



GLOBAL PROTECTION FORUM 2022

Thematic Segment – Access for Protection

Concept Note

Protection by Presence: How Donors and Media Coverage Shape the Ability of International and Local Organizations to Provide Protection

Monday 24th October, 16:00 – 17:30 CEST

Today there are more people affected by humanitarian crises than at any point in history. Globally, conflicts drive 80% of humanitarian needs.¹ The early months of 2022 have displaced more than 100 million individuals as a result of persecution, conflict, violence or human rights violations, the highest ever on record.² Faced by this increasing numbers, humanitarian and human rights organizations are struggling to increase their presence to strengthen the protection of civilians and provide them with urgent, often live-saving support.

However, as recently shown by the events in Ukraine which have grabbed the world's attention, the presence and capacity to intervene in humanitarian crises is largely influenced by donors' interests and media coverage. Major donors play a crucial role in influencing the presence and resources of actors on the ground, as the allocation of funding is usually done based on the countries that represent a strategic interest for their governments but they are also faced with the challenge of meeting growing global humanitarian needs. Media coverage and media framing, on their hand, have also had the power to drive attention and funding to specific humanitarian crises (ex. Afghanistan in 2002, Iraq in 2004 and Ukraine in 2022), while many equally severe crises have remained under covered (ex. Yemen, Ethiopia 2022).

This event brings together humanitarian, human rights and local actors actively involved in providing protection to reflect on how their presence is leveraged by donors' interests and media coverage. It encourages a collaborative approach between humanitarian and human rights actors to maximize all available channels and opportunities to influence donors' in making effective, informed decisions and deploying resources to where they can have the greatest impact. It further gives voice to local actors, who are usually the first responders and the ones who can promote long-term solutions but are historically excluded from high level decision making, to promote strategies to overcome challenges in access and protection for underfunded and under covered crises.

¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview>

² <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/unhcr-ukraine-other-conflicts-push-forcibly-displaced-total-over-100-million-for-first-time/>

Aims of the sessions include:

Unpack the complex issue of protection by presence, bringing into the perspective the role that other key actors, such as donors and media, play in influencing humanitarian assistance and presence.

Humanitarian, human rights and local actors reflect on the importance of a collaborative approach and the need for a holistic, multidisciplinary response that can guide donors' allocation of funds, shape media's perception and strengthen their presence.

Good practices and strategies are pushed forward to encourage humanitarian and human rights actors to speak with one voice, raise awareness and drive attention to the most severe humanitarian crises, in close collaboration with local actors.

Moderation: Kathryn Mahoney, Global Spokesperson, UNHCR

Speakers:

- Opening remarks, Liam Mahony, Director Fieldview Solutions
- Francesco Motta, Director APMENA, OHCHR
- Yasin Abbas, Protection Cluster Coordinator: Whole of Syria
- Sameera Noori, Deputy Director General, COAR Afghanistan
- Concluding remarks, Anne Sophie Laenkholm, ECHO

Background Reading

Liam Mahony "[Proactive presence – field strategies for civilian protection](#)"- Center for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Rosa da Costa, "[Beyond presence: protection intervention on the ground](#)" Forced Migration Review.

Elizabeth G. Ferris, "The Politics of Protection: the Limits of Humanitarian Action", Brookings Institution Press.