



Strengthening the collection and analysis of protection information for the Mosul emergency

Context

The Mosul emergency is primarily a protection crisis. Since the military offensive to retake Mosul started in October 2016, humanitarian partners have sought to reach people in need of assistance in areas of displacement and hard to reach areas. As the fighting was progressing, humanitarian actors increasingly reported serious threats to the safety and security of people fleeing hostilities and protection incidents in areas where assistance is being provided.

Objective and scope of the guidance note

In response to the deterioration of the protection environment, and in line with the IASC statement on the Centrality of Protection¹ as well as with Protection Cluster guidelines on the provision of humanitarian support at checkpoints or transit facilities in Iraq², **the Protection Cluster in Iraq is seeking to strengthen the collection and analysis of information received from humanitarian partners (protection and non-protection) responding to the Mosul emergency. This guidance note seeks to clarify the process through which the Protection Cluster will receive, analyse and follow up on protection information.**

In the receipt and analysis, the Protection Cluster and sub-clusters will be primarily guided by the following considerations:

- the physical safety and protection risks for affected populations
- the security of stakeholders reporting the information and of other humanitarian actors operational in the location
- the need to preserve access for humanitarian actors to areas of concern

The Protection Cluster recognises and values the complementary roles and mandates of all relevant actors involved in addressing protection concerns, such as the UNAMI Human Rights Office, the ICRC or human rights NGOs. While protection monitoring and human rights monitoring possess common elements including their focus on fundamental human rights, they differ in key aspects such as in terms of their primary purpose, and of their practical implementation. The primary purpose of protection monitoring is to facilitate and inform the humanitarian response so as to reduce threats and vulnerabilities and to increase the capacity of populations of concern.³

Within the Protection Cluster, the Ninewa Protection Working Group Coordinator is the focal point for the collection and management of protection information, as well as triggering follow up response and advocacy. **The usual protection reporting and coordination mechanisms in place in Ninewa will continue to apply and be supported by this effort.**

Information management and protection

- Confidentiality: incidents shared through this mechanism will only be accessible by Protection Cluster/sub-clusters staff who are experienced in dealing with sensitive protection information.
- The information will be entered in a password-secured database only accessible by Protection Cluster/sub-clusters staff and will be used to determine trends of protection risks per location or per type. It will not be used for individual case management or operational response to the incidents affecting individuals.
- An analysis of trends will be shared with the humanitarian community to inform wider response, including potential advocacy.
- Only non-identifying information will be used
- Any information about incidents reported will only be shared with prior consent of the partner providing inputs
- Ninewa PWG/CPWG coordinator / co-coordinator will determine the most appropriate follow up action and

¹ The Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action Statement by the InterAgency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals Endorsed by the IASC Principals on 17 December 2013 : « *Humanitarians are unarmed and are morally committed to respect for international law – those engaging in abuses, on the other hand, do not place restraints on their behaviour. For this reason, presence will not always prevent violations.(...) The presence of international witnesses who fail to act may be taken as a sign of acceptance of violations and may further embolden perpetrators, thereby further increasing risk. It is critically important that would-be perpetrators are aware that some action will be taken when they violate the law.* »

² Protection Cluster guidelines on « Access to safety and criteria for provision of humanitarian support for persons at checkpoints or transit facilities », which provides that « Any humanitarian engagement at checkpoints / transit facilities should be coupled with advocacy efforts to protect and promote the rights of the people in need. »

³ See also Protection Cluster Guidance - Screening Sites and Related Facilities, Iraq, January 2017



prioritize protection issues / incidents for trends analysis.

- While the Protection Cluster is seeking through this mechanism to improve its ability to respond to protection concerns, it will not be able to immediately address all reported protection concerns.
- This effort is not a human rights violation investigation mechanism and does not seek to replace the UNAMI Human Rights Office mechanism

Guiding principles

- **Do No Harm:** Be careful not to cause further distress
- **Respect confidentiality:** do not take or share information/ photo of the location and the persons affected. Sharing of such reports or pictures on widely available forum, e.g. on skype groups, or non-protection coordination meetings attended by non-protection staff is highly discouraged.
- **Adhere to humanitarian principles:** impartiality, neutrality, independence, humanity
- **Do not probe or try to investigate:** just report what you observed or information that has been voluntarily shared
- **Be prepared to provide information of the IDP call center**

Information should come through **direct observation** or reported by affected individuals.

The level of details provided by partners in their reports should be based on their assessment of risks and concerns for affected persons, humanitarian staff involved, and humanitarian access. If deemed safe, details should include:

- ✓ Date and time of the protection incident
- ✓ Location (governorate, district, city/village, neighbourhood)
- ✓ Description of affected individuals / groups (i.e. number of individuals affected, gender, age group, IDPs/host communities/returnees, area of origin and last displacement, onward destination – if applicable).
- ✓ Information on security / military forces in control of the area, if applicable and possible to obtain
- ✓ Description of the incident
- ✓ Type of source: direct observation or by report by affected individuals

Possible reported incidents might include:

- ✓ Incidents that may amount to violation of International Humanitarian Law
- ✓ Diversion of aid by local authorities or armed actors (e.g. who request to get a portion of assistance)
- ✓ Occupation of schools and hospitals by armed actors
- ✓ Children engaged with armed actors/forces
- ✓ Children who are unaccompanied (without any caregiver/guardian)
- ✓ Verbal or physical abuse of civilians (including detainees) by armed actors
- ✓ Denial of access to safety (e.g. if armed groups do not allow civilians to leave a dangerous location)
- ✓ Lack of access to services (e.g. when water tanks are empty, or clinics do not have doctors / drugs)
- ✓ Denial of humanitarian or life-saving assistance (e.g. if armed groups or local authorities do not allow civilians to receive assistance or to move to a location where assistance is being provided)
- ✓ Forced return or denial of the right to return (when local authorities or armed actors force individuals to return or do not allow individuals to return to their homes)
- ✓ Forced recruitment (for instance when armed actors recruit people in their armed group)
- ✓ Detentions raising concerns: detention of minors, lack of information provided to the family of arrested individuals, mistreatment of arrested individuals

For protection partners including Child Protection, GBV and HLP sub clusters: protection cluster/sub clusters partners (NGOs and UN agencies) should continue sharing information on protection concerns or incidents through their usual mechanisms:

- during Ninewa PWG/CPWG meeting
- by email or verbally with the Ninewa PWG/CPWG coordinator / co-coordinator

For all other clusters' partners: humanitarian partners (NGOs and UN agencies) can share information on protection concerns or incidents to the following email address: NPWG@unhcr.org⁴. Inputs can also be shared verbally with the Ninewa PWG coordinator / co-coordinator.

⁴ As protection partners have existing reporting mechanisms for sharing information on protection incidents through Ninewa Ninewa PWG/CPWG coordinator / co-coordinator, as described in the para above, this format may not be applicable to them, however there is no bar for them to report through the generic email address if they consider appropriate.