



Global Protection Cluster/ Child Protection AoR Mission Report

31st August – 6th September 2016

Participants:

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A. Background

The conflict in northeast Nigeria has led to widespread displacement and rapid deterioration in the humanitarian situation. The advancing military campaign by Government forces (in cooperation with the Multi-National Joint Task Force) against Boko Haram has in recent weeks/months exposed great suffering among the population. As of August 2016, just over 1.8 million individuals were displaced in the northeast of the country, with close to 190,000 Nigerian refugees in neighboring countries of Niger, Cameroon and Chad. 2,000,000 civilians remain trapped in conflict areas or inaccessible parts of the north-eastern part of the country. Among those who are internally displaced (mostly children and women), the majority of the IDPs remain within host communities but the resources and the capacity of local communities to show solidarity and assistance to IDPs is under a considerable strain.

As shown by series of rapid protection assessments carried out by UN agencies and international NGOs, Nigeria continues to face a severe protection crisis, with Boko Haram insurgency and counter-insurgency measures in the North East resulting in chronic insecurity and endemic violations of human rights and humanitarian standards exacerbating the plight of vulnerable civilians and triggering waves of forced displacement.

To reinforce the coordination mechanism as a result of Cluster activation¹ and the internal L3 declaration of several agencies including UNICEF, IOM and UNHCR, a week long joint mission of the Global Protection (UNHCR), and the Child Protection (UNICEF) Area of Responsibility (AoR) was deployed in Nigeria.

Protection Sector Coordination

The Protection Sector Working Group (PSWG), co-led by UNHCR and the National Human Rights Commission at the federal level, was set up at the National level in 2012 to strengthen coordination. PSWG pre-existed all coordination structure and was initially established to coordinate protection. In 2014, the need to strengthen the coordination of the protection sector was heightened, as the insurgency and counter insurgency activities widened in scope and increased in intensity, in the three North East States of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa. At State-level, the PSWG in Borno state was established in July 2015 with the local Ministry of Women and Social Affairs as the lead, and UNHCR as co-lead.

In 2015, the PSWG established the Child Protection Sub-Working group (CPSWG), co-led by UNICEF and the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, and the SGBV Sub-Working Group, co-led by UNFPA and the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development were activated. In the context of returns, a sub-working group on Land and Property Rights is in the process of being established by NRC.

¹ At the time of writing, the Government of Nigeria had not responded positively to the request of a system wide L3 activation thus while from an international humanitarian perspective, the coordination model is represented by a cluster-like situation, the politically correct reference remains that of “sectors”.



B. Mission Activities

Several **meetings** were held in **Abuja** with the following interlocutors:

- Deputy Resident Coordinator (actual OIC Humanitarian Coordinator)
- UNOCHA Head of Office, Abuja
- The UNHCR Representative, Protection Cluster Coordinator, Protection Officers, Program Officer and Information Management Officer
- The Training Officer, Director and Deputy Directors of Relief and Rehabilitation, NEMA and the acting HC and the Head of Office of UNOCHA
- The UNICEF Chief Child Protection and Protection Coordinator for Borno State.
- Child Protection Sub-Working group
- Nigerian National Human Right Commission
- A joint meeting with ECHO, OFDA, and DFID

In **Maiduguri**, **meetings** were held with:

- Members of the Protection Clusters/Sectors including DRC, NRC, CRS, Premiere Urgence, IRC, Concern, Plan International, ICRC, IOM, Action Aid, Care for Life, Center for Community Health Development, COOPI, Ekkliyyar Yan'uwa A Nigeria, IMC, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Mercy Corps, Nigerian Bar Association, Women in New Nigeria, INTERSOS, ,
- Heads of UN agencies (WFP, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNHCR)
- UNOCHA
- Ministry of Women and social development
- NEMA

Field visits:

Two camps were visited: NYSC (National Youth Service Corps) and Muna garage as well as two host communities, Madinatu and New Prison.

C. Methodology

A mixed coordination needs assessment methodology using key informant interviews and direct observations was employed to elicit the information required for the mission.

The UNHCR offices in Abuja and Maiduguri were instrumental in setting up briefings/meetings and engaging with several key informants from agencies and organizations as enumerated above. In addition visits to host community and formal and informal camp sites were also undertaken where key observations were made as well as engaging with key beneficiary informants.

D. Coordination Environment

As part of improving coordination at the national and regional, the coordination and operation presence of main agencies (including UNOCHA) and partners has shifted from Abuja to Maiduguri in Borno State with the HC being based in Maiduguri. Most agencies leads are sending experienced emergency coordinators to lead the sectors. The Government of Nigeria is represented by both NEMA and SEMA at Borno state level but the absence of a centralized coordination mechanism remains a challenge. Discussions are in place to integrate existing coordination platforms into the new Borno-centered coordination structure to enhance complementarity and avoid parallel coordination forums at federal and provincial level.

Coordinating an expanding humanitarian response, while making sure it remains led by national government and non-government agencies is a priority for UNOCHA. Coordination with the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) has been raised as a key issue. To this end, UNOCHA drafted and circulated a coordination model similar to that of a regular UNOCHA led cluster system however with some concerning aspects that remain to be further discussed such as the creation of a separate "community engagement" working group as an expansion of the Communication with Communities (CWC) working group found in other contexts.



The Cash working group requires further integration with the clusters. In recent months there have been significant developments in terms of data collection and analysis. The UN and the EU collaborated in carrying out one of the most comprehensive assessments in the North East in the country since the insurgency. Data collection remains a top priority as the foundation for good analysis and evidence-based response. The two rounds of UNHCR's Vulnerability Screening were instrumental in identifying the most vulnerable population in six states. In addition to the Vulnerability Screening, UNHCR and partners have continued to carry several useful exercises such as protection monitoring, registration of refugee returnees and rapid protection assessments. The results of these activities have been shared with humanitarian actors.

OCHA has established an IM Group with representatives of all sectors, so accurate and comprehensive disaggregated data is widely available. In spite of the good efforts of some agencies –in particular UNHCR Protection Monitoring and Vulnerability assessments and IOM's DTM - more is required to conduct a detailed profiling and needs assessments in the IDP population. This is particularly so in light of the continued movement of IDPs in and out of camps. Moreover a clear modality should be crafted so that the complementarity of the DTM and the Vulnerability Screening is further strengthened.

UNICEF as lead agency for child protection has established a strong working relationship with the Ministry of Women and Social Development Affairs. Senior officers from both the National and the state level are present in all Child Protection WG coordination meetings.

Although coordination of the humanitarian response remains critical, discussions on an early recovery and development transition are already in place. Several Local Government Areas (LGAs) where return is taking place have a presence of some organizations that have started operations and the need for coordination with development actors and the government has been specifically discussed

Regarding Protection, more than 29 NGOS/Agencies implement protection activities in the North East.

E. Recent Operational Environment

According to the latest DTM Round XI as at August 2016, there are now 1,878,205 conflict displaced persons in 303,469 families in the Northeastern Nigeria. Borno state continues to host the most IDPs with 77% of the displaced population. 81% of the population are living in host families with 14% in camp and camp like settings.

The Nigerian army continues to liberate more areas previously under the control of Boko Haram and some 17/27 LGAs in Borno State have come under Government control over the past months liberating some 752,000 individuals in very poor condition.

F. Protection findings and recommendations:

- 1) Notwithstanding the complexity of the a crisis with its multiplicity of actors-, the dynamic within the Protection Sector Working Group and between the HCT, NEMA and SEMA and other sectors is constructive, positive and action-oriented. Of particular note is the focus of the PSWG on information gathering (in difficult circumstances and with limited access to LGAs), protection analysis and advocacy. With this focus, the PSWG is able to produce helpful information products to inform the overall humanitarian response. During the mission, the PSWG was consistently acknowledged for its analysis, particularly the production of protection reports on a monthly basis, protection assessments, dashboards, intention of return surveys and vulnerability screenings. According to the Resident Coordinator, the information shared by the PSWG, has been crucial to inform HCT priorities and to facilitate a shared understanding of the protection situation and opportunities for complementarity in responses with other sectors at the Inter Sector Working Group (ISWG). He also praised UNHCR's leadership in ensuring that the HCT has strategic protection priorities. Examples of such action were the development of HCT framework on return and other strategic interventions mentioned below.



- 2) The inclusion of a wide range of actors in the PSWG, from Governmental agencies INGOs and national NGOs to IDPS themselves, is a very impressive achievement and enables more comprehensive analysis and programming; The role of the National Human Rights Commission as the National co-lead of the PSWG, has been extremely important as they are a recognized entity in Nigeria, promoting human rights and advocating for protection. At provincial level, the Governmental Co-lead role was praised by the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development as an example of governmental/UN cooperation. The ongoing capacity building activities undertaken by the PSWG for governmental officials and security forces on humanitarian principles and international law (IHL, IHRL) was widely acknowledged and appreciated. The development of specific advocacy tools on return, security of camps and relocation was also flagged as essential. At the same time, however, despite important investments in capacity building, there is a high turnover in government and partner staff in the field – as such, this needs to be factored into the PSWG’s capacity building strategy.
- 3) There is a functional Child Protection coordination, with strong engagement both from government and humanitarian actors, however there is need for it to be strengthened for issues of concerns need to be more clearly stated and their relevance to the current context well documented.
- 4) In terms of enhancing the governmental capacity at regional level, the PSWG under UNHCR leadership was able to convene the first major regional protection dialogue in June 2016 that brought high-level government officials from Lake Chad Basin. The dialogue resulted in a regional protection action statement; which reinforced the regional nature of the crisis and the need to have regional framework for response. It also mobilized international support and created potential for more regional cooperation in addressing protection challenges arising from the conflict.
- 5) The PSWG was commended for its efforts to mobilize leadership on protection by the HCT. It prepared analysis and discussion, for example on the critical need to enhance security and protection in and around IDP Sites, Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons and Returnees in Nigeria and a Protection Strategy to ensure that protection remains central to the humanitarian response. Although the current PSWG protection strategy needs to be updated to reflect the latest developments it remains a valid framework for protection programming, strategic advocacy interventions and the bases for an HCT Strategy for Protection. Donors also emphasized how Protection remained an ongoing issue at the HCT agenda because of the strategic direction provided by the PSWG in the areas of forced displacement and freedom of movement in conflict, civil-military coordination and the civilian character of IDP hosting areas, persons with specific protection risks and comprehensive solutions.
- 6) A strong recommendation is made to assist the Humanitarian Coordinators to develop an overarching, comprehensive and humanitarian system-wide protection strategy in a manner that enhances the effectiveness and performance of country-level humanitarian responses addressing the most serious protection risks facing affected populations.
- 7) The multiplicity of stakeholders, each with their own perspective, interests, capacity and agenda presents a challenge to achieving a coherent protection programme since parallel coordination structures coexist at national/sub-national level, and outside the humanitarian architecture. A review of the operational protection coordination structure is recommended to prevent duplication of interventions whilst strengthening coordination. Coordination between Protection and Health cluster on MHPSS issues is an example: while MHPSS is under the health cluster, a number of protection actors provide psycho-social support and consider this as a key protection activity (Child Protection and GBV Sub-Working groups).



- 8) The PSWG objective of working with the government to develop, adopt and implement a legal and institutional framework for IDPs, consistent with the UN Guiding Principles and the Kampala Convention, was reinforced by a recent visit of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, Mr. Chaloka Beyani. Although the draft policy on IDPs has been in development for over 10 years, the PSWG should continue to offer/provide technical assistance to support the adoption of a policy framework for IDP protection. It can also call on the continued support of UNHCR Headquarters, the SR on IDPs and other key stakeholders for advocacy and training on IDP law and policy.
- 9) Concerning the sub-clusters Child Protection and GBV, they are integrated in the overall coordination and PSWG work-plan, bringing all the various elements of protection together in a coherent programme and having sufficient visibility into the analysis of the HNO and HRP. A referral pathway is in place between the different Sub-clusters and Sectors, although greater clarity is required among PSS services as they function across sectors. The need for a Mine Action Sub-working group is still under discussion, as mine-risk education is currently undertaken by Child Protection and the Early Recovery sector. Given the increased role of Mine Action in the return of IDPs to their homes and the potential presence of UXOs and IEDs, the creation of a Mine Action Sub-working group under the Protection Sector is strongly recommended. The ongoing creation of a HLP working group led by NRC is vital. All Sub-clusters need to develop Information Management (IM) products (e.g. returnee dashboard, year-end snapshot, protection monitoring report) and utilize the 5W reporting tool to map operational activities in coordination with the PSWG IM.
- 10) Serious security concerns are not only inhibiting access and, thereby, protection information gathering but also advocacy with and to the government and non-state actors about human rights; building capacity of local protection actors with access to key locations is critical. Additionally, enhancing local actors' capacity will grow the understanding of protection in humanitarian action and will improve the delivery and sustainability of protection interventions.
- 11) It is suggested that the PSWG disseminate the "Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations In The Humanitarian Programme Cycle", a preliminary guidance note developed in 2015 by the EDG, to provide practical guidance to HCs and HCTs, to ensure that accountability to affected populations (AAP) and protection are embedded throughout the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC).
- 12) The low levels of funding of the Protection sector are a tangible sign that despite all the impressive efforts undertaken by the PSWG, Protection remains a challenging sector. Although one of the explanations shared was the lack of understanding of the humanitarian programme cycle of some local NGOs, more advocacy is needed for funding for protection. The PSWG needs to articulate what is "life-saving": physical, legal and material activities of the sector and alongside a clear explanation of protection mainstreaming in practice. Also, the PSWG can promote and results-oriented approach, in which protection outcomes are defined and measured by a reduction in risk of exposure to rights violations and by a causal logic linking activities to a remedy or change in outcomes.

The GPC and its AoRs could provide the following support to the Nigerian operation:

- Cross-fertilizing ideas from other operations on relevant issues, such, capacity development in insecure environments, and innovative approaches to communicate protection (i.e. Communications package) and through the GPC Community of Practice;
- Facilitate consultation with human rights actors particularly Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure the presence of international human rights support to Nigeria;



- Facilitating a dialogue between donors and agencies at global level raising awareness about the possibility of funding protection activities;
- Providing guidance for RC/HCs on their responsibilities to make protection central to the humanitarian operation;
- Providing examples of good practice in protection relevant to the Nigeria operation, for example on how to work with national partners, particularly in the Humanitarian Programme Cycle;
- Providing guidance on specific issues, such as Multi-Purpose Cash or Protection Information Management;
- Providing a clear statement of that “life-saving” activities including services the protection sector can deliver, e.g. physical protection of civilians, livelihood support to survivors of GBV, reunification of children with families, or the clearance of Explosive Remnants of War;
- Provide the EDG note Check-List on “Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations In The Humanitarian Programme Cycle” and;
- Acting a “global advocate” for the PSWG issuing specific thematic alerts (i.e. return).