



SOPs for GPC Public Statements & Media Releases

1. Background

Advocacy is an integral part of protection and it also represents a cross-cutting priority for the GPC. It is included as a key component in the GPC's 2020-2024 Strategic Framework and the cluster is committed to ensuring it supports, enables and amplifies a range of public and private influencing efforts all with the aim of mobilizing needed protection-focused actions and strengthening protection outcomes. One element of such influencing can include the issuance of public statements and media releases by the GPC on issues of concern. The GPC occupies a unique position to bolster collective protection advocacy on priority issues and is committed to carrying out this role in close collaboration with protection clusters and members based on its 'value add'.

The GPC primarily pursues private advocacy and other lower visibility influencing efforts given the complex operating environments that many protection clusters find themselves in. However, engaging in more public approaches is one of the available 'tools' for the GPC. As [outlined here](#), the GPC regularly pursues influencing efforts via private donor/Member State briefings, roundtable discussions, and correspondence as well as the broader dissemination of key protection updates, messages and reports. Such efforts are complemented by more public advocacy as required, reflecting specific contexts, issues and needs. This SOP for public statements and media releases recognizes how such public approaches require a particularly robust process of consultation and risk management, ensuring 'do no harm', technical coherence and that the GPC efforts add value.

2. Objective

The GPC will issue global statements and media releases in response to pressing protection crises and concerns, as needed. The aim of such public-facing initiatives is to call attention both within the humanitarian system and/or more broadly with political, media and public stakeholders to protection risks and priorities that are not being adequately addressed, and where humanitarian assistance and protection services are not reaching those who need it (including due to funding shortfalls, access constraints etc.). The issuance of a statement or release will be linked to other influencing and engagement efforts, either at country or global levels or both.

The specific objectives of a public statement or media release are:

- To call attention to a particular protection risks and violations of IHL/IHRL as well as protection related service needs and delivery that are not being adequately addressed with the aim of influencing the behaviours, priorities and approaches of duty bearers (state and non-state) and other key decision-makers and donors in the prevention, response and remedy of protection violations.
- To amplify the voices and protection priorities of impacted communities and local protection leaders, particularly in forgotten or under-represented crises.

- To strategically bolster the advocacy efforts of national Protection Clusters and members, and other national/local protection, human rights and civil society actors.

3. Guiding Principles

- **Do no harm** - Ensure that any potential adverse effects (e.g. increasing protection risk, increasing vulnerability for person or population of concern, increasing risks to staff/partner safety etc) of an advocacy intervention are prevented/mitigated. If the possible risks outweigh the expected benefits of the intervention, then the advocacy initiative needs to be reconsidered and redesigned.
- **Evidence based** - All public positions, statements and messages will be rigorously vetted to ensure the highest possible standard of evidence, data and technical analysis is used.
- **Neutrality, impartiality, humanity and independence** - Preserve the values of humanitarian action, at field level and globally, in order to foster dialogue, access, and collaboration.
- **Field, local and affected populations first** - Decision-making and consultation processes put country-based protection cluster colleagues and members, local protection actors and affected persons at the forefront of any advocacy effort. Advocacy efforts are primarily ‘triggered’ by country level stakeholders, with the GPC responding to such requests and ensuring country colleagues are in the lead in shaping strategy and approaches.
- **Centrality of Protection** - Ensure that advocacy for protection is a priority responsibility of the HC, HCT, clusters coordinators and IASC.

4. Key Considerations with Public Statements and Releases

Timing:

The GPC will issue statements and media releases based on determined need and in situations where it’s deemed the GPC can ‘add value’ with its voice, based on the considerations below.

Guiding criteria to determine if GPC issues a public statement or media release:

Element	Criteria
Humanitarian imperative and protection severity	Grave breaches or systematic violations of IHL, IHRL; High number of civilians affected, high level of mortality and suffering, large-scale displacement; Major gaps in humanitarian/protection services, funds and/or access.
Complementarity and support to PC/AoRs advocacy efforts	Specific request from in-country PC/AoRs to complement advocacy efforts led in country; GPC messaging to build on protection analysis, messaging and narratives developed by PC/AoRs.
Media coverage and advocacy efforts	Need for more visible public advocacy to complement other informal and bilateral advocacy efforts to achieve a protection outcome; Protection issues particularly underreported (trafficking, mental and psychological distress);

	links to/supports ongoing advocacy efforts/strategy.
Geographical focus	Where PC/members/protection allies have asked for GPC support; New emergencies at scale; Neglected and forgotten crises; key thematic priorities for GPC.
Risks management	Adherence to 'do no harm' principle; Risk analysis, close consideration of risks/red lines raised by other humanitarian/protection stakeholders; Clear mitigating plans/actions in relation to potential negative impacts on safety, access, engagement etc.
Strategic need for public advocacy	Close consideration of other potential advocacy tactics, channels and approaches, including private advocacy and lower visibility options, that may be pursued first; Further dedicated deliberation needed if particular concerns raised by key stakeholders.
GPC value add	Added value and leverage to protection issues at global level/via the GPC.

5. Process

Step 1 - Request to issue a Statement

Responsible: ATT, field (PCs/AoRs and LNNGOs as focal points) and GPC Ops cell

- The request for a statement comes directly from the Cluster Coordinator after consultation with country AoRs Coordinators, the GPC Ops cell or from LNNGOs (part of the Protection Cluster or partners of UN agencies in-country).
- GPC/AoR Global Coordinators are informed of the request for a statement by the GPC Deputy Coordinator for External Relations

Step 2 - Analysis of triggering criteria/decision making on statement

Responsible: ATT co-leads and GPC Ops cell Head of Advocacy and Communication Pillar

- A brief risk assessment shall be done by ATT co-leads and GPC Ops cell Head of ACP
- A Communications Framework shall be done by ATT co-leads and GPC Ops cell Head of ACP

Step 3 - Drafting of the advocacy statement

Responsible: ATT co-leads and GPC Ops cell Head of Advocacy and Communication Pillar

- An initial first draft is compiled by the ATT co-leads, in collaboration with the field PC and in consultation with the AoRs, and GPC Ops Cell Head of ACP

Step 4 - Consultation

Responsible: ATT, field (PC/AoRs and LNNGOs as focal point) and GPC Ops Cell

ATT co-leads to share draft and risk assessment with all ATT members for inputs.

- Head of ACP to share draft and risk assessment with country Protection Cluster Coordinator. PC Coordinator to share with AoRs Coordinators and LNNGOs in-country for feedback and red lines.
- AoR Coordinators in-country to liaise with GPC AoRs in case of need/support.
- Consultations should be taking no further than 48h.

Step 5 - Sign off

Responsible: GPC Coordinator, in consultation with SAG co-chair.

- Final collective draft and risk assessment to be shared by Head of ACP with GPC Coordinator, first, and SAG co-chair, secondly, for clearance.
- An approval or a rejection shall be communicated in writing to Head of ACP, ATT and Cluster Coordinator in-country, accompanied by an explanatory note.
- Head of ACP, ATT and Protection Cluster in-country may only challenge the decision if all 3 parties agree on it – and in this case GPC coordinator and SAG are to be duly informed also in written.

Rationale is to build a bottom-up decision-making process that prioritizes the collective and the field/local stakeholders, empowering the GPC membership and fostering accountability, as committed by the SAG on their [ToR](#) under point 5 (Accountability and Communications).

Step 6 - Dissemination

Responsible: GPC Ops Cell Head of ACP

- The GPC Ops Cell Head of ACP disseminate the statement in accordance with agreed methods:
 - *Public domain:* The statement is published on the GPC website and the GPC Twitter account. It is also shared by email to the country Cluster Coordinator, GPC Advocacy Task Team, GPC AoRs Coordinators, GPC SAG and IASC RG3. ACP to work with ATT to develop media outreach plan as relevant for media statements.
 - *Restricted circulation:* The statement is only shared with country Cluster Coordinator, GPC Advocacy Task Team, GPC AoRs Coordinators, GPC SAG and IASC RG3 with a mention of 'restricted circulation'.

Step 7 - Monitoring of impact and adjustment of strategy and follow-up actions as required

Responsible: ATT co-lead, GPC Ops Cell Head of ACP

- Basic MEAL framework to be used by Head of APC and ATT co-leads for monitoring of advocacy, collecting feedback from field/global colleagues and quarterly feedback to ATT members, Cluster in-country, GPC Coordinator and SAG.

Contact:

GPC Ops Cell Head of Advocacy, Communication and Partner Engagement Pillar, Marie-Emilie Dozin, dozin@unhcr.org

GPC Advocacy Task Team Co-Lead, Alison Kent, Alison.Kent@oxfam.org

GPC Advocacy Task Team Co-Lead, Carolina Montenegro, cmontenegro@near.ngo

Annexe 1: GPC Statement Template



Statement on [Title]

Date

Brief description of context

Key protection or other concerns (including a quote) and impacts on communities.

Recommendations or 'asks'

For further information, please contact William Chemaly, Global Protection Cluster Coordinator, at gpc@unhcr.org

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) is a network of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations and United Nations (UN) agencies, engaged in protection work in humanitarian crises including armed conflict, climate change related and natural disaster. The GPC unites members, partners and communities working on the full gamut of protection activities, including in four specialized Areas of Responsibility (AoRs): Child Protection (CP), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Housing, Land and Property (HLP) and Mine Action (MA). Additional information available here: <https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/>

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