

75 year-old Abdu Salam was displaced from his village in Myanmar.



Engaging with IDPs

People who are displaced within their own country are legally under the protection of their own government. Yet that same government might be the cause of their flight. It is no surprise, then, that internally displaced people (IDPs) are among the most vulnerable people in the world. In 2012, there were an estimated 28.8 million IDPs worldwide, the highest number in more than two decades. UNHCR assisted and protected some 17.7 million of these people, many of whom had been driven from their homes by the conflicts in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, and the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria). ●●●

Cluster approach

UNHCR's engagement with IDPs is governed by a number of fundamental policy considerations: the primary responsibility to protect and assist IDPs lies with States; the rights and freedoms of all IDPs must be ensured without discrimination; and it is the shared responsibility of humanitarian organizations to protect and assist IDPs. Unlike in the case of refugees, for whom UNHCR has the primary responsibility, the care and protection of IDPs falls under the Cluster Approach, a collaborative framework which governs the IDP-related work of various United Nations agencies and other humanitarian actors.

UNHCR leads three clusters under this approach: the first covers protection; the second, emergency shelter; and the third, camp coordination and camp management. One of the organization's priorities in 2014-2015 is to make the clusters it leads more effective by improving coordination with its cluster partners, and strengthening its engagement with national authorities responsible for IDPs.

To strengthen its operational capabilities, in 2013 UNHCR launched a learning programme on internal displacement

Challenges. The theme of the dialogue in 2013 is "Protecting the Internally Displaced: Persisting Challenges and Fresh Thinking." The Dialogue places internal displacement back on the international agenda, following broad concern that much remains to be done to improve emergency response, address protection challenges and find durable solutions for IDPs.

One of the primary objectives of UNHCR's work on behalf of IDPs is to support and build the capacity of government institutions to protect and

implementation of the 2009 African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons (Kampala Convention). It does so through advocacy, support for capacity building and technical advice. In 2013, UNHCR worked in partnership with the African Union, the Special Rapporteur for IDPs and the Brookings-London School of Economics Project on Internal Displacement, to organize a training programme in Uganda on IDP protection for government officials, members of parliament and national human rights institutions. The year 2013 also saw the publication of UNHCR's *Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, developed in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and other partners.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Working closely with national authorities and partners to support durable solutions for IDPs is another UNHCR priority. In 2012, close to 1.6 million IDPs returned to their homes in Côte d'Ivoire, Iraq and Yemen, many with UNHCR's assistance. In the Balkans, UNHCR works with the authorities to find durable solutions for people who have been displaced in this region since the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.

UNHCR and its humanitarian partners have established a Return Consortium in Somalia to facilitate the sustainable return of IDPs from Mogadishu to rural areas of the country. In Colombia, collaboration with UNDP under the Transitional Solutions Initiative (TSI) has been extended to 13 sites by the end of 2013, including rural return and urban local integration sites. In Côte d'Ivoire, UNHCR is playing a key role in implementing a protection-sensitive inter-agency strategy for the return of IDPs to the western part of the country.

To implement the Secretary-General's 2012 Policy Committee Decision on Durable Solutions for IDP and refugee returnees, currently being piloted in Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire

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ment for its staff and, in collaboration with its partners, provided extensive technical support and training on IDP protection to field operations. It has also undertaken a series of training events for staff and cluster partners on coordination and leadership. The next two years will see UNHCR pursue its commitment to enhance the coordination capacity of its staff and partners through the Cluster Coordination and Leadership Learning Programme. More than a hundred professionals have benefited from this programme in 2012-2013.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

UNHCR will highlight IDP protection during the High Commissioner's annual Dialogue on Protection

assist displaced people. UNHCR steps in when the authorities are either unable or unwilling to fulfil their obligations in this regard. In Afghanistan, the DRC, Georgia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia, and Yemen, UNHCR will support the efforts of the governments of these countries to develop legal and policy frameworks for IDPs that are in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. The adoption of the National Act for the Protection of IDPs in Kenya (2012) and the Policy on Internal Displacement in Yemen (2013) are examples of recent achievements.

UNHCR works with its partners – including the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons – to promote im-

and Kyrgyzstan, UNHCR will help government authorities and local partners to develop durable solutions strategies, engage development actors, and ensure that solutions benefit both refugee and IDP returnees.

DEVELOPING TOOLS

The 2013 launch of the UNHCR Emergency Information Management toolkit, which provides information management and protection tools as well as guidance and reference materials for UNHCR staff and other humanitarian actors, will be followed in 2014 by the launch of an equivalent IDP information management toolkit. In close collaboration with the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force and other partners, UNHCR will develop guidance on the coordination of needs assessments in complex emergencies. The new guidelines will complement existing IASC guidance on Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessments. Information management in field protection clusters will be strengthened by the Global Protection Cluster's engagement of a dedicated information management officer, supplemented by the establishment of a rapid-response roster.

EMERGENCY SHELTER CLUSTER

As the co-lead of the Global Emergency Shelter Cluster for conflict situations, UNHCR continues to enhance its partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, which leads field shelter clusters in crises caused by natural disasters. The revised structure of the Global Emergency Shelter Cluster, which includes a strategic advisory group, thematic working groups, communities of practice and a cluster support team, will improve the accountability of cluster lead agencies and permit more active participation by cluster partners in decision-making.

The recently endorsed five-year Shelter Cluster Strategy will enhance preparedness and coordination in 18 shelter clusters and cluster-like structures worldwide, nine of which are led by UNHCR. The strategy also incorporates communication and advocacy components.

An 18-month grant from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection has allowed UNHCR to increase its capacity through the recruitment of two global focal points: one

in the Field by updating tools, training packages and information management systems. It is also improving surge staffing capacity through a European Union grant. These activities are fostering improved practices and strengthening re-

IN 2013, UNHCR PILOTED A NEW METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION OF EMERGENCY SHELTER CLUSTER RESPONSES AND THEIR IMPACT ON AFFECTED POPULATIONS

for coordination and the other for communication and advocacy. The grant will also permit UNHCR to provide more responsive and flexible support to country-level coordination mechanisms. In addition, UNHCR benefits from the support of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, which has seconded one of its staff to focus on coordination.

In 2013, UNHCR piloted a new methodology for the evaluation of emergency shelter cluster responses and their impact on affected populations. The results of this exercise will inform the development of a standardized evaluation method which will be made available for general use by shelter partners in 2014. UNHCR's contributions to the emergency shelter cluster website will address the information management needs of global and country-level clusters.

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT (CCCM) CLUSTER

The Global CCCM Cluster, co-chaired by UNHCR (conflict situations) and IOM (natural disasters), supports field operations in both emergency and long-standing displacement crises. It does so by means of rapid deployments of expert staff and the development of tools and guidance, as well as by building the capacity of national authorities and civil society.

The CCCM Cluster is strengthening coordination between cluster partners and enhancing the response to needs

responses. The cluster's new website and online camp management toolkit database will be regularly updated by CCCM partners with new practices, methodologies and information management tools.

The cluster has also been updating its training materials and developing a new e-learning platform. Training workshops have been held or are planned in Algeria, Burundi, the DRC, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Mali, Mauritania, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria and Turkey. Training-of-trainers workshops will build global and regional training capacity.

Field deployment of the CCCM Rapid Response Team has improved the cluster's ability to deliver predictable and timely coordination and services. The team collates best practices, develops policy and assists in CCCM Cluster setup.

The CCCM Cluster will work on the priorities identified during the 2012 Global CCCM Cluster Retreat for its three-year strategic plan. These priorities are: to improve the field response in camp and camp-like environments; prepare national authorities and CCCM clusters so they can provide stronger CCCM responses; widen the understanding and adoption of the CCCM approach; raise the cluster's accountability to affected populations; and address the needs of IDPs outside camps. The cluster will also promote community participation and seek other ways to strengthen accountability in project design, implementation and follow-up.

Global Protection Cluster

The Global Protection Cluster (GPC) led by UNHCR continues to strengthen support to field operations and engage globally on protection issues. At field level there are currently 27 active protection clusters, of which 16 in complex emergencies are led by UNHCR. The GPC will continue to support field protection clusters in both emergency and protracted crisis situations, including through the rapid deployment of GPC support missions. In 2012-2013, such missions were conducted with the aid of the Protection Standby Capacity (ProCap) roster and in close collaboration with partners in the CAR, Chad, the DRC, Mali, Somalia and South Sudan.

Funding received for the GPC from ECHO in 2013, will enable UNHCR to bolster its capacity as a cluster lead agency to support field protection clusters in the areas of protection mainstreaming, information management, and training. With the support of the International Rescue Committee and World Vision, the GPC will enhance protection mainstreaming by providing a support package and training kit for field protection clusters, of which the development began in 2012. The use of protection mainstreaming materials has been piloted in four countries in 2013, and the finalization of the entire package will take place in 2014.

Capacity-building through training will be one of the main priorities of the GPC. A number of protection cluster coordination learning programmes are scheduled for 2014, in collaboration with UNHCR's Global Learning Centre and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. More than 90 participants in three countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sudan) have been trained to enhance coordination at the country level. Programmes in 2013 have targeted government officials and national NGOs.

The GPC's interactive website and periodic newsletter constantly seek to make available the most relevant and up-to-date information on developments

and trends to partners and stakeholders. Contributions are invited from other UN agencies and field-based protection clusters and humanitarian coordinators. Regular thematic round-table discussions, some led by the UN Special Rapporteur for IDPs, in 2012-2013 addressed humanitarian access and the transition from humanitarian to development action. The GPC will continue to organize such thematic discussions in 2014-2015 for practitioners, academics and experts in order to improve coordination and operational approaches among protection clusters. The GPC has also commissioned a study to examine patterns of protection funding, of which the findings were presented in 2013.

The GPC remains dedicated to advocating for the protection of civilians in unfolding situations such as in the CAR, Mali and Syria. It will continue to play a role in the Transformative Agenda of the IASC in order to ensure the centrality of protection in the humanitarian response to IDPs.

Key IDP Operations

Syrian Arab Republic (Syria)

The escalating conflict and deteriorating conditions in Syria have affected more than 6 million people. Limited access to IDPs and affected populations, as well as safety concerns for staff and partners, impose significant constraints on the humanitarian response. Despite these challenges, UNHCR has been able to assist and protect people of concern, including by conducting several deliveries of humanitarian assistance across front lines.

UNHCR is diversifying its partnerships with local organizations, forming an outreach volunteer programme and opening a network of community services centres which offer counselling, psychosocial support and services to people with specific needs, including the elderly and the disabled. By strengthening

relationships with local organizations, UNHCR and its partners have been able to reach an increasing number of displaced families in Syria, and provide them with community services, as well as basic assistance items such as blankets, hygiene kits and medicine.

All these activities have been conducted in close collaboration with key partners, including the Syrian Arab Red Crescent Society. UNHCR also participates in inter-agency advocacy for the delivery of humanitarian services, and leads the shelter working group in Damascus with the Ministry of Local Administration. This group has developed different types of shelter adapted to the local environment, as well as relief kits for displaced people that help protect them against the winter cold.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The DRC continues to be afflicted by a cycle of conflict. With an estimated 2.6 million IDPs, it hosts one of the largest internally displaced populations in the world. Recent fighting, particularly in the eastern part of the country between Government troops and other armed groups has driven the displacement of large new waves of people and aggravated the humanitarian crisis.

UNHCR seeks to protect and assist IDPs in the DRC through its leadership of the Protection Cluster, the CCCM Working Group and the Shelter Working Group within the non-food item (NFI) cluster led by UNICEF. Its work is supported by strong partnerships with the authorities, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), humanitarian

ADEN, DECEMBER 2012 | *The UN refugee agency has sent a planeload of supplies to Yemen as part of its ongoing assistance to internally displaced Yemenis.*

UNHCR airlifts supplies to IDPs in Yemen

This article is an adapted version of a UNHCR news story

31 DECEMBER 2012

The wide-body MD-11 airplane carried 10,000 blankets, 14,800 plastic sheets and 10,000 sleeping mats from UNHCR stores in Kenya to Yemen's southern port city of Aden as part of a **special airlift to help IDPs who have returned to Abyan Governorate** over the last few months.

The airlift — thanks to special funding from the European Union — is providing timely assistance for returnees who are in desperate need of support as they rebuild their lives in their areas of origin. UNHCR plans to assist 30,000 of the most vulnerable returning families through this urgent airlift and with further assistance that will arrive by sea.

“UNHCR is supporting IDPs to exercise their right to return home,” said Naveed Hussain, UNHCR Representative in Yemen. “The challenge now is to make these returns sustainable through rehabilitation and development work.”

UNHCR has been responding to the IDP crisis in the south of Yemen since it began in May 2011, providing life-saving assistance, monitoring of needs, and counselling services.

In July 2012, IDPs started to return home and rebuild their lives. Initially, returns were slow due to the widespread presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance, extensive damage to infrastructure and a desire to see evidence of improved security. Since de-mining carried out by the Yemeni Government and other security improvements, more than 100,000 people returned to their homes.

UNHCR is the lead international humanitarian agency responding to returnees' needs for shelter and domestic items. To date, UNHCR has distributed non-food items to some 10,000 families and shelter kits to more than 9,000 families in Abyan. UNHCR has been present on the ground and staff members conduct field visits on a regular basis. ○

agencies and others. Activities include the implementation of a strategy to combat sexual and gender-based violence through sensitization campaigns and an integrated legal, health and psychosocial response. UNHCR is also working with partners to support authorities in the development of an effective national legislative framework for protecting and assisting IDPs.

UNHCR and the Protection Cluster also advise MONUSCO on the protection of IDPs and other affected populations. Two dedicated protection cluster coordinators in Kinshasa and Goma work with other cluster partners to facilitate protection work across the country, engage in advocacy and help mainstream community-based protection. The UNHCR-led CCCM sector in Goma is now supported by a dedicated coordinator and capacity building officer and the CCCM Rapid Response Team, all deployed through the ECHO-funded CCCM project. An additional UNHCR staff member will soon join the DRC operation to provide more sustained leadership to the CCCM sector.

Central African Republic (CAR)

Continued fighting in the CAR in 2013 has led to massive internal displacement and a significant deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the country. More than 206,000 individuals have been displaced, with women and children bearing the brunt of the crisis.

UNHCR, which leads the protection cluster, and its partners have developed a comprehensive protection strategy which forms the basis for the UN Country Team's humanitarian response plan. The cluster, in close collaboration with the GPC, has also launched several advocacy initiatives highlighting the grave protection risks for IDPs and affected populations in the country.

Though operating under serious security constraints and with limited access to people of concern, UNHCR is working closely with its partners to ensure that the humanitarian response incorporates protection as a strategic objective. UNHCR continues to remind parties to the conflict of their responsi-

bility to protect civilians. It also collaborates closely with the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the CAR to protect civilians.

The shelter cluster in the CAR is co-led by UNHCR and the NGO, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development. UNHCR has contributed to the cluster in different ways, for instance by distributing NFI packages in areas in the north-western part of the country, in close coordination with the protection cluster.

Myanmar

By the end of 2012, the total number of IDPs in Myanmar was estimated at 430,000. Most of the displacement in the country is generated by the inter-communal conflicts in Rakhine State (140,000) and Kachin State (85,000). Many of the IDPs, particularly those staying in camps, live in deplorable conditions and with little access to basic services.

The activation of the joint Shelter/NFI/CCCM cluster has begun to strengthen the humanitarian community's presence and response capacity significantly in areas of Myanmar with high levels of displacement. The cluster is also working with the Government and selected partners to assist IDPs in Kachin and Rakhine States, as well as in south-eastern Myanmar. In these areas UNHCR supports some 230,000 displaced people by monitoring their protection, engaging in advocacy with the Government, and improving access to essential services.

This joint cluster has also coordinated the initial distribution of emergency shelter materials and the construction of temporary shelters to protect the displaced population during the rainy season. These efforts have been supported by the Global Shelter Cluster in the areas of coordination, advocacy and communications. Social media networks helped ensure that regular updates on the situation were provided. The deployment of technical experts in shelter and settlements was made possible by UNHCR's standby partners RedR-Australia and the Norwegian Refugee Council. ■