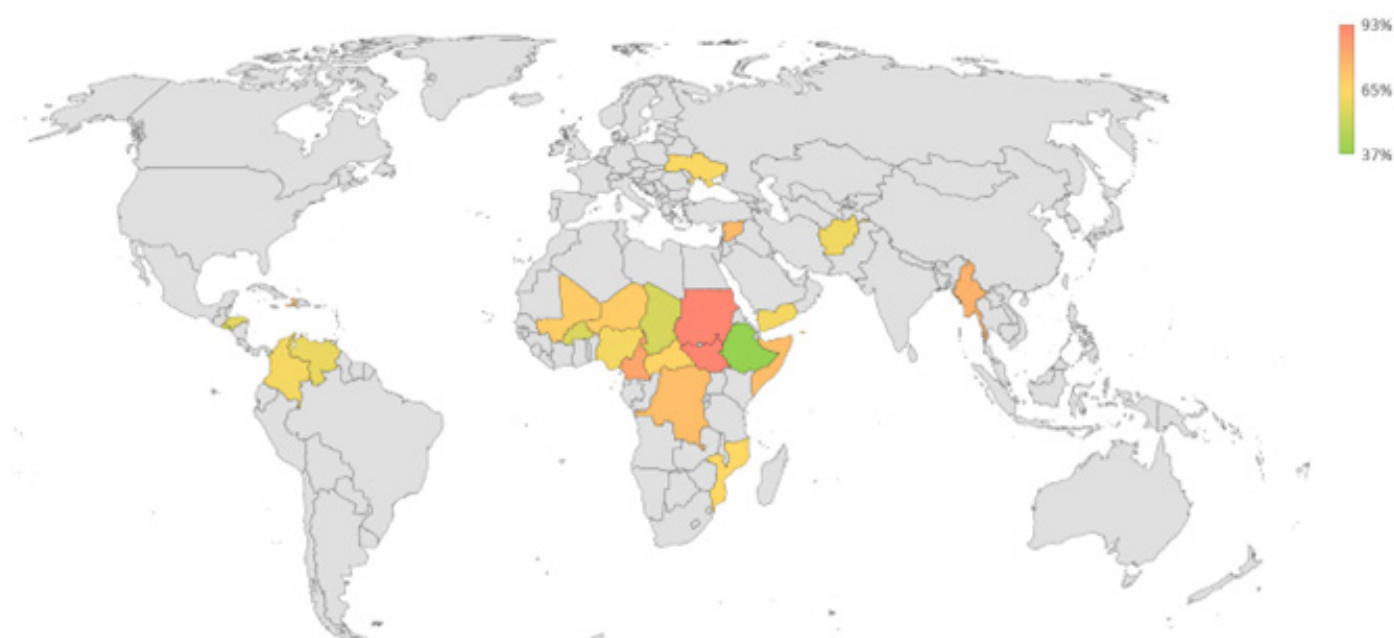
² [Statement of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of IDPs and the GPC Coordinator on North-West Syria](#).

³ Sudan GBV Sub-Sector. Key Messages on Sudan IASC Scale-Up. September 2023. Available [here](#).

With the transition and draw down of several UN Missions during 2023, protection risks have also been increasing for affected populations, while at the same time protection actors have been actively supporting efforts to ensure continued protection of civilians. In Mali, following the approval by the UN Security Council to withdraw the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSMA), protection actors have anticipated a severe deterioration of the security, humanitarian, and human rights situation in the country, leading to potential significant harm to civilians.⁴ The withdrawal of MINUSMA will have concrete funding implications to provide physical protection to civilians, delivery of humanitarian aid including support to local service provision, as well as human rights monitoring, reporting and advocacy with duty-bearers. Explosive ordnance risk education (EORE), clearance efforts, victim assistance as well as coordination of mine action will be further limited, and a number of child protection efforts (notably linked to the UNSC 1612 Resolution Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism) and reporting on conflict-related sexual violence will also be impacted. In DR Congo, discussions are ongoing between the Protection Cluster and the substantive sections of the MONUSCO (Protection of Civilians, Civilian Affairs and the Office of Human Rights) with regards to the Mission's progressive withdrawal plan. The joint operational planning is mostly looking at the mutualization of Protection Monitoring mechanisms, strengthening community-based protection and early warning mechanisms and networks, and harmonizing approaches and tools.

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

93% of 29 Protection Clusters have produced 64 Protection Analysis Updates, including 39 national, 22 sub-national and 3 thematic since the 1st of January 2022. The PAUs are produced regularly on the basis of the Protection Analytical Framework.

PAU PUBLISHED IN 2023*

Yemen	JANUARY	DR Congo	JUNE	NW Syria	OCTOBER
Venezuela	FEBRUARY	Ukraine	JUNE	NE Nigeria	OCTOBER
Burkina Faso	MARCH	Afghanistan	JULY	Burkina Faso	NOVEMBER
Afghanistan	MARCH	Sudan	AUGUST	South Sudan	NOVEMBER
El Salvador	APRIL	Mali	AUGUST		

* Click on the country to access the latest PAU (if public).

*The approach to PAUs have been revised during the 1st quarter of 2023, please see [here](#) the latest guidance.

⁴Mali Protection Cluster. Key Messages on the Protection Impacts of the MINUSMA Withdrawal. August 2023. Internal

KEY COUNTRY NEWS

Afghanistan experienced a series of powerful earthquakes in Herat Province causing substantial casualties and damage to schools, water systems, healthcare facilities, and other critical civilian infrastructure.

Forced displacement continue to expand significantly due to insecurity in **Burkina Faso**, particularly in the South-West region of the country.

Suspected non-State armed group (NSAG) members attacked members of the “Boki” community living in Egbekaw village in **Cameroon** on 6 November, resulting in at least 50 deaths and many more injured.

Instability along **CAR's** borders with Chad, Sudan, and South Sudan, is negatively impacting the humanitarian and protection situation, with increased community tensions, GBV and violence against children. The political context is marked by ongoing tensions between the government and the opposition over the new Constitution of 30 August 2023, and the Tokenization Act, with various positions taken by both camps.

The Lake province in **Chad** is hosting 215,928 internally displaced persons as of the end of September, due to recurrent attacks by NSAGs and inter-community tensions around agricultural and fishing activities.

Despite the signing of a bilateral ceasefire with the National Liberation Army/Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) in July, **Colombia** has seen continued forced displacements, confinements, and confrontation between non-state armed groups.

The security situation in **DR Congo** continued to deteriorate due to

armed confrontations with M23 with the state of siege in Ituri and North Kivu extended for the 58th consecutive time.

Despite the peace agreement in Northern **Ethiopia**, inter-communal conflict, as well as conflict between government forces and unidentified armed groups, drought, and flooding continue to exacerbate the protection risks faced by various communities throughout the country.

With 2,161 people killed, injured, and kidnapped, the third quarter of 2023 saw a 16% increase in victims of criminal groups in **Haiti**, bringing the total number of victims to over 5,650 since the start of 2023.

Violence levels have not decreased in **Honduras**, as well as crimes of extortion and GBV. Climate-related disasters also exacerbate protection risks.

The closure of MINUSMA camp bases in Ber, Goundam, Ogossagou, and Tessalit, in **Mali** occurred amid a deteriorating security situation, endangering the lives of hundreds of uniformed and civilian personnel.

A 32% increase in IDP returns was recorded since April 2023 in Northern **Mozambique**, despite sporadic displacement as a result of continued human rights violations against civilians, perpetrated by both sides to the conflict (6,000 IDPs displaced in September and October).

Protection risks have intensified in **Myanmar**, driven by persistent conflict that has led to unprecedented levels of displacement, extensive property damage, and the expanding presence of landmines, particularly in the Northwest and Southeast.

On 26 July 2023, a coup d'état occurred in **Niger** when the country's presidential guard detained president Bazoum, and General Tchiani proclaimed himself the leader of a new military junta.

Following an attack by Hamas on 7 October and Israel's widespread shelling, air strikes and ground military operations in response, to date the estimated death toll exceeds 14,800 people, including 6,000 children and 4,000 women, in **Gaza**⁵ and 1,200 people in Israel⁶, with 1.7 million estimated to be displaced. A further 222 Palestinians, including 58 children, have been killed by Israeli Forces in the **West Bank**. The majority were killed in confrontations following Israeli search and arrest operations or in the context of demonstrations in solidarity with Gaza.

Six months since the start of the Sudan crisis, thousands of people continue to arrive daily in **South Sudan** – the majority are people returning to South Sudan.

Entering its 7th month of the conflict, at least 9,000 people have been killed in **Sudan**. Actual figures may be higher with communications challenges and ongoing violence inhibiting systematic reporting.

Starting early October, new attacks in densely populated areas in North-West **Syria**, including IDPs camps, and resulting displacement have put civilians at increased risk across 91 communities in Idleb and western Aleppo.

The humanitarian situation in **Ukraine** is expected to deteriorate in the coming months, as the onset of the winter brings additional challenges and risks to people facing harsh conditions.

⁵ The casualty figures are provided by Gaza Media Office since the 11 November; since this time, Gaza Ministry of Health has not been able to update cumulative casualty figures following the collapse of services and communications at hospitals in the north of Gaza.

⁶ The estimate, which includes foreign nationals, has been changed by the Israeli sources.

EMERGING PROTECTION TRENDS

CRISIS WATCH

ALARMING SITUATIONS

oPt

The situation in Gaza, previously a protection and humanitarian crisis, is now a catastrophe. People who had already been living under blockade and occupation find themselves under siege and bombardment. 2.2 million Palestinians in Gaza, effectively the entire population, are without protection. There are no safe spaces and there are no routes to escape. People in Gaza have endured weeks of the most intense conflict marked by relentless Israeli airstrikes, attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, continual denial of essential services (water, fuel and electricity) and humanitarian aid (including food and medicines). As of mid-November, over 1.7 million people were internally displaced, a level vastly exceeding anything experienced in previous Gaza escalations.

SUDAN

The ongoing conflict in Sudan, which began in April 2023, has been marked by targeted attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, including markets, hospitals, and public offices. Heavy fighting in urban areas, GBV, including conflict-related sexual violence, and violence along ethnic lines are all particularly concerning dimensions of this ongoing crises. As the conflict has continued, the disruption of an already weak protective system in the country has drastically been undermined, resulting in a substantial breakdown in the rule of law and civilian safety mechanisms. The weak protective environment is currently exacerbated by a collapse of health services marked by 80% of non-functional health services in the country. A worrying sign of child recruitment has been observed in different parts of the country while high levels of family separation continue.

SAHEL

The Sahel continues to face the impact of persistent insecurity, conflict, food insecurity and floods. The coup d'état in Niger in July and the impact of current sanctions has further eroded the protection situation, increasing the reliance of populations on negative coping strategies, such as early marriage, survival sex, child labour and recruitment in armed groups, to ensure the very basics of survival. In Mali, following the approval by the UN Security Council to withdraw the MINUSMA, protection actors anticipate a severe deterioration of the security, humanitarian, and human rights situation. ACLED has reported a 38% increase in violence targeting civilians in Mali so far this year. In Burkina Faso, the number of people internally displaced has reached 1.76 million. For people living in areas cut off by non-State armed groups, their access to basic services, fields, grazing areas and assistance is now increasingly limited, with some areas have crossing the emergency thresholds for food and nutritional insecurity.

PROTECTION RISKS

OF CONCERN

HIGHLIGHTS ON PROTECTION RISKS

DISINFORMATION AND DENIAL OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

30% 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 3 countries compared to June 2023.

32% of cluster operations (7) report the risk as high or very high. This represents a notable increase compared to the last period, where 3 countries reported high or very high levels

CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE

TORTURE OR CRUEL, INHUMAN, DEGRADING TREATMENT OR PUNISHMENT

33% of cluster operations (7) report this risk as high or very high.

MONITOR

TRACKING OF 15 PROTECTION RISKS ACROSS EMERGENCIES

The Global Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility monitor and track 15 protection risks⁷ 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 (see p.19).









PROTECTION RISK		VERY LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
ABDUCTION & DETENTION	Abduction, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention	0	2	7	13	2
ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS	Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects	0	3	4	10	7
FAMILY SEPARATION	Child and forced family separation	1	4	13	3	3
MARRIAGE	Child, early or forced marriage	1	6	10	4	3
DISCRIMINATION	Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access	0	1	11	10	2
DISINFORMATION	Disinformation and denial of access to information	2	6	9	7	0
FORCED RECRUITMENT	Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups	1	4	7	9	3
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	Gender-based violence	0	0	6	10	8
LEGAL IDENTITY	Impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies and justice	0	2	11	9	2
PRESENCE OF MINE	Presence of Mine and other explosive ordnance	4	2	6	7	5
PSYCHOSOCIAL	Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress	0	2	5	13	4
THEFT & EVICTION	Theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property	0	3	9	7	5
TORTURE & CRUELTY	Torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment	3	3	11	6	1
TRAFFICKING & LABOUR	Trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices	4	5	10	5	0
MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT	Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement	0	5	4	11	4

⁷[GPC Protection Risks Explanatory Note, March 2023](#)

AT A GLANCE

MOST SEVERE PROTECTION RISKS REPORTED IN THE LAST QUARTER

Since June 2023, the 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, with an increase of countries reporting high or very high levels of protection risks related to attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects and psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress, and a slight decrease of countries reporting high or very high levels of protection risks related to unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement.

 <p>GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE</p> <p>100% of operations report gender-based violence as being the most concerning. 75% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS</p> <p>100% of operations report attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects amongst the affected populations. 71% describe the risk as high or very high.</p>	 <p>MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT</p> <p>100% of operations report unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement. 63% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>ABDUCTION & DETENTION</p> <p>100% of operations highlight abduction, forced disappearance, arrest and/or detention as a major concern. 63% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>
 <p>PSYCHOLOGICAL ABUSE</p> <p>100% of operations report psychological/ emotional abuse or inflicted distress amongst the affected populations. 71% rate the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>DISCRIMINATION</p> <p>100% of operations report discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access as a risk. 50% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>PRESENCE OF MINES</p> <p>Presence of mines and other explosive ordnance is a risk across 84% of operations. 60% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>	 <p>FORCED RECRUITMENT</p> <p>Forced Recruitment and association of children with armed forces is a risk across 96% of operations. 52% describe the risk of as high or very high.</p>



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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

Women and girls have been targeted in **Sudan** during lootings and when travelling from conflict-affected area in search of safety. Sexual violence continues to be used by gangs as a weapon against the population of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area and Artibonite department in **Haiti**. 317 feminicides were committed in **Honduras** by 30 September, which already exceeds the total number of the previous year (308). GBV issues, including early marriage, intimate partner violence, and trafficking were reported, particularly in the Northwest of **Myanmar**. GBV is the protection risk with the highest severity in **South Sudan**. 40 femicides cases (of 139 in total for 2023) were reported in **Venezuela** between July and August and sexual violence increased drastically across the country. An alarming 49% increase in human rights violations and protection incidents were recorded by protection monitoring actors in August as compared to July in **DR Congo** (18,835 incidents, including 1,386 allegations/alerts of GBV including 572 rapes). In **El Salvador**, 64% of women older than 15 years report suffering sexual violence in some point of their lives. The GBV AoR **Mozambique** bi-annual report (June 2023), indicates that sexual abuse, trafficking and forced marriage are amongst the most often GBV-related rights violations, with Human Rights Watch reporting that hundreds of women and girls have been kidnapped by NSAGs and forced into marriage or used as sex slaves.

PRESENCE OF MINES AND OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE

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

According to MSNA 2023, explosive ordnance (EO) is a key concern for IDP returnee households in **Myanmar**, with nearly half reporting having a member affected by EO in the 12 months prior to data collection. Presence of mines and other EO severely impact conflict-affected individuals in **Ukraine**. With increasing numbers of EO including Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), curfews have been further expanded in **Burkina Faso** to over 22 provinces across 8 regions. EO contamination continues to remain a major protection concern in **Syria** with over 10.2 million at risk, with half of those children (around 4.6 million).

PSYCHOLOGICAL / EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR INFLICTED DISTRESS

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

23,000 people were newly displaced in **Niger** between July and September 2023, with thousands of IDPs and host communities affected by psychological distress following the coup d'état, soaring food prices, and insufficient humanitarian assistance. Fear of attacks on women appearing in public in **Afghanistan** has increased psychological distress and desperation.

ABDUCTION, KIDNAPPING, DISAPPEARANCE, ARBITRARY ARREST, DETENTION

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

During the third quarter of 2023, kidnappings rose by more than 96% in **Haiti**, and by 166% in the Artibonite department, compared with the previous quarter. **Niger** reported an increase in kidnapping since the coup d'état that occurred in July. Protection monitoring actors in **DR Congo** reported a staggering number of 1,109 abductions and disappearances in August 2023. 128 abduction cases were reported in **Chad** between July and September, compared to 52 cases between January and June 2023.

UNLAWFUL IMPEDIMENTS OR RESTRICTIONS TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, SIEGE AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

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

Increased forced relocations were reported in Northeast and Northwest **Syria**. In **Niger**, 23,000 people were newly displaced between July and September 2023. Freedom of movement of females in **Afghanistan** has reportedly declined by 22% as compared to 2022. In **Burkina Faso** an estimated 2 million displaced people have been recorded in June, representing a 18% increase compared to same period in 2022. In Borno state in **Nigeria**, freedom of movement is still a critical barrier limiting access to farmlands and livelihood opportunities.

FORCED RECRUITMENT AND ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN IN ARMED FORCES AND GROUPS

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

Recruitment of children into gangs remained a major concern in **Haiti**. Children and youth in **Honduras** are evermore exposed to the risks of forced recruitment by criminal groups, with high school dropout rates and an estimated 20,000 children living in street-like situations. The presence of NSAGs across the border between **Venezuela** and **Colombia** and in the gold mines in Bolivar and Amazonas increases the risk of recruitment into armed groups and of trafficking with the purpose of labour and sexual exploitation.

ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS AND OTHER UNLAWFUL KILLINGS, AND ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN OBJECTS

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

4,004 reported cases of attacks, murders and physical assaults marked an increase in protection incidents in **Mali**. Attacks on civilians due to absence of security forces and local authorities followed by the occupation of schools by armed groups were reported in Nzacko/Bakhouma in **CAR**. Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings as well as attacks on civilian objects represented more than 2/3 of the overall number of incidents documented in July and August 2023 in **Burkina Faso**. In Southeast and Northwest **Myanmar**, indiscriminate shelling, airstrikes and explosive ordnance continued to claim lives and threaten the safety and security of civilians. Very limited services are available in the conflict-affected areas in **Sudan**, as 80% of hospitals are non-functional due to ongoing attacks.

DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMATIZATION, DENIAL OF RESOURCE, OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND/OR HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

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

Restrictions on humanitarian access as a result of security measures taken by the new authorities in **Niger** following the coup d'état were reported. Restrictions on women and girls' presence in the public sphere in **Afghanistan** has resulted in reduced participation of women and girls in public life. This has further impacted women and girls' ability to access humanitarian assistance and receive critical protection services.

Conflict, violence and human rights abuses remain the main drivers of protection risks. In 2023, more than 160 million people are in need of protection. Amidst growing levels of conflict and violence globally, civilians are often subjected to violence, abuse, coercion and deprivation during armed conflict. In 2023, there continues to be a blatant disregard for International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) and perpetrators of violations and abuses are rarely held to account, thus encouraging a climate of impunity.

This year Global Protection Forum's theme, "In the Hour of Need", focused on the range of approaches and interventions being advanced by protection actors to prevent and respond to violence, conflict, and human rights abuses. A sharper focus on preventing protection risks and violence from the outset and ensuring timely, accountable, and locally driven protection interventions in the midst of conflict is increasingly critical in the current context of spiralling numbers of people in need, protracted crises and limited resources.

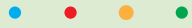
The Forum sessions offered the chance to unpack emerging challenges and share promising practices that respond to the risks and needs experienced by diverse populations – in their hour of need – and ensure a clear focus on achieving protection outcomes. Over the past year, the Global Protection Cluster and all its partners have felt the increasing urgency of this topic (and this challenge), notably with the growing emergencies in Sudan, Haiti and DRC, not to mention in Gaza and the Middle East, the worsening situations in Ukraine, Honduras and Burkina Faso, as well as continued high levels of needs in protracted crises like Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan. With growing protection risks and in light of extensive grave violations and protection concerns, there is a clear need to do protection work differently and ensure that we, as a sector, are more timely, responsive and impactful than ever.

This year's Forum, which ran from 23 October to 2 November, garnered participation from more than 2,100 people. With 50% of those registered joining from sub-Saharan Africa and 10% from Latin America and the Caribbean, registrations have become more diverse than ever before – both geographically and by type of organization. This reflects how the Forum is designed for and with colleagues and practitioners from the field, many of whom are working on the frontlines in several of the contexts explored during the sessions. All sessions were recorded and are available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#) and [French](#).

The Opening Ceremony of the Forum set the tone for the coming sessions, with several strong calls to action for strengthened protection leadership, advocacy and collaboration, all grounded in partnership with affected communities and local leaders, from the distinguished panellists. The High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Volker Türk, emphasised in his keynote remarks the importance of courage and leadership from protection actors as they advocate together and in solidarity with all those experiencing violence and conflict. He shared messages with regards to the importance of collaborative and complementary action by protection and human rights actors, grounded in a shared vision of protection and commitment to human rights across humanitarian action. Recognizing the severe harms experienced by civilians in contexts such as Sudan, Yemen and Central African Republic, the panellists also shared practical insights and learnings on how protection actors, in collaboration with key allies such as women's rights organizations, peace actors and human rights groups, are advancing protection amidst conflict and violence. The speakers all called for the prevention, interruption and reduction of violence to be further strengthened as the guiding light for protection actors in this hour of need globally.



Internally displaced living with relatives in White Nile state, Sudan.



SESSION OVERVIEWS

SESSION 1

Civilians Pay the Highest Price: Protection Centered Health Interventions to Reduce the Risk and the Impact of Attacks Against Health Care

International Rescue Committee, Global Health Cluster, ICRC, and WHO.

From Ukraine to Afghanistan to Yemen and Sudan and most recently in Gaza, civilians continue to pay the highest price when critical civilian infrastructure, such as education or health care, are under attack. Across Cluster operations, attacks against health care are a grave threat to everyone living in areas affected by conflict. The impact of the attacks on health care workers and facilities are simply devastating.

It is clear that not all Governments and armed actors are able, or willing, to comply with their obligation under international law to protect health care. Communities have played a significant role to ensure the protection of health care, as do civil society networks and local actors. Where there are gaps, humanitarian protection and health teams have implemented protection centered health interventions to help reduce the impact. The Syria Protection Cluster, the Health Cluster, UNIDOR and IRC in South Sudan, ICRC in Colombia, and WHO in Yemen spoke to the collaboration between health and protection teams, and what it takes to prevent and mitigate impacts of attacks on health care.

The promising practices shared during the session included the use of existing monitoring and reporting mechanisms on attacks on healthcare (for instance the [WHO SSA, Government led mechanisms](#) and the [Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition](#)), community-led, governmental and interagency early warning mechanisms, engagement and confidential dialogue with armed groups on the legal framework related to the protection of healthcare, and contingency planning to mitigate risks towards healthcare exposed to attacks and security threats. The different speakers also outlined the challenges, and what still needs to be done by humanitarian and protection actors to urgently to strengthen the collective response:

- More data sharing and joint analysis between health and protection actors to facilitate a common and evidence-based understanding of the issues.
- Stronger collaboration between health and protection for joint action to help to reduce violence and respond to the needs of health workers and communities.
- Increased resources to end violence and reduce the impact of this violence on health workers and communities.

This issue cannot be addressed by just one actor alone. Sustained partnerships between national and international NGOs, UN Agencies, ICRC, as well as between Protection

and Health actors and constant engagement with those affected, wider communities, national authorities and donors are essential. The [Joint Operational Framework](#) established by the Health and Protection Cluster is an example of a vehicle for such collaboration.

SESSION 2

Housing, Land and Property Rights as Proactive Protection: Custom, Climate and Community

Housing, Land and Property AoR of the Global Protection Cluster, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), Norwegian Refugee Council, Global Land Tool Network, Humanitarian and Development Consortium, UNHCR, and Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare.

Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights have their origins in international human rights law and the right to adequate housing. However, whilst laws are important, HLP also involves practices, customs and attitudes that revolve around the full spectrum of rights to public and private housing, land and property.

Much of our work is in customary settings – what does this mean for Housing, Land and Property rights? In these settings, different land tenure systems co-exist within a country, each with their own legal framework, legal authority over rights and legitimacy to resolve disputes. How then do we adapt our approaches to increasing people's security of tenure; ensuring that the rules and arrangements that make it possible for people to live on their land and use their property work well for the most vulnerable? Safeguarding HLP rights in customary settings can be part of proactive and preventative approaches that reduce harm and mitigate protection risks related to safe, secure and dignified shelter and housing, and access to land for food, agriculture and livelihoods.

Actors and activists from operations, policy and donor perspectives, including those working on development and peace, focused on exploring the value and significance of customary HLP actors in the allocation and management of housing, land and properties, for the protection of ecosystems and indigenous communities as part of this.

Climate change increasingly results in the displacement of local communities. Local communities living in customary settings have an increasingly important role to play in the mitigation of climate risks for the proactive protection of people and livelihoods.

Further efforts are needed to integrate HLP into thinking on prevention and proactive protection, and to do so in collaboration with nexus and solutions-oriented actors. Speakers advocated for this by reflecting on the benefits of a community-based approach, ensuring the development of management strategies that are context-specific,

socially acceptable, and ecologically sound, leading to long-term sustainability. Positive examples from field operations illustrated how to address this gap.

In Afghanistan's informal settlements, approaches that integrate HLP and climate, and put the community at the centre, have had positive impacts increasing tenure security and climate resilience. Securing HLP rights helps mitigate climate vulnerability by increasing household and settlement-level investment in climate-resilient housing and infrastructure.

In eastern Africa, the escalating menace of land degradation in rural areas called for a comprehensive climate change strategy that incorporates climate change interventions, such as wetland wise use planning, with the registration of land rights to tackle the ecological concerns and provide a robust solution for securing communal access points to natural resources.

In South Sudan, the HLP AoR has supported capacity development of communities on climate change and environment, including preventive actions such as flood mitigation strategies within the context of HLP. Awareness creation and information sessions aimed at encouraging communities to move to higher ground during the rainy season. Speakers also emphasised the importance of integrated approaches and synergies, working hand in hand with actors from clusters such as Shelter and Food Security. In Honduras, the protection of HLP rights by registering abandoned land and property is part of a strategy for preventing conflict and promoting longer-term solutions to forced displacement.

Across all these cases, careful planning and coordination is key – developing the right relationships to collaborate across clusters, sectors and different legal systems. Understanding the context is a crucial part of this process, as part of due diligence efforts to identify the relevant laws, rules, community approaches and impact of efforts on HLP. Overall, the session helped foster greater understanding and connection across clusters, sectors, operations and perspectives. This fits into wider efforts by the HLP AoR following requests from operational colleagues for more resources on working in customary HLP contexts, which should lead to hybrid and evolving frameworks on HLP.

SESSION 3

Community-led Approaches to Advance Prevention and Proactive Protection

Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam, AGED Burkina Faso, SIDA, READO Somalia, Apoyar Colombia, The Tenth of April Ukraine, GADHOP DR Congo, and Global Protection Cluster.

Emphasis has also often been placed on the role of external actors to provide support and assistance to affected communities when duty bearers are failing in

their responsibility to protect. However, the capacities of communities themselves in actively contributing to their own protection has often been less understood and less visible – not always appearing as part of formal funding strategies and response plans across the humanitarian sector, but nevertheless playing a vital role in supporting protection outcomes for those faced with crisis.

Over the past number of years this is however starting to shift, and protection actors have been seeking to really build on and advance the participation and leadership of communities. Local actors and communities must play a more prominent role in protection efforts to effectively reduce protection risks. A truly inclusive, community-led response is crucial.

This session demonstrated how community-led approaches offer a pathway for advancing prevention and response to protection risks by giving control of decisions and resources to community groups as agents of their own protection. Many community-based protection actors are the ones with the needed contextual knowledge, the relationships of trust with parties to the conflict and community members, as well as the proximity and access needed to support the protection in some of the most difficult operating environments.

In Ukraine, communities on the ground were the first one to deliver humanitarian assistance, organise evacuation, and welcome people in shelters. In Somalia, READO are documenting behaviour change in the community, with local leaders advocating to support a rights-based approach, and an increasing focus on addressing GBV. In DR Congo, information to the population on their rights during raising awareness sessions are organised with together with communities. Maps of services available are shared with communities, that can be used in case of protection needs.

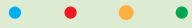
Community and local actors cannot and should not always have to do it alone and the broader sector, including international protection actors and allies, must support greater risk management and risk-sharing, amplifying, and accelerating impacts, as well as ensuring needed funding and resources are dedicated not only to response but also to preventing harm before it happens.

SESSION 4

Acting Before the Hour of Need: Prevention of Harm to Children in Humanitarian Settings

Global Child Protection Area of Responsibility, The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Plan International, Street Child UK, UNICEF, DG ECHO, and the German Federal Foreign Office.

Prevention plays a critical role in child protection in humanitarian action.



This session highlighted the importance of the lens shift required to effectively protect children from the devastating impact of humanitarian crises, conflict, and violence, stressing that much of this harm is preventable. Anticipatory action is also key in addressing the root causes of harm to children. UNICEF's [Child Protection Strategy for 2021-2030](#) places a strong emphasis on prevention. There is considerable focus on secondary and tertiary prevention, for example through case management, rather than primary prevention and we need to add this lens to our work to effectively prevent harm to children. Further investment in preventing harm to children at the population or sub-population level, in addition to responsive actions, is needed for humanitarians to fulfill their ethical duty to prevent harm when possible, to uphold the rights, including the best interests, of the child and to potentially be more cost-effective in our programming.

The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action shared their increasing body of work to develop tools, build awareness, and generate evidence, to support the uptake and prioritisation of the Primary Prevention Approach as a critical element of child protection across humanitarian action. This includes the development of core resources such as the ['Primary Prevention Framework for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action'](#) and ['Identifying and Ranking Risk and Protective Factors: A Brief Guide'](#) amongst others.

Plan International shared experience in piloting a primary prevention framework in South Sudan, highlighting the participatory approach adopted, the development of a monitoring plan, and the identification of key risk and protective factors in South Sudan and Niger.

Street Child UK emphasized the importance of engaging local organizations and understanding the root causes of violence and highlighted the significance of research into prevention mechanisms and the need to incorporate these strategies into ongoing and future programs. We cannot do prevention work without the community. They need to lead the assessment of the protection risks and the protective factors. We need to make the engagement meaningful. Community-based protection should not be only project-design, but should be part of a broader prevention strategy.

Donors also stressed the importance of evidence-based research, multi-sectoral approaches, and community involvement, also emphasizing the need for a continuum of care and sustained interventions in prevention. They also reflected on the challenges faced in engaging in prevention due to the short funding cycle. Furthermore, discussions emphasized the need for systemic changes in the way humanitarian work is done, stressing the importance of integration, coordination, and early prevention across the protection spectrum. Donors highlighted the need to implement prevention through capacity strengthening. They also flagged the importance of including children and young people in accountability procedures and creating safe spaces for their participation.

The session concluded with a focus on strengthening collaboration with other sectors on prevention and the importance of using language that facilitates cross-sectoral engagement. The participants agreed that prevention is a crucial element of child protection and broader humanitarian action, and that further efforts are needed to integrate preventive measures into humanitarian programs and policies.

SESSION 5

Proactive Engagement with Armed Actors to Reduce Violence and Protect Civilians

Overseas Development Institute, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Norwegian Refugee Council, and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

How do affected civilians engage with armed actors to protect themselves? This session considered different forms of proactive engagement with armed actors to enhance their responsiveness to community protection needs, reduce violence within their ranks, or support unarmed civilian protection efforts. It demystified the engagement with armed actors as an impossible feat or a compromise to one's security. Discussions reflected on the implications for protection and peace actors, and opportunities to strengthen complementarity between humanitarian and peace action.

Speakers from South Sudan highlighted the risks faced by youth, including forced involvement in criminal activities and lack of access to education, as well as the distrust between the community and the police. However, positive developments were also noted, such as the successful application of a strategy for dialogue and trust-building, and the formation of a community leadership for peace and stability, including Nonviolent Peaceforce's efforts to engage with the youth, build trust, promote peacebuilding activities, and train the police on unarmed civilian protection.

NRC shared experience with humanitarian mediation efforts in CAR, emphasizing the importance of sustained efforts in strengthening community capacities in mediation and conflict resolution. A new ODI case study report finds that communities in CAR often exercise considerable influence over armed groups. The report highlights that too often external interventions, including those from humanitarian protection actors, undermine and frustrate these community-level efforts. This calls for approaches that aim to reduce and prevent violence to build on existing community action and agency. To do this effectively, the report recommends the humanitarian protection actors work more in complementarity with peace actors and learn from their practice.

The importance of creativity, experimentation, and learning from each other in addressing complex issues related to violence was emphasised.

Overall, speakers highlighted the need for continued learning from the practitioners in the field, highlighting the importance of community-based protection, prevention of violence, and multi-year financing for effective humanitarian response. There is a need for a more coordinated effort between humanitarian, peacebuilding, and human rights actors to achieve common protection outcomes.

SESSION 6

Protecting Civilians from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas: Supporting National Action

OCHA, UNHCR, Article 36, Norwegian People's Aid, ICRC, Civilian Impact Monitoring Project in Yemen, and Iraqi lawyer, IDP and explosive weapons survivor.

As underlined by the [UN Secretary-General](#), the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) is a major cause of civilian harm in armed conflict. Nearly 90% of victims are civilians. Explosive weapons also damage or destroy civilian infrastructure, with reverberating effects on essential services such as water, sanitation, electricity and healthcare. Victims and survivors of explosive weapons can face longer-term challenges of disabilities and trauma. The devastating effects of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas are seen currently in Gaza, and have been documented in Ukraine, Iraq, Yemen, Syria and across many other contexts.

An ICRC [study](#) found that the use of EWIPA is a recurring feature of contemporary armed conflicts, and a major cause of civilian harm. In addition, it has serious implications under international humanitarian law. The study found that while civilian harm in urban warfare has many causes and compounding factors, a lot will come down to the choice and use of weapons and tactics by the parties to the conflict. Information collected for the study and other sources clearly point to a pattern of grave civilian harm when heavy explosive weapons are used in cities and other populated areas. The ICRC study concludes that a policy of avoidance with regards to the use of heavy explosive weapons is necessary and possible and provides many recommendations in this regard.

In a milestone achievement, on 18 November 2022, States adopted the EWIPA Political Declaration, which has been endorsed by 83 States. The Declaration includes a commitment to adopt and implement policies and practices to avoid civilian harm, including by restricting or refraining from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, where such weapons may be expected to cause civilian harm. The panel underlined that implementing the declaration now is paramount. The panel also spoke to the importance for more states to endorse the political declaration. Protection actors can play a key role in supporting its universalization and implementation. Speakers highlighted the humanitarian impacts of EWIPA use as witnessed by protection actors on the ground, including for humanitarian access, and the importance of working with communities to mitigate the risk of this harm. Insights were also shared on mechanisms

like the Civilian Impact Monitoring Project in Yemen that are serving to provide an operational picture to inform humanitarian programming, victim assistance and response in as close to real time as possible. Additionally, they serve as valuable tools for advocacy and trend analysis.

The Norwegian People's Aid shared examples of effective preparedness and protection strategies to raise awareness and help civilians protect themselves when explosive weapons are used. For example, utilizing social media platforms to disseminate safety messages during conflicts. Collaborating with local organizations has proven to be highly effective in empowering civilians with the tools and knowledge they need to be better prepared and protected against the use of explosive weapons.

The panel concluded with a poignant testimony from a lawyer who has personally endured forced displacement and disability as a result of explosive weapons use in Iraq. The speaker welcomed the adoption of the EWIPA Political Declaration and expressed hope for a transformative shift away from the current approach. His expectation is that the declaration will go beyond its initial steps and make substantial progress in significantly reducing harm to civilians.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Ensuring Age, Gender, Disability and Diversity in Preventive and Responsive Actions

Humanity & Inclusion, Protection Sector Syria, UN Women's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, CARE Afghanistan, LIDOSOM Somalia, HelpAge, Inclusion Ambassador Program Syria, and Inclusive Friend Association.

This roundtable discussion underscored the urgent call to safeguard vulnerable communities, especially those facing discrimination based on age, gender, disability, and diversity. The session explored inclusive and effective protection services in humanitarian contexts, featuring insights from five panelists who shared their experiences and best practices in applying an Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) approach.

The discussion addressed the importance of an AGD inclusion approach in humanitarian contexts. The subsequent panelists delved into topics such as rapid gender analysis, gender-responsive programming in Afghanistan, and proactive protection for persons with disabilities in Somalia and Nigeria. They also addressed the neglect of older people in humanitarian responses. The audience actively participated to share their insights and feedback, fostering an inclusive discussion.

The Q&A session provided an opportunity to engage with the panelists, generating insights and actionable recommendations, such as keeping this type of platforms for opportunities to share practical examples and sharing experience of inclusive response.

ACCESS THAT PROTECTS

The past year witnessed a further worsening of access constraints, a trend that has been increasingly evident in crisis contexts around the world. Such access constraints are having profound reverberations on protection actors' access to affected communities, and the access of those communities to humanitarian assistance and protection. The GPC recognizes the foundational role that access plays in enabling protection, and how protection actors can support strengthened access, and has therefore focused on advancing policy and practice change that further enables these linkages between access and protection. These efforts have included a campaign on Access that Protects, including with the publication of an [Agenda for Change](#) in collaboration with OCHA. In 2023, the GPC has been advancing collaboration with OCHA, Protection Clusters, Access Working Groups, the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) and other stakeholders to advance the recommendations put forward in the Agenda for Change and, ultimately, to move the needle on an access that provides the critical sustained and quality space for protection.

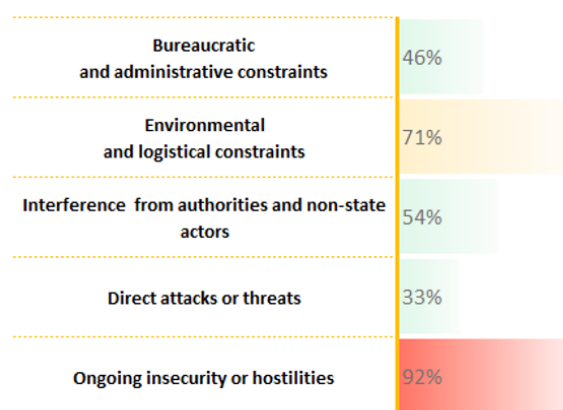
SITUATIONAL UPDATE

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 46% of operations. The situation deteriorated in 42% of operations: Afghanistan, Chad, DRC, Haiti, Honduras, Mali, Myanmar, South Sudan, OPT, and Sudan. The situation improved only in CAR, El Salvador, and Ethiopia.

BARRIERS



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
Colombia, Somalia, OPT	Afghanistan, Chad, Haiti, Honduras, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, South Sudan, Sudan	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, CAR, Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Venezuela, Ukraine, Yemen	El Salvador, Ethiopia	Nigeria

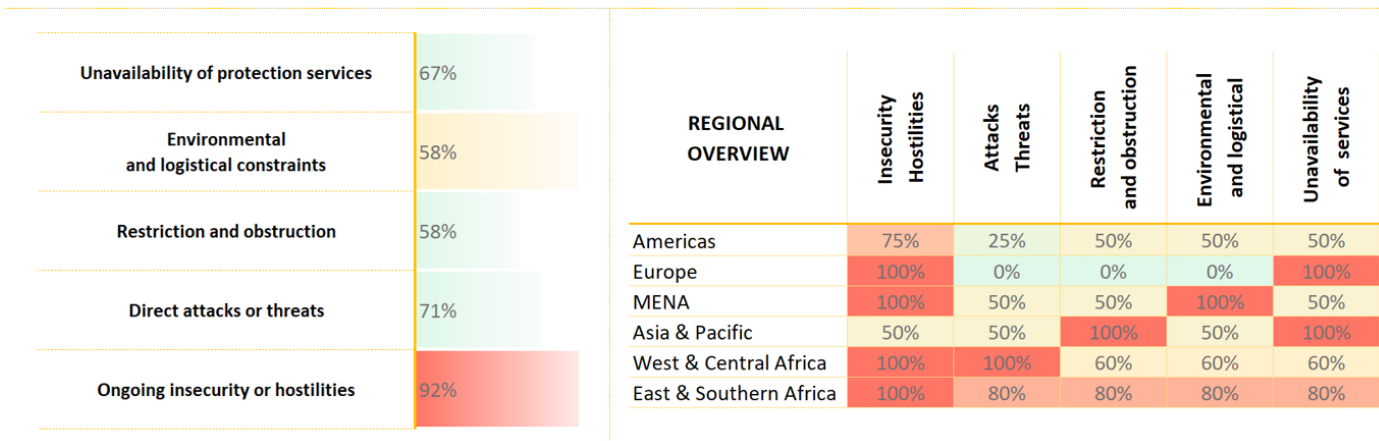
In September, 120 access-related incidents were recorded by OCHA across 12 states/regions in **Myanmar**, affecting the delivery of planned humanitarian assistance to approximately 277,000 people in need. Access to communities by protection actors has been heavily restricted in Tillabery, Diffa and Tahoua in **Niger** where military interventions have increased. Following the coup d'état and the closure of the borders between Niger and Benin, markets and the delivery of essential goods to meet the needs of vulnerable populations have also been affected. Administrative and bureaucratic impediments continue to hinder the delivery of protection services in **Sudan**. Access to areas close to the front line and under the temporary military control of the Russian Federation continue to be extremely challenging and severely limited in **Ukraine**.



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 50% of operations. The situation deteriorated in 42% of operations: Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Haiti, Honduras, Mali, Myanmar, oPt. South Sudan, and Sudan. The situation improved only in Ethiopia and CAR.

BARRIERS



SITUATIONAL UPDATE

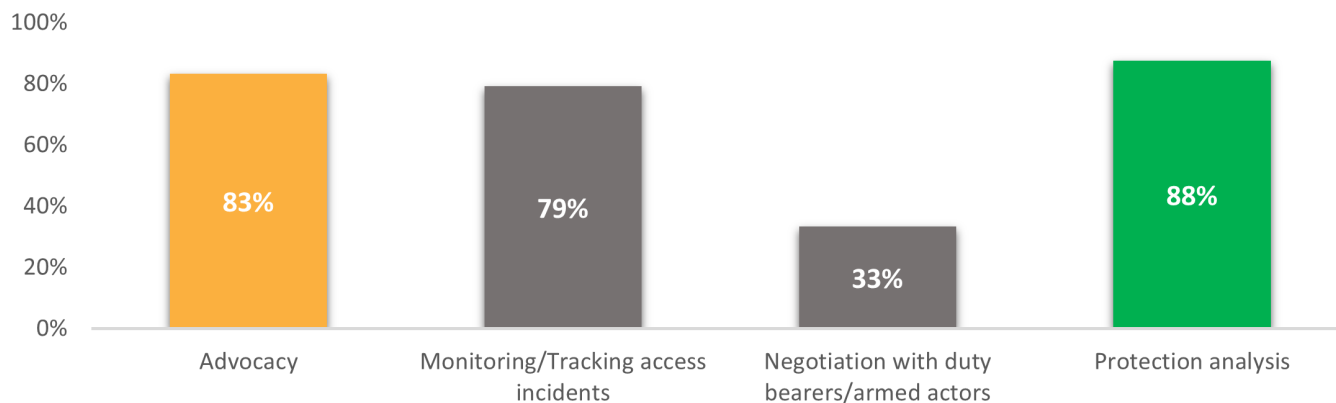
Approx. 25% or less	Between 25% and 50%	Between 50% and 75%
Somalia, South Sudan, OPT, Sudan	Afghanistan, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Colombia, Haiti, Honduras, Mali, Myanmar, Niger	Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, Yemen

Due to expansion of territory control and increase in armed violence in the department of Artibonite in **Haiti**, humanitarian access and access to protection services by the population has decreased. Public transport vehicles were frequently targeted in the communes of Estère, Liancourt and Petite Rivière de l'Artibonite.

AGENDA FOR CHANGE

PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS ON PROTECTION CLUSTER COMMITMENTS

During the reporting period, Protection Clusters advanced 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 (83%). Protection Clusters also encouraged their members to report access incidents through OCHA reporting system or other mechanisms in place at country level (79%), and supported negotiation efforts undertaken by its members, OCHA and/or HC/HCT (33%).



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 ⁸	PROTECTION CLUSTERS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN ACCESS WGs	PROTECTION CLUSTERS PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVE ACCESS WORKING GROUPS
91%	AFGHANISTAN, BURKINA FASO, CAMEROON, CAR, CHAD, COLOMBIA, DRC, ETHIOPIA, HAITI, MALI, MYANMAR, NIGER, NIGERIA, SOMALIA, SOUTH SUDAN, SUDAN, SYRIA, VENEZUELA, UKRAINE, YEMEN	87%

GOOD PRACTICE: STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF PROTECTION ACTORS TO UNDERTAKE NEGOTIATIONS FOR ACCESS AND PROTECTION

In line with the recommendations put forward in the Agenda for Change, throughout 2023 the GPC has contributed to strengthening its partners' capacity to negotiate access and protection. Among other initiatives, the GPC developed a partnership with the [Center of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation \(CCHN\)](#) - a joint initiative of UNHCR, ICRC, MSF Switzerland and WFP - to design and deliver negotiation trainings in support to Protection Cluster members and partners.

In October 2023, the GPC, together with the CCHN and UNHCR, organized several negotiation workshops which saw the participation of more than 70 Cluster members and supporters working in the Horn of Africa (particularly Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and South Sudan) as well Colombia.

These workshops allowed to apply the CCHN's broad expertise on humanitarian negotiation to real-life protection challenges. The participants reflected on the tension between ensuring the respect of humanitarian principles and norms and finding common ground with a range of counterparts including governments, armed groups, security forces, gangs, communities and other stakeholders. Ultimately, they strengthened their negotiation skills in support of protection outcomes for communities affected by crisis.

All CCHN trainings were based on experiential learning – in other words, on a combination of theory and practice that relies on the exchange of field expertise and on context-specific simulations and case studies.

Participants discussed how protection actors and the wider humanitarian community actively use negotiation strategies to diminish protection risks; this includes negotiating for access, for the delivery of protection programmes and specialized services, for the respect of the civilian and humanitarian nature of sites, and for reduced harm to civilians in armed conflict (e.g. the release of children recruited into armed groups and improved compliance with International Humanitarian Law).

Upon completing the workshop, all trainees became members of the CCHN “community of practice”: a global, growing network of some 7,000 frontline negotiators who exchange practices while benefitting from exclusive support and training opportunities offered by the CCHN. This also ensures the sustainability of the initiative and helps meet the evolving learning needs of participants.

Reflecting on the many valuable lessons learned through these trainings, the GPC, CCHN and UNHCR are committed to continue providing support and capacity building on protection negotiations to even more Protection Cluster members and partners in 2024.

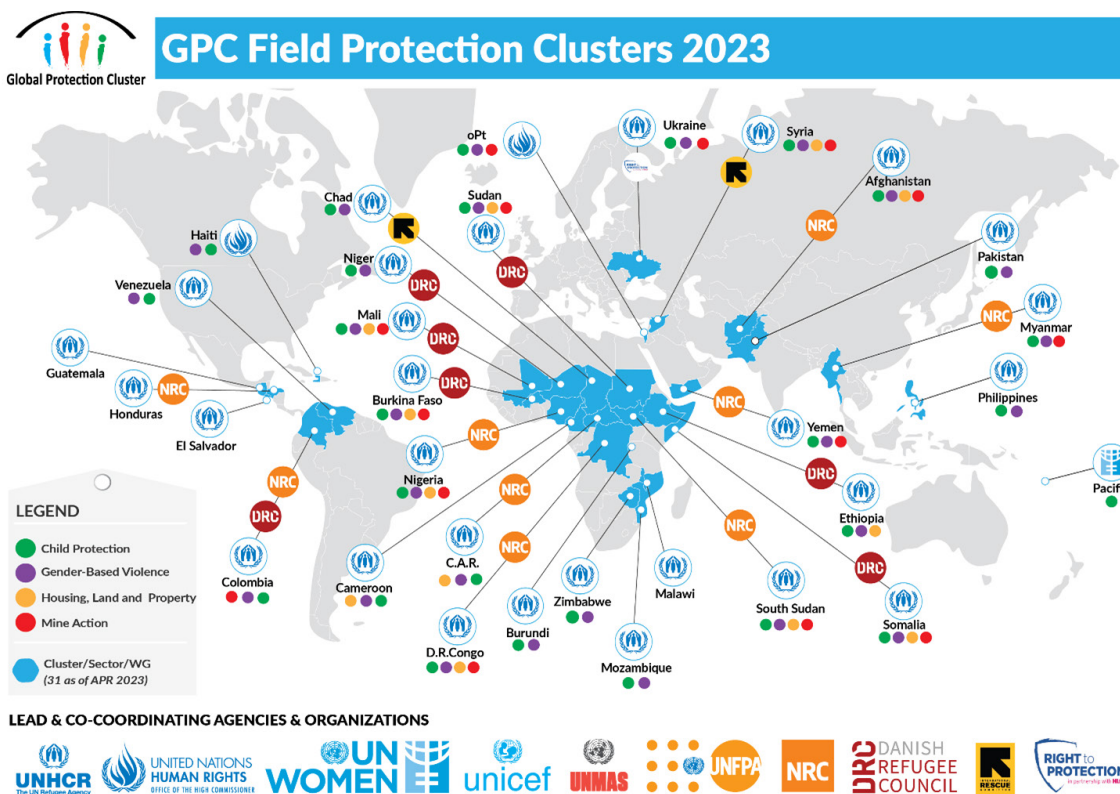
⁸The data refers to the operations reporting during the period cover by the GPU.



FIELD COORDINATION AND OPERATIONS

The Global Protection Cluster conducted its **annual funding data collection exercise** and published the report: [Protection Funding: Where do we Stand in 2023?](#) This year, 28 countries participated in this exercise, compared to 23 countries in 2022 and 12 countries in 2021, allowing for a more detailed analysis of the protection funding situation than ever before. The findings of the report were presented at the GPC Annual Donor Meeting, on 3rd October, which was co-chaired by Norway and widely attended by diverse donors in Geneva, including EU, US, UK, Switzerland, Sweden, Serbia, Norway, Australia, Laos, and Canada. The event was an opportunity to convey to donors and external stakeholders an up-to-date picture of the status of protection funding, and spotlight operational needs and requirements in real time.

Protection needs continue to grow at a steady pace, with 168 million people in need of protection in those 28 operations, representing an additional 30 million people (22%) in comparison to 2022, largely driven by the three scale-up emergencies in DRC, Haiti and Sudan, the worsening situations in Ukraine, Honduras and Burkina Faso, as well as continued high levels of needs in protracted crises like Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan. This year, protection actors have been at the forefront of a number of crises affecting the lives, dignity and rights of populations. However, most of cluster operations (23 out of 28, or 82%) still record less than 50% of the required funding – hampering an adequate protection response. National and local actors are recognised as the driving force of protection. 20% of the funding reported was operated by national and local partners in 2023, compared to 17% in 2022. It is also clear that community-led approaches offer a pathway for advancing prevention and response to protection risks by giving control of decisions and resources to community groups as agents of their own protection.



KEY FIGURES

REQUIREMENTS (US\$)

\$3.6_B

FUNDED (US\$)

\$1.4_B

PEOPLE IN NEED

168_M

TARGET

79_M

Source: GPC Annual Funding Report, 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				
	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.

