



Visioning and Strategic Retreat, Protection Sector Working Group: Nigeria

Conclusions, Recommendations and Follow-up Actions

6-7 August 2015

Abuja, Nigeria

Context

There is a growing belief that the humanitarian response system is, if not broken, then stretched to breaking point. Humanitarians are asked to respond to an ever growing list of problems in multiple crises with static funding. The protection of human rights in emergency situations is seen as particularly problematic. The Report of the Sri Lanka Panel revealed deficiencies in humanitarian action when confronted with a strong government with a clear agenda and unclear mission goals by the HCT. This led to the UN initiative called Human Rights Up Front, which makes clear the responsibilities on RC/HCs and UNCTs to ensure human rights considerations are at the forefront of engagement with Member States, including in humanitarian action. At the end of 2013, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee adopted a statement on the centrality of protection in humanitarian action, i.e. that the purpose of response is to protect the human rights of affected people. The independent Whole of System Review of protection, commissioned by the IASC, reported in May 2015. It identified major deficiencies, including in the understanding of protection, the engagement of local actors and non-traditional humanitarian actors, and an “analysis gap”, whereby humanitarian actors are not correctly understanding the situation around them. Nigeria faces these problems.



Deliberation among participants during the retreat. 7 August 2015 Solomon Momoh
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The security situation in North East Nigeria remains dynamic and fluid. In the past 12 months, conflict trends in the North East have changed. The ongoing insurgency and counter-insurgency measures have immense impact particularly on the most vulnerable civilian population. Protection monitoring exercise reveals grave violations of children’s rights, including abduction, forced recruitment into armed groups, attacks on

schools and hospitals, sexual violence, abuse/exploitation/neglect, a lack of prevention measures in place and limited response services available for victims. Women and girls are vulnerable to rape, sexual abuse and exploitation during conflict and displacement. Among those who are internally displaced, the majority of the IDPs remain within host communities. The resources and the capacity of local communities to show solidarity and assistance to IDPs is under a considerable strain. Humanitarian face significant challenges in having full access to civilians who had been kidnaped and held hostage by insurgents to provide the necessary response. There are concerns regarding abuse and exploitation of IDPs by security forces and youth/vigilante groups.

The PSWG has made strong contributions towards a robust coordination of protection delivery and provision of crucial strategic guidance to the HCT and other sectors. In line with PSWG protection

strategy and action plan, members continue to carry out operational interventions. At a strategic level the PSWG was also able to provide strong leadership in guiding the HCT to develop the PSWG Recommendations to the HCT on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees in Nigeria. It has also developed an operational checklist on return which aims to provide guidance for humanitarians and authorities when faced with some controversial and complex issues such as determination of voluntariness of return, establishing minimum levels of security and ensuring effective level of participation by IDPs.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned achievements, the PSWG however continues to face the following major challenges:

- A large number of conflict affected populations are in insecure locations, making it difficult for PSWG members to immediately address protection needs of particularly vulnerable IDPs.
- Insecurity and volatile security situation which has increasingly confounded by Boko Haram intensified attacks in major towns, engaging security forces in serious battles.
- Insufficient immediate, medium term and long term support to address the impact of trauma and physical violence on immediate survivors and secondary victims, including unwanted pregnancies and associated stigma to enhance reintegration into communities/ families.
- Limited presence of operational actors in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe which has hindered the identification of and response to the needs of children at risk and SGBV survivors.
- Absence of effective civil-military coordination mechanism.

Scope and Objective



NRC Emergency Response Team Leader Kate Norton, UNHCR Representative Angele Dikongue-Atangana, Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator Munir Safieldin, DFID Humanitarian Advisor Nicola Dahrendorf and GPC Senior Protection Coordinator Simon Russell discussing the centrality of protection. 6 August 2015
Solomon Momoh ©UHNCR

The PSWG's two-day retreat, held between 6 and 7 August 2015, was aimed at carrying out a strategic-level discussion on protection with senior members of the HCT and cluster-leads to ensure the humanitarian response is holistic, making sure response is based on need and is not supply-driven. It was aimed at being strategic and overarching and at the same time conducting a focused deliberation on a range of operational protection issues with its members, Sub-Working Groups on Child Protection and SGBV and State-level PSWGs. A small informal planning group constituting OCHA, the Norwegian Refugee Council, UNFPA, the National Human Rights Commission, Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution and UNICEF-Child Protection supported the planning of the retreat. The retreat was co-facilitated under the coordination responsibilities of NHRC and UNHCR. UNHCR provided the full funding for the exercise.

The agenda of the retreat involved discussion on the following topics:¹

- Centrality of protection and mainstreaming.
- PSWG protection strategy, the work plan and implementation.
- Funding, capacity building and trainings.
- Linkage with Sub-Working Groups and State-level PSWGs.
- Accountability to affected population.

The high-level segment discussion on centrality of protection featured a panel of the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator, the Representative of UNHCR, the Emergency Response Team Leader for NRC and the Humanitarian Advisor for DFID. Representatives of leads of the main sectors and coordinators of field-based PSWGs and INGOS from Adamawa, Borno, Gombe and Bauchi participated in the retreat, contributing to a rich deliberation on the various aspects of the field-level protection landscape, coordination and capacity.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Follow-up Action

Development and contribution towards the implementation of an overarching protection strategy

- ✚ PSWG to support the HCT in a robust data analysis on vulnerabilities of affected population in Nigeria, how this is reflected in number and understanding of trends, harmonization, etc; multiplicity of sources and issues around the comprehensive nature of the statistics **[Action by: All members of PSWG]**.
- ✚ Advocate for and establish a regular stand-alone agenda item on protection by the HCT in order to raise strategic protection issues as well as regular protection-specific briefing for the donors **[Action by: Coordinators with OCHA]**.
- ✚ Provide regular and sustained briefings on emerging and urgent protection issues to the HC.



Retreat participants during a presentation. 6 August 2015 Solomon Momoh
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PSWG Protection Strategy

- ✚ Engage in regular and concerted effort to facilitate “simpler to understand” notions of protection **[Action by: All members of PSWG]**.
- ✚ Revisit the PSWG TOR and Protection Strategy in line with the current discussions (regarding information management and data analysis engendering common understanding of issues and focus of action with strategic focus) **[Action by: Small ad hoc PSWG group]**.
- ✚ Support the development of framework for civil-military coordination **[Action by: OCHA]**.

¹ See Annex I for the annotated Agenda of the Retreat.

- ✦ Develop a strong capacity within PSWG on conflict and protection analysis **[Action by: Small ad hoc PSWG group, NRC]**.

Lead and ensure effective protection mainstreaming

- ✦ Encourages bilateral meetings and sector participation in other sector meetings **[Action by: All members of PSWG, Coordinators and OCHA]**.
- ✦ Provide training on protection mainstreaming **[Action by: All members of PSWG]**.
- ✦ Effectively participate in the HNO process to work with other sectors to address common issues **[Action by: All members of PSWG, OCHA]**.

Fund raising

- ✦ Conduct regular briefings, exchanges of information and discussions of priorities with donors **[Action by: Coordinators and other PSWG members as appropriate]**.
- ✦ Request donor funding for PSWG capacity for field-level data collection, analysis, IM strategy development and production of protection and advocacy products **[Action by: Coordinators and other members of PSWG as appropriate]**.
- ✦ Support and actively participate in PSWG fund raising activities to encourage more actors to fund raise for protection **[Action by: Coordinators and other members of PSWG as appropriate]**.

Protection Monitoring

- ✦ Protection monitoring data for individual cases of protection abuses should be refined when getting updated case information from referral agencies **[Action by: UNHCR, NHRC, Sub-Sectors]**.
- ✦ Strengthening of referral system starting with mapping of services and operationalization of referral guidelines **[Action by: UNHCR, NHRC, Sub-sectors]**.
- ✦ Issue of potential double counting in protection monitoring should be analyzed and, if necessary, addressed **[Action by UNHCR, NHRC and Sub-sectors]**.
- ✦ Protection monitors should seek to strengthen their collaboration with humanitarian actors on the ground **[Action by: All members of PSWG]**.
- ✦ Organize a separate meeting to give key actors and stakeholders who will use the information from protection monitoring a more detailed understanding of the collection and collation of data **[Action by: UNHCR and NHRC]**.
- ✦ Ensure complementarity between protection monitoring system and other actors who are on the ground **[Action by: All members of PSWG]**.

Protection Advocacy

- ✦ PSWG members should work towards ensuring that the protection strategy is refined by identifying the following key areas of interventions **[Action by: Task Team on Law and Policy & all members of PSWG]**:
 - a. Domestication of the Kampala Convention and development of legal and policy framework on internal displacement.
 - b. Strengthening of capacity of key humanitarian actors.

- ✦ Advocate for the application of the Checklist Operationalizing the PSWG Recommendations on Returns by other sectors **[Action by: Coordinators]**.
- ✦ Map the capacity of government counterparts to conduct “internal advocacy” within the government bureaucracy **[Action by: All PSWG members, NHRC]**.
- ✦ Advocate for and promote the operationalization of humanitarian principles **[Action by: All PSWG members]**.

Accountability to Affected Populations

- ✦ Need for sensitization/dissemination of **code of conduct** for local staff of implementing partner organizations on how IDPS should be treated **[Action by: Ad hoc advocacy group to be constituted]**.
- ✦ PSWG to carry out advocacy and increase awareness with beneficiaries to ensure that **response centers should be as close to beneficiaries as possible** where they are to avoid perception that some of the centers are “interrogation centers.” **[Action by: All PSWG members]**.

CP SWG, SGBV SWG and State-level PSWGs

- ✦ Undertake analysis of actual and potential capacity of protection actors **[Action by: Sector or Sub-Sector leads]**.
- ✦ Development of SOPs to address protection issues concerning civilians rescued from insurgents **[Action by: All PSWG members]**.
- ✦ Establish M&E frameworks for measuring effectiveness of intervention primarily relating to access to basic services **[Action by: Coordinators]**.
- ✦ Disseminate documents and tools developed by National PSWG with State-level PSWGs and also encourage two-way communication by feeding to PSWG regular updates on achievements and challenges faced by State-level PSWGs. **[Action by: Coordinators]**.