

# PROTECTION CLUSTER/AoRs ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



**Dear Protection Partners,**

Welcome to the annual Yemen Protection Cluster Newsletter. In this edition, we share a summary of the key initiatives, products and events that the Protection Cluster and areas of responsibility undertook during the year 2023. We also provide key highlights from the Hubs during the year under review.

This Edition is divided into 10 parts namely Strategic updates, Resources and Publications, Thematic Updates, AoR Updates, Field Updates, Information Management Products, Advocacy, Engagement with Partners, Impact Stories from the Field, and Upcoming Events/Publications.

Through quarterly and annual newsletters, we hope to continue keeping our partners and other readers informed of the vast range of activities and initiatives the Protection community in Yemen is engaging in.

Do not hesitate to contact us for any clarification/feedback on this product.

Best regards

Protection Cluster & AoRs

## SUMMARY

- Strategic Updates
- Resources and Publications
- Thematic updates
- AoR Updates
- Field Updates
- IM Products
- Advocacy
- Engagement with Partners
- Impact Stories
- Upcoming Events/Publications

# Strategic Updates

## Centrality of Protection

The Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Yemen Crisis (IAHE) conducted in 2022 established among other things that Protection had not been made central to the humanitarian response in Yemen and remained one of the most underfunded sectors under previous humanitarian response plans (HRPs), and further that mainstreaming of protection across all operations had not been supported strategically through the HCT. Whereas there have been HCT Protection Strategies in the past, the existence of such strategies has not always led to the elevation of protection as an overarching imperative in the Yemen response.

In December 2023, the PC and AoRs finalized the Centrality of Protection Strategy outlining the HCT protection priorities in the Yemen response and the operationalization of the CoP in the context of the HRP 2024. This was preceded by series of consultations with and the incorporation of feedback from the HCT, the inter-cluster coordination mechanism (ICCM), the Protection Cluster SAG, the donor community, the Durable Solutions Working Group among other coordination fora and groups in Yemen. The CoP Strategy is accompanied by an action plan outlining the activities to be implemented by different named actors towards the operationalization of the Strategy, and the timeline for each activity.

The 2024 HRP has incorporated the Centrality of Protection action plan for Yemen through various activities such as monitoring of the protection environment inside and outside IDP sites including in return, displacement and settlement areas, inter-sectoral referrals, advocacy and analysis.

# Resources and Publications

The Protection Cluster developed and issued several guidance documents in line with the need to create common understanding and harmonizing practices among protection actors in the country. These standards were developed with the support of and in consultation with AoRs and the Cluster SAG, and include the following:

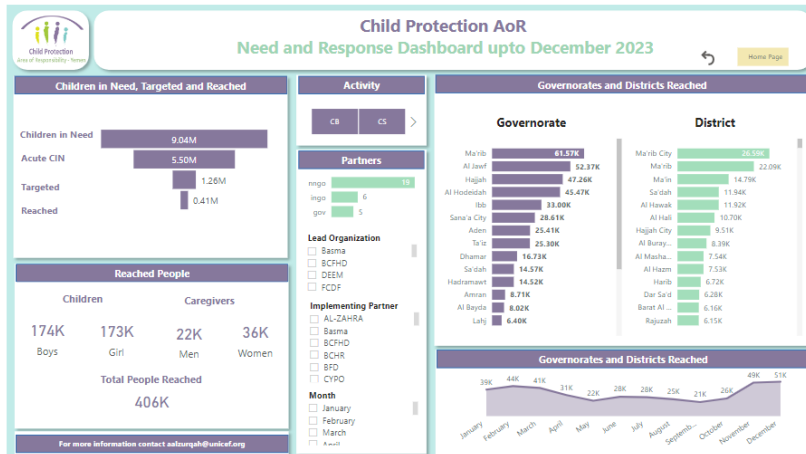
1. [Cash for Protection Guidelines](#)
2. [Vulnerability Criteria](#)
3. [Inter-agency Referral Package](#)
4. [Framework for Voluntary Relocation of IDPs elsewhere in the Country](#)
5. [Guidance Note on Protection Considerations for the Flood Response](#)

## Thematic updates

As part of Protection Cluster's advocacy efforts and to shine the spotlight on specific issues affecting the protection landscape in Yemen, the Protection Cluster issued a number of thematic updates during the year 2023. Some of these updates were issued through the joint efforts of the Cluster and ACAPS and are useful in raising the attention of the donor community to the urgent protection issues and informing HCT strategic priorities, as well as informing the coordination with other clusters towards addressing the issues and gaps highlighted in these updates. The updates include:

1. [Challenges to Housing, Land & Property Rights](#)
2. [Forced evictions Analysis](#)
3. [Protection Cluster Note on Civil Documentation Issues in South of Yemen](#)

# AoRs Updates



## Localization Strategy

The Yemen Child Protection AoR, with support from the Global Child Protection AoR launched the localization strategy development process. This process aims to promote and accelerate the localization approach within child protection humanitarian response and coordination in Yemen. Three actions were identified to achieve this objective:

- The development and implementation of contextualized localization action plans for the child protection coordination group
- The strengthening of institutional capacities for selected local and national actors
- The generation and documentation of evidence of effectiveness

## Child Protection

### Summary of 2023

In 2023, the Child Protection Area of Responsibility responded to various child protection concerns and was able to reach an estimated 405,575 people, including 347,203 children (173,399 girls, 173,804 boys) and 58,020 adults (35,782 women, 22,238 men) through community-based mental health psychosocial support and



### Mainstreaming of Protection

The Child Protection AoR, with the support of the Cluster lead agencies, UNICEF and co-lead Save the Children, conducted strategic advisory group SAG meetings to guide the critical decisions regarding child protection AoR strategies and working across other sectors. GBV[3] AoR, FSL[4], and CCCM[5] Clusters were prioritized for mainstreaming, integration training, and evaluation tools.

### Capacity Building

In 2023, the CP AoR continued targeting child protection actors including government and local authorities through face-to-face training regarding (Data collection and reporting, Child protection minimum standards, Cluster coordination for agencies leading the coordination, child protection in education for CP and Education actors, Safe identification, and referrals, SGBV for children, CP mainstreaming/integration, fundraising and proposals writing,). More than 25 organizations benefited from this capacity-building activities through pieces of training of 352 adults (168 women, 184 men).

A capacity assessment was conducted on National organizations to develop a starting dashboard and allow trainers to have a clear idea of existing localization practices. An action plan will be developed in the coming months.

# Women Protection

### **Nationwide Official Endorsement for GBV SOPs in Yemen**

December 2023- In a strategic and significant milestone for GBV response in Yemen, UNFPA-led Gender-based Violence (GBV) Area of Responsibility (AoR) facilitated the launch and maintained official endorsement for the GBV Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The endorsement by MOSAL in Sana'a and Aden followed close coordination, discussion and workshops that concluded within the 16 days of activism campaign.

All GBV stakeholders and partners in Yemen have participated in and contributed to the development of the Gender Based Violence Standard Operating Procedures (GBV SOPs) for a standardized and effectively coordinated response to GBV issues. The achievement of the unifying SOP procedures presents a significant step forward for all GBV partners for better collaboration and coordination of service provision to women and girls facing various patterns of violence and associated risks across Yemen.

Implementation of and adherence to these GBV SOPs by joint partnerships and individual organization will help strengthen frameworks and systems that enable service providers to properly understand and address GBV including in cross-sectoral collaborations and referrals.



### **A joint Conference Discusses Consequences and Prevention of Early Marriage in Yemen**

25 November 2023, Sana'a- 16 Days of Activism campaign kicked off with an opening of a joint conference on the issue of early marriage and discussed for three days implications and preventive measures. Organized by Ministry of Human Rights (MOHR) in partnership with GBV AoR, UNFPA and UNICEF.

Experts, civil society organization, women led organizations, human rights practitioners, lawyers, religious scholars, and relevant UN agencies attended and participated in the conference. Participants also included senior officials from General prosecutor's office, Ministries of social affairs (MOSAL), health, justices, Interior and the national women committee. Papers presented in the conference highlighted the negative impact of child marriage on the Yemeni society, establishment of four committees from the official side, as well as a set of recommendations. Outcomes of the conference included recommended actions on economic empowerment, and working on a legal article that makes education free for all until completion of secondary school, as well as increasing awareness and building capacities of legal guardians, neighborhood heads, religious leaders, lawyers, judges, and local law enforcement about the negative consequences and legal violations associated with falsifying a girl's age in marriage agreements.

### **GBV AOR conducts a successful 16 Days of Activism Campaign across Yemen**

November-December 2023, Yemen- Marking the 16 Days of Activism global campaign 2023, UNFPA-led GBV AoR and partners in Yemen led a successful and expanded campaign against gender-based violence that women and girls face. The campaign from 25th November-12 December 2023, witnessed organization of numerous activities by humanitarian partners governmental bodies, NGOs and INGOs commemorating the event days and mobilizing support for protection and empowerment of women and girls. This year's campaign witnessed a significant increase in participation and engagement of communities in bazar activities, officials in conferences and workshops and media. (More will be shared on a special issue of a GBV-AoR-issued newsletter on the event).



## AoRs Updates

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### Mine Action

The United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator's Office (UN RCO) in coordination with UNDP is exploring a restructuring of the UN support to the mine action sector while working to streamline efforts. This is an opportunity to ensure that critical changes to Yemen's mine action approach are implemented going forward. For example, UNDP's current financial constraints have highlighted that continued international long-term support and commitment cannot be expected and that there must be national commitment and willingness to constructively engage with the international stakeholders. The revised approach foresees that the future lead on mine action be placed within the office of the UN RCO. The position will remain with the UN RCO through the end of 2024 or until such a time that the conditions become conducive to transfer it to a UN Agency, Fund or Programme

### Housing, Land & Property (HLP)

Throughout the year 2023, the HLP Working Group has worked actively against forced evictions, seeing them as one of the main threats to Yemenis' protection. The WG supported the formation of an HLP-focused taskforce at the Executive Unit (ExU), regularly discussing imminent eviction threats and collaborating to strengthen local capacity encompassing HLP-related topics.

Understanding the importance of HLP rights in the framework of Yemen's peace and social reconciliation process, the WG has actively supported the capacitation of not only government entities and CBOs, but also raising awareness of communities, particularly women and minorities. For instance, empowering populations to understand the importance of (HLP) documentation and how to obtain it has become imperative in 2023.

This further includes active legal support in the form of counselling.

**HLP Case Management** - with the rise in HLP-related issues in Yemen including evictions as already highlighted above, HLP case management has become one of the most significant activities for addressing evictions, HLP disputes and fostering social cohesion amongst IDPs and between IDPs and host communities. The HLP WG kicked off training for partners on HLP case management at the Hub level. These training will be enhanced in 2024 in keeping with the rising demand for HLP expertise in the country.

The HLP Working Group through one of its partners, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) undertook an assessment on the access to inheritance rights for women in Yemen. The report highlights the challenges faced by Yemeni women in obtaining inheritance rights despite women's right to property and inheritance being enshrined in both sharia law and the country's legal framework. Noting the high ignorance levels among women on their property and inheritance, the study recognizes the significant place of public education and awareness raising especially targeting women on their legal entitlements relating to property and inheritance, and as well as community-wide campaigns on the same. It also recommends a range of other actions aimed at addressing women's challenges in accessing property and inheritance rights in Yemen.

The WG has supported the Cluster in partnership with ACAPS in publishing different thematic pieces touching on HLP issues in Yemen, notably the Challenges to Housing, Land and Property Rights in Yemen published in April 2023, and the Forced Evictions Analysis published in December 2023. It is important to note that evictions as a major challenge facing IDPs feature extensively in both the foregoing publications.

# Sana'a Hub



Throughout 2023, the Yemeni Relief Committee (YRC), a partner of the protection Cluster, has actively addressed the diverse needs of the community. Collaborating with community-based protection networks (CBPNs), YRC conducted 160 awareness sessions and identified 2523 households in need of assistance across 14 districts within Sana'a Hub. YRC implemented four Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) including distribution of wagons for income generation; provision of livestock and training to widows, conducting mobile programming and maintenance sessions, and contribution to infrastructure by building the wall of Abu Al-Hassan Al-Hamdani School. Activities relating to legal assistance supported by YRC in Sana'a Hub included awareness sessions on legal aid services, support in acquiring civil documentation such as national identity cards, legal counseling, and provision of legal support to vulnerable families at risk of eviction, or those already evicted.

In psychosocial support (PSS), YRC reached 3758 individuals, while solar panel installations enhanced safety for 397 IDP households at night. Economic empowerment, facilitated by Emergency Cash Assistance (ECAs), positively impacted 560 households. YRC's commitment to referrals ensured

essential services for persons with special needs, disabled individuals, and at-risk children. Additionally, social activities focused on empowering women and girls, exemplified by the successful manufacture of resin medals for 15 women. YRC's integrated approach underscores its dedication to enhancing the well-being of communities in Amran Governorate.

Among other partners, Sustainable Development Foundation's (SDF) partnership with UNHCR and YHF played a pivotal role in delivering vital protection services to vulnerable populations, (IDPs) in Sana'a City, Dhamar, and Al-Bayda and Marib.

Through its Integrated Mobile Teams (IMTs), SDF consistently provided legal assistance, psychosocial support, and identification and referral services for vulnerable women and children. Noteworthy is their proactive approach, addressing multifaceted protection risks while fostering collaboration with CBPNs, PMTs, and local authorities. Eight impactful social activities were conducted, including recycling initiatives in Dhamar and Albaydha, a Secretarial training program in Sana'a City, and a literacy program in Almalimi Camp.

SDF conducted 16 Days campaign against Gender-Based Violence in Sana'a City, Dhamar and Al Bayda and Marib, involving 42 disabled women in which bazaars and psychosocial activities were provided, this campaign for three days was conducted under the global theme "UNITE! Activism to end violence against women and girls. SDF also made significant strides by establishing three fixed child-friendly spaces (CFSS) in Marib and recreational activities Sana'a city, Dhamar, and Al-Bayda, providing a nurturing environment for children. Furthermore, the vocational and business training offered to GBV survivors played a crucial role in supporting their livelihoods.

### Al Hudaydah Hub



The collaborative efforts of the protection partners in Hudaydah have significantly contributed to the alleviation of protection risks for vulnerable populations in the region. The comprehensive referral system ensured that a wide array of needs were addressed, ranging from mental health support to legal assistance. The cash for protection program notably aided over a thousand individuals, providing them with critical financial support in times of need.

Additionally, facilitating access to National Identity Documents was a crucial step in ensuring that IDPs and returnees could assert their rights and access services. By assisting 1863 individuals in obtaining these documents, the partners played a pivotal role in enhancing the legal identity and security of these vulnerable groups.

### Aden Hub

Aden Sub-National Protection Cluster team and their partners supported the ExU and MOSAL with trainings during the first half of 2023. The 12 days of training provided by INTERSOS, NRC, UNHCR, and FMF covered a range of important topics in the field of protection and humanitarian work. These topics include Cluster Approach: Understanding the Cluster approach, Roles and Responsibilities of the Protection Cluster, Protection Mainstreaming, Community-based Protection, Humanitarian Principles, and Accountability to Affected Population.

The objective of these training sessions was to enhance the understanding of the ExU and MOSAL teams on protection and humanitarian work, with the goal of improving the quality of their interventions. By providing better services to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and vulnerable populations, the teams contribute to the overall well-being and safety of those in need. This collaborative effort reflects a commitment to building capacity and promoting best practices in the field of protection, ultimately aiming to create a more resilient and responsive humanitarian system.

NPC - Aden hub team also facilitated a full day session on a Referral package consisting of the Protection Referral Minimum Standards, an inter-agency referral form and a referral tracker for the West Coast Protection Working Group partners at DRC office in Al Mukha. This was a pilot training with similar sessions planned to be delivered in the rest of the Hubs/areas in the early months of 2024. The training was aimed at improving the system of referring and responding to protection concerns among protection actors and between protection and non-protection actors.

### **Ibb Hub**

The joint efforts of YWU and Deem, supported by UNHCR funding, have significantly contributed to the empowerment of women and girls in the Ibb, Taiz, and Al-Dalee governorates. Through this project, not only have individual competencies been developed, but also a foundation has been laid for lasting social and economic empowerment within the community. The project serves as a testament to the positive impact of targeted skill-building and support in conflict-affected areas.

### **Sa'ada Hub**

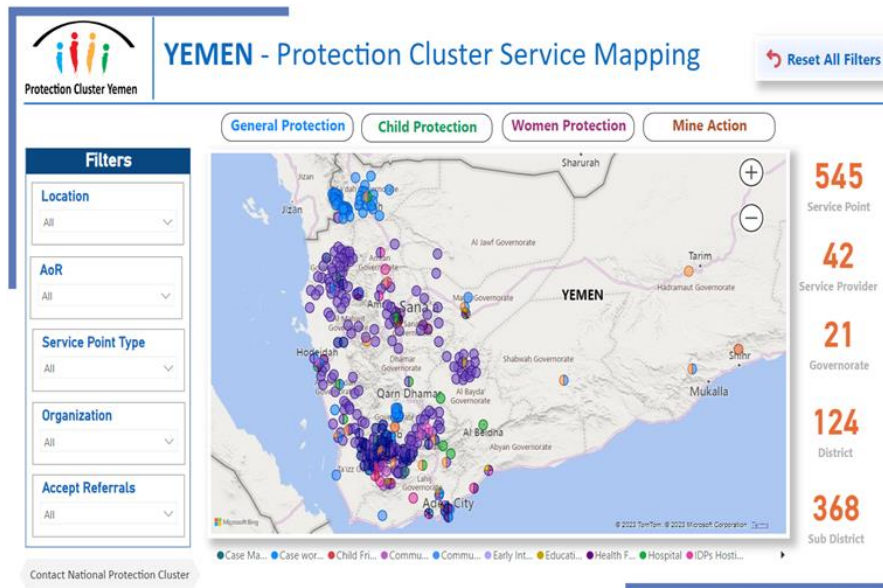
Protection partners continued providing protection services through integrated mobile team with activities such as protection monitoring, assessment, Psychosocial support, legal aid, recreational activities for children, awareness raising sessions on selected topics and cash based interventions including emergency cash assistance for specific vulnerable families based on identified need and criteria.

Protection partners in Sa'ada also supported the issuance of national identity cards in both Sa'ada and Al Jawf in coordination with the Civil Registration Authority (CRA).

Referral of cases between protection actors and other sectors continued throughout the year, with mental health being highlighted as one of the cases in need of collective investment owing to limited number of facilities and expertise required to respond to the many cases in need of psychiatric help.



# Online Service Mapping



PC and the AoRs launched the Service Mapping tool, providing a comprehensive overview of Protection and AoR services across Yemen! The tool has enhanced referrals among Protection & AoR partners at the national and sub-national levels. PC and the AoRs launched the Service Mapping tool, providing a comprehensive overview of Protection and AoR services across Yemen! The tool has enhanced referrals among Protection & AoR partners at the national and sub-national levels.

At a glance, users can see the overall number of service points and providers. They can also filter between General Protection, Child Protection, Women Protection and Mine Action protection services that are available by service location, type, and organization as well as further details. The tool is also equipped with a geographical map that facilitates the navigation between locations and types of services and shows the number of service points, service providers and locations targeted.

## 4W Dashboards (Quarterly, Mid & End-Year)

The PC issued 12 monthly and 4 quarterly 4W dashboards throughout 2023. The Cluster equally issued a mid-year dashboard and recently, an annual one. The 4W dashboard typically provides a snapshot of information related to "Who is doing What, Where, and When" in the context of humanitarian activities. The dashboard includes information on which organizations (Who) are involved in protection activities, the nature of their interventions (What), the geographical locations of these activities (Where), and the timeline or duration of these initiatives (When). s circulated among partners and donors. This inclusivity ensures that relevant stakeholders, both implementing organizations and those providing financial support, are kept informed about ongoing protection activities. The regular issuance of the 4W dashboard facilitates monitoring and evaluation efforts. Organizations can assess the impact of their interventions and identify areas for improvement. The regular issuance and circulation of the 4W dashboard contributes to transparency, coordination, and informed decision-making within the humanitarian response, ultimately supporting more effective protection activities for those in need.

# Advocacy

## Donor Briefing

In line with the cluster's commitment to undertake advocacy and resource mobilization on behalf of its members, the Protection Cluster and AoRs coordinated two donor briefing sessions, attended by majority of the donors to protection projects in the Yemen HRP 2023. The sessions were intended to provide general updates to the donor community on the progress of the various donor-funded protection initiatives and projects, and challenges faced by partners in the

implementation of protection projects. These briefings were also aimed at receiving feedback from donors regarding specific workstreams initiated and/or led by the Protection Cluster and AoRs as part of the broader humanitarian response in Yemen, such as the HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy.

The briefing sessions provided an opportunity for the cluster and AoRs to appraise the donors on the funding situation for the protection sector and appeal for enhanced support to the sector in particular and the Yemen humanitarian response in general towards giving effect to the Centrality of protection commitments across the response.

## Protection through Health - A Joint Initiative

In May 2023, the Protection and Health Clusters organized a joint advocacy event on the sidelines of the World Health Assembly in Geneva to discuss and raise awareness for a closer integration of the two sectors.

The MHPSS Technical Working Group is one example of integrated response efforts in Yemen, the group comprising Health, Education, and Protection clusters and aiming to provide comprehensive mental health support to around 8 million people in need. The Protection Cluster co-chairs the MHPSS TWG alongside Health and Education clusters, and all three are taking steps towards addressing MHPSS gaps in the country.

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# Engagement with Partners

## YHF

In June 2023, the Yemen Humanitarian Fund (YHF) launched the first standard allocation amounting to US\$45 million for lifesaving support in locations with the highest protection risks and needs and the most vulnerable people in hard-to-reach and underserved areas. - 17 projects with protection component were funded in the allocation to the tune of approximately US\$13.3 million. Three of these were standalone while the other fourteen are integrated with other sectoral interventions, with varying percentages covering protection. The three standalone protection projects account for just about US\$1.7 million.

In line with ensuring centrality of protection in this allocation, both standalone protection projects as well as integrated projects were accepted in the allocation. At the same time, the Protection Cluster and AoRs worked with other clusters to deliver protection mainstreaming training to all recipients of this allocation, focusing on protection risk identification and mitigation.

# 🌟🌟🌟 Impact Stories from the Field 🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟🌟

## **Breaking the cycle of economic dependence by impartation of Life Skills**

Reem, a 33-year-old widow and mother of three, found herself displaced from Azal Sana'a to the Al-Qafr district in Ibb. With no source of income, Reem faced immense challenges. However, her life took a remarkable turn when she embarked on a path of skill development and self-sufficiency. Through dedicated training in quilt making, sewing, and life-skill courses, Reem gained valuable expertise and, more importantly, a renewed sense of empowerment. The support extended to her by YWU funded by UNHCR was a lifeline that transformed her circumstances. Equipped with a comprehensive quilt making kit, Reem now possesses the tools to shape her own destiny. From initially knowing nothing about quilt making, she has honed her skills to produce exceptional quality quilts. Reem's newfound ability has not only granted her a sense of accomplishment but also instilled the belief that she can meet her life's needs independently.

## **Women Empowerment through HLP-Rights Training**

"We were desperate, but now we have reason to hope. We will persevere for that hope and strive towards it." Bushra, Aden resident, 29 years old.

Forced to flee Aden twice owing to the conflict, Bushra's family house was illegally acquired by their maid forcing her family to stay in rented accommodation upon their return to Aden.

"We will secure our rights; we will not stay silent." Bushra has been empowered after attending one of the training sessions by UN-Habitat shedding light on HLP rights' violations and how to address them. These sessions reached more than 1,500 people with HLP information to date. The sessions are part of UN-Habitat's groundbreaking project aiming to accelerate urban recovery and peacebuilding in Yemen through supporting HLP rights for vulnerable communities and improving land tenure security for women.

Bushra was able to access the legitimate HLP documentation needed to verify her rights under the guidance of the project. She diligently went to the relevant government offices to obtain tenure documents and other papers in her grandfather's name to prove her right to the house. Although her family still faces some challenges and concerns regarding the next court appointment, Bushra's success in knowing her rights and taking action so far is a testament to the impact of the project.

"I make it a point to share my knowledge with every woman I know" Bushra says. "I have been raising awareness among my friends about HLP rights, and I will continue to do so."

With her passion for empowering other women, Bushra has become a force for positive change in her community.

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## **Upcoming Events/Publications**

Situational Analysis for Yemen (a product of the Protection Cluster and AoRs in collaboration with ACAPS)

Protection Analysis Update

Training series for partners focusing on Cash for Protection guidelines, HRP 2024 activity guide and activityinfo, and inter-agency referral package

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