

ANNEX III

IRAQ HUMANITARIAN COUNTRY TEAM

Internally Displaced Persons:

Policy update on establishment and management of camps and camp-like settings for IDPs

February 2015

Introduction

1. This update of the 2014 HCT “Policy on the Establishment and Management of IDP Camps” has been prepared by the Protection Cluster following developments with regard to the choice of camp locations and related protection concerns. The update is informed by relevant policies and guidance, including *title 10 on ‘Accountability of sector/cluster leads to the Humanitarian Coordinator’* enshrined in the *2006 IASC Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Approach*, and the Global Protection Cluster’s tool on protection mainstreaming in Camp Coordination Camp Management (CCCM) programmes dated May 2014.

Purpose and scope

2. In 2014, prior to the activation of all clusters in Iraq, the UN Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) adopted a “policy on the establishment and management of camps for IDPs in Iraq” (attached hereto), encompassing minimum standards for the establishment of camps, as a temporary measure and one of last resort. The policies in this paper supersede those in the 2014 HCT policies.

3. Recently, the HCT has received information about plans for the possible creation of IDP camps in areas close to places of origin of IDPs. These locations may include areas in proximity to frontlines, military posts and/or close to areas contaminated with mines and IEDs. Additionally, other sites may be close to active oil pipelines or in locations where water may be insufficient for both the displaced and host communities thereby risking inter-community tensions and conflicts. Furthermore, many areas of origin, including those recently liberated, have limited accessibility for humanitarian organizations, given the overall security situation and large-scale destruction of houses and infrastructure.

4. Against this background, the HCT is aware of cases whereby humanitarian actors operating outside the cluster coordination framework are, or plan to be, involved in the establishment of camp or camp-like settings in potentially unsuitable locations.

5. For these reasons, the HCT hereby updates its 2014 position.

HCT Policy on Establishment and Management of IDP Camps and Camp-like Settings

6. The HCT believes that camps and camp-like settings should only be established as a temporary measure and one of last resort. Should, however, the authorities decide to establish camps or camp-like settings, the following should be observed:

- a) Camps and camp-like settings should be humanitarian and civilian in character;
- b) Camps and camp-like settings should be temporary, and established with a clear medium to long term solution-oriented strategy in mind, that also takes into consideration all durable solutions available to IDPs, including the principle of voluntary return to places of origin once conditions allow;
- c) Camps and camp-like settings should meet standards for distance from borders, conflict frontlines and boundary lines, and should be located where security to the displaced and the humanitarian workers can be provided to facilitate effective delivery of protection and humanitarian aid;
- d) If the circumstances of existing camp or camp-like setting change such that the residents become at risk due to, for example, shifting conflict lines or the resident population exceeds capacity, mitigating measures should be taken to reduce the risks, including reorganization or relocation as necessary.
- e) Safety risks associated with landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) should be taken into consideration whenever planning camp and camp-like settings;
- f) Establishment of camps should not lead to encampment policies for IDPs violating IDPs right to freedom of movement;
- g) The risks affecting boys, girls, men and women in their daily activities should be considered and mitigated whenever possible, including of physical abuse and violence, Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), exposure to forced recruitment and exploitation;
- h) In line with the Accountability to Affected Populations Operational framework, women, men, girls and boys from all communities (displaced, host and conflict- affected) and, in particularly, persons with specific needs, should be fully involved in decisions relating to their situation, such as the development of camp/site policy, management;
- i) Camps and camp-like settings should be located near urban or semi-urban centers so as to allow for access to existing health care centers, markets, schools and other public services as well as where possible, employment opportunities;
- j) Camp management structures, security, basic services and infrastructure should be established prior to IDPs taking up residency and should be informed by gender and dignity risk analysis;

- k) Shelters and services should be cost effective, culturally appropriate, and safe for men, women, girls and boys, including for female headed-houses, people with disabilities and other people with specific needs;
- l) Camp management authorities should actively engage with host communities to promote community cohesion and peaceful co-existence. Where tensions exist within camp communities, or between camps and the host community, the camp management authorities should exercise particular caution in planning any expansion of camps or changes in the composition of the camp's community;
- m) Protection of minority groups requires particular attention. All residents of the camp should enjoy equal access to rights and services without any discrimination on grounds of ethnicity, religion, sex, place of origin, age, or disability;
- n) Based on the total number of IDPs planned for the camp and the estimated breakdown per age, gender and diversity, the lay out of the camp and camp-like settings should integrate child/youth friendly spaces and play grounds, community centers, legal advice center, school, health facilities and information points; and
- o) The humanitarian community along with the national and local authorities should endeavor to equalize the type and quality of services available in the camps across Iraq so that the provision of services is equal to all. The uneven presence and quality of services can lead to unfair treatment and perceptions of discrimination.

7. The HCT will take principled decisions regarding the suitability of camp locations and on a case by case basis determine its willingness and ability to provide services in any camp established by the authorities in an area that creates protection risks for the camp's residents. The HCT is guided by the "do no harm" principle in its decision-making and will take into account internationally accepted standards (legal, protection and SPHERE standards) related to camp establishment, including security, access, environmental impact.

8. UN agencies and NGOs should not assume responsibility for camp management, in general. In partnership with the responsible national authorities, international and national humanitarian actors should provide technical support, life-saving relief assistance and essential services. The technical support should include training and capacity building of national authorities in camp management and camp coordination, including in protection and gender awareness issues, as well as in planning, monitoring and evaluating the humanitarian response. The technical support should also ensure that a gender sensitive and rights-based approach is applied to all activities implemented in the camp.

9. The HC/HCT calls upon Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) members to maintain an open and regular dialogue, as well as to coordinate to the extent possible with humanitarian actors that presently operate outside the cluster framework, before, during and after displacement. Such actors shall be invited to work and coordinate with the clusters.

10. The HC/HCT will continue to support the ICCG members' synergies with non-cluster humanitarian actors in line with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.

11. The ICCG and National Protection Cluster will continue to update the HC/HCT on developments in this area.