



STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE WORLD DAY AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

30 July 2023

Global crises, conflicts, and the climate emergency exacerbate pre-existing trafficking risks and give rise to new ones, as traffickers capitalize on the human, material, social, and economic distress of internally displaced persons. In internally displaced settings when families and communities struggle to meet their basic needs, have limited options to seek protection, social safety nets are disrupted and, the rule of law is weakened, vulnerability to trafficking increases.

The Global Protection Cluster and its AoRs, and in particular, its Anti-Trafficking Task Team led by UNHCR and IOM, call for **more support and resource allocation to anti-trafficking efforts in emergencies**, so that we can ensure systematic and adequate prevention and protection within all humanitarian action from the outset.

Recent data show increasing [gaps](#) in anti-trafficking responses globally, and humanitarian actors are particularly struggling to keep up with the growing risks and needs in current and emerging crises. Insufficient resources for proactive prevention, risk mitigation and protection responses to address trafficking and related abuses and human rights violations in humanitarian settings lead to **entire groups vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation at risk of being left behind**.

Data (June 2023) from the Global Protection Cluster on 32 country operations reveals that in 68% of operations, trafficking is a medium to very high risk – with 28% operations reporting the risk as high or very high. Associated phenomena are also on the rise. 76% of protection clusters report high or very high risk of gender-based violence, 88% report a medium to very high risk of early and forced marriage. 96% report forced recruitment, including the use of children by parties to the conflict¹.

Women and children remain a primary target for traffickers in all contexts. A recent study commissioned by the Global Protection Cluster's Anti-Trafficking Task Team has pointed to persons with disabilities, men and boys, and older persons being among those most often overlooked as potential victims of trafficking in humanitarian settings. Men and boys are particularly vulnerable to certain types of trafficking such as child recruitment and forced labour. The key principle of the Centrality of Protection requires that humanitarian action **leaves no one behind**.

We must act proactively to prevent crisis-induced human trafficking. Our responsibility is to avoid people becoming victims of trafficking.

All humanitarian actors are called on to integrate anti-trafficking in their work, collect data on the relevant risks, vulnerabilities and protective factors, and provide referral pathways to age-, gender-, and disability sensitive and inclusive services for trafficked persons and those at risk. State and non-state actors' emergency management plans for conflicts, disasters, and pandemics must foresee trafficking prevention

¹ Global Protection Update, June 2023, available [here](#)

for all affected populations. Only by [working together and putting the needed resources in place](#) can we reach every victim and every person at risk of trafficking in these most difficult contexts.

About the GPC Task Team on Anti-Trafficking

The Global Protection Cluster established the Task Team on Anti-Trafficking in Humanitarian Action in mid-2017 to take stock of existing anti-trafficking work in crises; to gather good practices; and to develop guidance on addressing trafficking in humanitarian responses in settings involving internal displacement. The Task Team's overall objective is to inform the GPC position on anti-trafficking interventions in humanitarian responses (in non-refugee settings) and to provide recommendations on how best to integrate them systematically in existing cluster mechanisms. The Task Team is co-led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Task Team members include InterAction, the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, Norwegian Church Aid, Save the Children, Caritas, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Women, the office of the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, and the Child Protection and Gender-Based Violence Areas of Responsibility (AoRs). Membership is open to interested agencies and organisations.

For more information, please visit: https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/issues/anti_trafficking or contact the co-leads, Liliana Sorrentino : sorrentl@unhcr.org or Zahra Atbi : fatbi@iom.int.