



# - Guidance note -

*Informing Afghanistan Protection Cluster strategic priorities for 2017-2018*

## INTRODUCTION

A round of consultations with key stakeholders related to the efficiency of the Afghanistan Protection Cluster (APC) highlighted the need to review and rethink strategic priorities and coordination mechanisms to enhance protection outcomes for populations affected by the conflict. Main findings indicate that there is a lack of conflict analysis, lack of prioritization of protection concerns, limited focus on protection of civilian in conflict areas, poor quality of the protection response plan and weak information management. The paper outlines key elements and findings to be considered or incorporated when developing the 2017-2018 APC Strategy, while taking into account responsibilities, challenges, limitations and opportunities.

**The APC guidance note will serve as a basis to organize a strategic APC workshop with key APC members that will to discuss, define and agree the following elements:**

- **Information management:** Agree figures and data set to be regularly updated by APC members, especially AoRs (monitoring framework provided by HNO/HRP)
- **Protection analysis:** identify key protection risks to be tackled by APC members and gap analysis (to inform HNO/HRP)
- **Protection approach:** identify the most relevant approach to tackle identified protection risks (prevention, mitigation and response) through addressing threats, vulnerabilities, and capacities using the protection risk equation.
- **Key geographical areas to focus on:** Defined by the HAG analysis and need assessments considering the nexus with development actors
- **Theory of change:** define protection narrative using the HCT protection strategy template and describe key expected protection outcomes

## SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS AT A GLANCE

Despite considerable support from the international community over the past 15 years, the security environment has continued to deteriorate. This has led to widespread poverty, shrinking humanitarian space, increased violence against civilians and vulnerabilities of population affected by displacement, limited prospect for stabilization, peace, durable solutions and development. Global and regional political developments have also resulted in shrinking protection space for Afghan refugees in Europe, Pakistan and Iran. The complexity of emergency humanitarian needs versus chronic poverty in host communities has evoked a shift to a needs versus status based approach to assistance. Limited funding has also highlighted the requirement to develop thresholds to prioritize assistance. Humanitarian access is a key protection concern, especially for IDPs in rural and remote areas where humanitarian actors have limited coverage due to internal security policies and on-going conflict.

This is underscored by the findings from 2016, which indicate that 33 out of 34 provinces experienced conflict between non-state armed groups and government forces throughout the year while districts in over half the country reported conflict induced displacement. Approximately 20% of IDPs were displaced to hard-to-reach areas. As a result of ongoing conflict with AGEs and Governmental forces in a large part of Afghanistan, the following patterns of displacement have been identified:



- Significant number of new IDPs (141,775 as of June 2017) due to the recurrent military clashes, decrease of 25% compared to 2016;
- Increase number of refugee returnees as of June 2017 compared to the previous year due to shrinking protection space in Pakistan and Iran;
- Increased trends in short term displacement due to the lack of humanitarian access, with people often returning to their place of origin after the engagement has finished (ex. Situation in Kunduz in 2016: 118,166 people were displaced from Kunduz in September-October, and 69,916 Kunduz IDPs that were displaced within the Northern and North-Eastern provinces returned to their places of origin within several weeks – a month period);
- Pattern of secondary and multiple displacement in rural and urban centers (according to the REACH study on prolonged displacement, some 23% IDPs were displaced twice or more<sup>1</sup>);
- Pattern of return in unsafe areas due to limited livelihood opportunities in urban centers and the need to tend to crops<sup>2</sup>;
- Pattern of local integration in urban center of protracted IDPs due to lack of security in area of origin;

Recurrent shocks and stressors have been putting an incredible pressure on capacities of the Afghan population to cope with the substantial movement of IDPs and returnees hence dramatically increasing community tensions, negative coping mechanisms, violations of human rights, and overall vulnerabilities<sup>3</sup>. Children are particularly at risk, with incidences of child labor, child marriage and children out of school being higher within IDP/returnee groups than the quiescent population<sup>4</sup>. The focus of emergency humanitarian assistance on those displaced within the last six months and limited assistance for returnees past immediate survival have also contributed to a gap in reintegration and early recovery, with affected populations often returning to worse conditions.

Many contested areas are rural and remote, however assistance is focussed on urban and peri-urban. Pattern of displacements towards urban centers has increased the risk to civilians due to non-respect of IHL and IHRL, indiscriminate targeting and use of civilian assets in the conduct of military operations. It has also strongly diminished the capacities for stabilization and development of the country with regard to the gradual loss of control of large parts of the territory by the GoIRA.

Lack of livelihood opportunities in areas of displacement combined with wide spread insecurity, lack of freedom of movement, and limited humanitarian access to AGEs controlled areas is generating an alarming humanitarian and protection crisis that requires immediate attention and a new strategic approach by the APC.

## **PATTERNS OF ABUSE**

Analysis of protection risks needs to be improved to better prioritize and mitigate risks in 2017-2018. The APC will dedicate further time and resources to producing a comprehensive protection risk analysis. Information available suggest the following patterns of abuse:

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<sup>1</sup> REACH PIDP study, p. 17

<sup>2</sup> IDMC. Afghanistan: New and long-term IDP risk becoming neglected as conflict intensifies.

<sup>3</sup> The findings of the Protection community assessment in the East indicate that additional influx of people into communities, that already have limited service providers' capacities, overstretches the resources, like water, health and education, leading to the overcrowded schools, hospitals facing challenges with the number of people and water sources being not sufficient to meet the needs of the local and displaced population.

<sup>4</sup> Source: UNICEF Sit reps



## Protection of civilians related to IHL/IHRL violations

Civilians bear the brunt of the conflict, as they are caught in the crossfire, victimized by indiscriminate attacks or deliberately targeted. Alongside more traditional guerrilla warfare tactics, a visible intent by Taliban to shift tactics towards large-scale attacks, particularly on urban areas, poses grave risks for civilian protection and results in substantial levels of forced population movements.

Families often leave villages abruptly and with little prior warning, in response to rapidly encroaching clashes or military operations. IDPs often flee only with what they can carry, surrendering key assets in exchange for relocation to safer areas. Displaced populations in Afghanistan often benefit from the support of host communities, largely relying on tribal affiliations or the support of established kinship networks. Spontaneous camps and settlements are therefore the exception rather than the rule. However, widespread poverty among host communities and the rapid depletion of existing resources generally necessitates a humanitarian response to address acute needs (food, shelter, and basic relief and hygiene items) to address relatively high levels of vulnerability in the initial phases of displacement, particularly among those with weak support from family and community networks.

In its Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict Annual Report 2016, UNAMA recorded the highest number of civilian casualties since it began systematic documentation of civilian casualties in 2009. The increase in casualties among children is particularly alarming. Key objectives of the Strategy are to be action-oriented, consider new trends in conflict and displacement and align with priorities identified by the reinstated Humanitarian Access Working Group (HAG). A draft of an advocacy strategy has been revisited in 2017 with the support of the Afghanistan Protection Cluster (APC) and Protection of Civilians Working Group (PoCWG). It identified the following focus areas for advocacy:

- Adherence to IHL principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution to cease the use of explosive weaponry and aerial attacks in civilian populated areas, the indirect use of weaponry and deliberate targeting by parties to the conflict;
- Protection of humanitarian space including aid workers and delivery, healthcare infrastructures in line with ICRC/MSF #NotATarget campaigns and education infrastructures in line with the Oslo Safe Schools Declaration;
- A safe passage for fleeing civilians in times of military operation and conflict induced displacement (especially in large scale emergencies and when military operations aim at capturing or re-capturing cities);
- Continued pressure on the National Unity Government to publish and implement its National Policy on Civilian Casualty Prevention and Mitigation, including all aspects of IHL, with the support of UN and civil society;
- Development of services to protect children affected by conflict, especially to prevent child recruitment and exploitation of children (particularly, bacha bazi) by parties in the conflict.

## Protection from explosive remnants of war

More than three decades of armed conflict in Afghanistan has left widespread mine and ERW contamination across the country. It is estimated that 3,511 minefields, 309 battlefields and 52 contaminated firing ranges remain throughout the country, which affects 1,500 communities. These impacted communities are spread out in 256 districts, in 33 out of 34 provinces, affecting an estimated 910,000 people (figures from UNMAS).

In terms of mines, the priority areas to be cleared are those contaminated sites that are close to communities and where high levels of casualties are being reported. For the current planning period (according to the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan strategic plan) the top 20 districts that report the highest number of casualties (since Jan 2015 until now) are spread across 9 provinces, predominantly in the South and South East regions. They are: Maywand, Nad Ali, Tirin Kot, Shah Wali



Kot, Qalat, Lashkar Gah, Dihrawud, Shahjoy, Andar, Nawa-I- Barak Zayi, Nahri Sarraj, Gelan, Ghazni, Arghistan, Chaghcharan, Qaysar, Puli Khumri, Kandahar, Bala Buluk, Spin Boldak.

Afghanistan still reports the highest number of casualties from mines and explosive remnants of war in the world (according to the 2016 Landmine Monitor). In total UNAMA documented 326 incidents of explosive remnants of war detonation resulting in 724 civilian casualties (217 deaths and 507 injured), an increase of 66 per cent compared to 2015, rendering explosive remnants of war responsible for six per cent of all civilian casualties in 2016. Men accounted for 13 per cent and women account for 3 per cent of these casualties.

Even more worryingly, children comprised 86 per cent of all civilian casualties caused by the detonation of explosive remnants of war in 2016 – making it the second leading cause of child casualties after ground engagements (609 child casualties documented, with 183 deaths and 426 injuries). In the first three months of 2017, once again children comprised the vast majority – 81 per cent – of the casualties caused by the detonation of explosive remnants of war.

UNAMA documented a further increase in civilian casualties from unexploded ordnance during the first three months of 2017, recording 203 civilian casualties (50 deaths and 153 injured), a one per cent increase compared to the same period in 2016.

In April 2017, UNAMA again drew attention to explosive remnants of war, citing them as one of the main causes for a steep rise in child casualties during the first three months of 2017. Danielle Bell, UNAMA's Human Rights Director stated, "The 17 per cent increase in child casualties reflects the failure of parties to the conflict to take adequate precautions to protect civilians, including through marking and clearing unexploded ordnance after fighting ends."

The priority areas with regards to unexploded ordnance (UXO) are those that see the heaviest fighting and thus shift as the fighting shifts. The mine action sector responds by deploying cross trained teams to the areas contaminated once safe. The teams survey and clear spot tasks posing immediate danger. Mobile mine/ERW Risk Education Teams are also deployed where needed, in places of displacement (preparing for people to return), in contaminated areas of return, and at encashment and transit centers.

The returnee population is relatively more prone to lethal landmine and ERW accidents than the civilian population living in their community of origin. According to data from DMAC and UNMAS, travelers including returnees and IDPs account for 30% of all landmine, ERW and Pressure Plate IED accidents. Returnee populations are particularly vulnerable due to their unfamiliarity with the overall threats posed by explosive hazards; lack of information about how to identify them and lack of the potentially life-saving behaviour to adopt in response, in addition to their unfamiliarity with their new surroundings, including the history of armed clashes and potential for explosive contamination in areas of settlement.

All surviving casualties of ERW face social, economic and psychological problems impacting not only the individual, but their families, communities and the Afghan society as a whole. As such, there is a critical need for physical and social rehabilitation programmes throughout Afghanistan. Approximately 90% of the Afghan population lives more than 100km far from a rehabilitation centre; while 20 Provinces out 34 have no prostheses and orthoses services available. With more than 1,360 impacted communities located 10km – 50km from adequate health centres, and a further 26 impacted communities located more than 50km from adequate health centres, the likelihood of fatalities due to mine/ERW and PPIED incidents increases. These 1350 communities are spread across 32 provinces, with a map of the hazards and health centres at the end of this guidance note.



The main challenge to respond to the above are related to funding shortfalls. Afghanistan has the capacity to respond to the threat of mine and ERW and to respond to the needs of victims, but with funding to the sector having dropped by 80 per cent since 2013, the sector is now unable to mobilize sufficient teams to respond to the demand.

Thus going forward, in addition to regular operations, the sector will focus on:

- Maintaining a quick response team on standby who can quickly deploy to areas where fighting has occurred to survey for unexploded ordnance, clear critical tasks and deliver risk education to at risk populations;
- With funding decreasing, but casualty numbers rising or remaining the same, the sector needs to enhance efforts to do more with less, or in other words to be more efficient. Significant cuts have already been made in the cost to clear 1 square meter of contaminated land. Going forward, efforts will be made to make the coordination part of the sector more efficient through finalizing the handover to national counterparts and thereby reducing the expensive UN footprint.
- Advocacy vis-à-vis allied, Government and AGEs with regards to the use of weaponry that may leave ERW in heavily populated areas;
- Advocacy on the need to clear battle sites post kinetic engagement, especially in populated areas;
- Strengthen resource mobilization efforts to ensure the sector can function at full capacity. The total funding for mine action requested through the HRP is \$3,080,676 (across MRE, EOD/survey and coordination), of which 80% (\$2,485,695) has been mobilised.

## Child protection

During displacement and emergencies and conflict, violations of child rights occur in multiple forms. The increased insecurity caused by violence and conflict has exacted an increasing toll on children in terms of the number of civilian casualties along with serious child protection concerns.

The rapid humanitarian assessments of newly conflict-induced displaced populations often detect children amongst those injured by the armed clashes. Aside from material hardships, the psychological impact of the conflict and subsequent flight is deemed to be severe. Recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups remains a significant risk in light of the fragmentation of NSAG and varying degrees of interest in compliance with IHL. Active conflict led to 11,418 civilian casualties<sup>5</sup> in 2016 - approximately 11% were women and 31% were children. In 2016, the Country Taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 57 incidents of recruitment and use of children in the conflict (89 boys) who were recruited and mainly used for planting IEDs, transporting explosives, carrying out suicide attacks and spying. Forced recruitment is primary reason given by Afghan asylum seekers in Sweden and Norway. Poverty, coercion and lack of livelihood opportunities, including during the more prolonged phases of displacement, is also a factor that contributes to the recruitment of children, particularly adolescents. Access to education in displacement is generally hindered by several factors: Poverty and destitution, with a loss of assets and means of livelihood, often forces displaced families to engage children in support of family resilience and interim livelihood strategies. Lack of civil documentation, cultural and social norms, threats and intimidation, social status and poverty are significant obstacles. In 2016, 423 schools were intermittently closed due to conflict and

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<sup>5</sup> UNAMA Protection of civilians 2016 Annual Report. Available here: [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_in\\_armed\\_conflict\\_annual\\_report\\_2016\\_feb2017.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/protection_of_civilians_in_armed_conflict_annual_report_2016_feb2017.pdf)



insecurity, affecting at least 11,200 students, the highest number of closures recorded by the Ministry of Education and UNICEF since 2003<sup>6</sup>.

Batcha Bazi<sup>7</sup> is also widespread in the country and the penal code is currently being changed to make this practice illegal. Parties to the conflict and the police are key perpetrators.

### **Unaccompanied and separated minors and families is an important concern**

The same poverty and instability caused by conflict and natural disasters force many Afghans to leave the country to seek better economic opportunities abroad. Adolescent boys in particular enter neighboring Iran or Pakistan unaccompanied on a regular basis in the hope of finding job opportunities and to contribute to their household income. Some of them move through these countries as transit locations with the ultimate intention being to reach European countries. However, the reality is that many of these children face extreme conditions, often fall into the hands of human traffickers, and get abused, imprisoned or even killed. Many are caught by authorities and sent back to Afghanistan.

Afghan children being formally sent back to Afghanistan from Iran return through one of two border crossings, either Islam Qala close to Herat or Zarang in Nimroz province in the South. During the year 2016, a total of 4,396 UASC were sent back from Iran. It is estimated that 20-30% of these children do not go through a formal return process and do not receive any support. Many of these children have reported horrific stories of abuse and exploitation, including from Iranian police and detention personnel. The experience faced by those adolescents are quite harsh especially as they leave Afghanistan via irregular routes, they are more likely to experience exploitation, abuse and violence not to mention detention prior to their return to Afghanistan. Based on the need presented, a package of services are being offered to children at the Islam Qala border including psychosocial support and family tracing and reunification by UNICEF and its partner in coordination with IOM, DoRR and DoLSAMD. From the period between July 2016 and March 2017, approximately 1,500 children returning through the Islam Qala/Milak border received the above mentioned services with UNICEF support.

A decision was made by the Iranian Government to divert the deportation route from the Islam Qala border to the Milak border in March 2017 which resulted in no flow of UASC to Islam Qala while the flow via Milak border doubled. In order to ensure those children received appropriate services, UNICEF temporarily shifted the partner from Islam Qala border to Malik border until the expected re-opening of the Islam Qala border in July 2017. In Milak border, approximately 150 children are assisted by the end of May 2017 with the same package of services as they were offered in Islam Qala and resettled in with their families. Additional UNICEF NGO partners were brought on board (HRDA) in June 2017, to assure coverage along the entire border.

### **Protection of women and girls**

Women and girls in Afghanistan continue to suffer, directly and indirectly, from the impact of the conflict and of the displacement. The respect and fulfilment of their rights during displacement remain challenged. UNAMA documented 1,218 women casualties in 2016, a 2% decrease from 2015. So far there is little evidence that sexual violence is used as a targeted strategy in the conflict. Obstacles related to social and cultural norms and lack of identification and response capacity does not allow to measure patterns and indications of episodes of GBV perpetrated by parties to the conflict. However, it is presumed that gender based violence occurs widely like in any other armed conflict and

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<sup>6</sup> Consolidated input (UNAMA Human Rights, OCHA, UNHCR, Afghanistan Protection Cluster, IOM) for the Security Council's informal Expert Group on the protection of civilians' discussions on Afghanistan

<sup>7</sup> Bacha bāzī (Dari: بچه بازی, literally "boy play"; from بچه bacha, "child", and بازی bāzī, "game") is a slang term in Afghanistan for a wide variety of activities involving sexual relations between older men and younger adolescent men, or boys, that sometimes includes child sexual abuse. The practitioner is commonly called bacha Baz (meaning "pedophile" in Dari) or simply BACH. Source Wikipedia



displacement setting. In addition, the emergence of new non-State armed groups affiliated with ISIS, particularly in the Eastern, Northern and Southern parts of the country, has contributed to a further deterioration of the situation for women and girls. While most of the facts remain unverified due to the lack of humanitarian access, frequent reports are received from displaced populations on the imposition of stringent social and moral codes for women and girls, including stricter limitations to freedom of movement and to seek basic health and education services among others.

Given the protracted conflict and continued displacements caused by the conflicts, a recrudescence of certain traditional harmful practices, such as early and forced marriages<sup>8</sup>, women and girls do not have meaningful access to education and health services in safety and dignity. The worsening protection environment and increase in internal displacement have generated an increase of vulnerability which can be correlated with the increase in the incidences of traditional harmful practices as negative coping mechanisms. Additionally, an absence of information/awareness about rights, negative effects of the harmful practices on women, girls and children and the lack of quality GBV services further contribute in already fragile context. In this context, existing capacities of basic GBV services including psycho-social counseling, medical, referral and response remain very limited.

Finally, the practice of bacha bazi however, is widespread among the parties in the conflict and represents a Gender Based Violence for young boys.

### **Protection of House Land and Property**

Forced displacement often leads to the loss of land, homes and other property with serious consequences for individuals and communities, who are often deprived of their main source of physical and economic security. Disputes involving housing, land and property (HLP) are both a fundamental cause of conflict as well as a result arising in the aftermath of conflict and can pose obstacles to return, reintegration and reconciliation. These disputes pose immediate protection and early recovery challenges in humanitarian operations. If left unaddressed, disputes on HLP can undermine peace and re-fuel hostilities.

Loss of land and property can have serious consequences for the lives, health and well-being of individuals and communities and expose them to various risks. Without access to land, homes and property people are often deprived of their main source of physical and socio-economic security, including shelter, water, and food as well as the ability to earn a sustainable livelihood. Lack of a home or a fixed residence can also restrict people's access to assistance and services, including education and health care, and limit their access to credit. As a result, displaced persons may suffer increased poverty, marginalization and are at risk of harassment, exploitation and abuse. Women and children often suffer disproportionately from the loss of land, homes and property. Discriminatory laws and practices frequently prevent women and girls from owning, leasing, renting and/or inheriting property. In case of divorce or the death of husbands, fathers or other male relatives, women and girls may be forced to leave their homes, coerced into marriage, or subjected to other harmful practices.

## **CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE OF CONCERN OF PROTECTION**

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** Over 652,600 Afghans (approximately 96,000 families) were newly displaced due to conflict in 2016, adding to a protracted IDP population of over 1 million. Most IDPs found refuge with host families in neighboring communities, already facing extreme poverty. Food, adequate shelter, WASH, and health care remain high priority needs, while efforts to raise awareness of mines and ordnance risks are also ongoing. A majority of IDPs live an insecure existence in makeshift shelters and informal squatter settlements with irregular access to services, poor

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<sup>8</sup> 8.8% of women aged 20-24 were married or in a union before the age of 15 and 45% before the age of 18 (AfDHS15)



sanitation including a lack of latrines, and fragile livelihood strategies; others reside in shared and overcrowded rental accommodation, or with relatives.

**Returns:** In 2016, more than 600,000 documented and undocumented Afghans returned from Pakistan and Iran including 372,577 registered refugees who returned under UNHCR's facilitated return program and were provided with UNHCR cash grants as part of their repatriation assistance package. The majority of returnees have indicated Kabul, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Herat, Balkh, Ghazni, Baghlan and Kunduz provinces as their intended destination for return, including areas subject to attacks by armed groups. Returnees report a lack of land and adequate shelter, insufficient livelihoods, insecurity, and poor access to services as obstacles to sustainable return and reintegration. These and other factors have forced many returnees to undertake secondary movement to locations, particularly in urban centers, other than their place of origin.

**Refugees and Asylum Seekers:** As of December 2016, 208 individuals were recognized as refugees while 135 had sought asylum. Financial support to these refugees and asylum-seekers, according to their vulnerability while meeting basic needs for food and shelter, must continue because of their lack of income, livelihood opportunities, and effective legal protection. Meanwhile, it is estimated that over 125,000 Pakistani refugees who have fled North Waziristan, mostly in 2014, are still hosted in Afghanistan. The lack of formal birth registration for refugee children born in Afghanistan may heighten the risk of statelessness.

**Host/Affected Communities:** The year 2016 saw the highest level of security incidents (23,712) in over a decade, including some 3,498 civilian deaths and 7,920 injured civilians. A similar trend was reported in January 2017, amid increasing territorial gains by AGEs. It is projected that conflict will continue to frequently result in substantial levels of forced population movements placing an additional burden on overstretched resources and support systems with some members of the host communities experiencing the same assistance needs as IDPs.

**People with specific needs:** Conflict-induced displacement disproportionately affects individuals with specific needs, such as children, constituting around 60% of the displaced population, women, older persons, and persons with disabilities. These populations are often exposed to the greatest deprivations and harshest conditions. Access to health for conflict-affected and displaced populations is gravely compromised by the extremely poor conditions of public health structures. Moreover, the numerous episodes of grave breaches of IHL with respect to medical facilities, medical personnel, and medical transport by NSAG, has led to numerous closures of facilities and the loss of access to life-saving medical care by local and displaced population. The chronic lack of female personnel and limited outreach hinders access for women to critical services and treatment. There is a duty to ensure that protection is mainstreamed across all response sectors as people with special needs are often exposed to protection concerns, including a lack of privacy and GBV due to overcrowded shelters, diversion of food assistance, placement of water sources and cash distribution points at a far distance from areas of settlement and where markets and community latrines are inaccessible.

## HUMANITARIAN AND DEVELOPMENT NEXUS

Returns and displacement are concentrated in time and space, thus posing a disproportionately large challenge to the absorption capacity of some districts and provinces. While the local impact of a massive influx of refugees, and the capacity to reintegrate, depends on a range of factors, one thing is clear: local absorption capacity certainly has a limit. Once the limit is reached, competition over resources could trigger or reinforce pre-existing causes of conflict, especially since institutions are weak. The increase in secondary displacement among returnees is a strong sign that the country's capacity to absorb and reintegrate additional inflows of returnees was already overstretched before the surge of the recent months' returns. There is no reason to believe trends will be reversed: a higher





number of returns from abroad will likely result in an increase in internal displacement. In particular, the continued deterioration of the security situation and the economic crisis in Afghanistan are likely to further challenge the reintegration of more recent returns. Whilst displacement is not the principal driver of vulnerability in this context, many of the factors related to displacement, including high levels of poverty, reduced access to informal safety nets, a lack of documentation and the loss of land and assets, have increased the vulnerabilities of some displaced households. REACH has estimated that some 759,293 IDPs, returnees and urban poor have settled in the informal settlements across the country. These settlements rarely offer any kind of formal social protection, education and psycho-social services.

In this context it is important to consider the difference between humanitarian and development principles and what this means for the neutrality of aid. Furthermore, humanitarian assistance modalities cannot respond properly to the urban displacement phenomena, the scale of displacement and nature of needs generated. It requires different types of intervention modalities along early recovery and development types of programming. The concept of the “new way of working” outlines the importance of mobilising development actors and further consider comparing advantages in these kind of situations.

The Government of Afghanistan has laid out its vision in the Mutual Accountability Framework (2014) and the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF 2017-2021) to transform Afghanistan in the coming years. In part, the aim of these frameworks is to ensure the rights of all citizens, including returnees and IDPs, to economic and physical security. The ANPDF further emphasizes that finding solutions for the needs of IDPs and returnees is a “vital part of the national development strategy”, thereby recognizing that the response requires a ‘whole of Government approach’ through its National Priority Programs (NPPs). Land tenure security, property rights, and upgrading the informal settlements are prioritized throughout the framework as measures to reduce poverty.

These developments represent a major opportunity to advance on key policy decisions - such as the right to settle in the area of choice, the right to obtain civil documentation in the area of settlement etc. – and to prioritize and target development response to vulnerable populations. However, the implementation of the Displacement & Returns Executive Committee Policy Framework and Action Plan at provincial level, taking into consideration an inclusive approach to respond to the needs of IDPs, returnees and host communities, represents a challenge but is also an opportunity to bridge the divide between humanitarian and development interventions, implementation modalities and funding streams. The commitment of donors towards a needs based approach based on a planning process that consolidates the immediate-, medium- and long-term needs and prioritized interventions is encouraging. It may finally facilitate the move from a fragmented approach towards an integrated response with concrete roles and responsibilities allocated to key actors (Government, donors, UN agencies, NGOs).

## **KEY GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS AND SCOPE OF WORK**

Protection concerns are tremendous in Afghanistan, some are directly related to ongoing conflict, ground engagements and forced displacement as other are rather related to widespread poverty and structural deficit. The APC will first and foremost address protection issues related to new shocks and will mobilize development actors to respond to protection issues related to structural deficits.

**Given limited resources and capacities**, it is paramount for the APC to prioritize key geographical areas taking into consideration following elements:



**Focus on key protection risks, responsive and rehabilitation actions:** Mainly related to Protection of civilian in high combat intensity areas as well as hard-to-reach populations in AGEs controlled areas should access allowed, new displacement due to the conflict, and equity of access to services by vulnerable groups.

**Severity of needs and response capacity:** Consideration will be given to the number of affected populations, especially children, in the contested, IEA and government controlled areas. Presence of operational partners and response capacity will be also taken into consideration. As of 1 March 2017 the access snapshot indicates approximately 54% of the territory is controlled or contested by NSAG. As of January 2017, the 3W Map shows the humanitarian community to be present as follows (if BPHS staff are included then the number of staff will increase in all areas): Areas under control of government (30,349 staff), contested areas (13, 279 staff), NSAG control (428 staff).

**Mobilization of early recovery and development actors** on the basis of comparative advantage and collective outcomes: Increased partnership with development actors to address urban displacement, prolonged/protracted displacement, durable solutions and the reintegration of returnees, development and structural deficit that generates negatives coping mechanism and acute vulnerabilities.

Where humanitarian access is feasible or could be negotiated, the APC will focus its interventions and coordination efforts on **high combat intensity/contested areas** that generate heightened protection risks and require an immediate response to protect affected population.

The scope of work for the APC is defined below on the next page and will be considered as key areas of priorities for the APC.

## CONCLUSION




The APC Guidance Note facilitates the identification of key areas of work to redefine strategic priorities for the APC. It provides highlights on some patterns of abuse and specific categories of population that are exposed to threats. It also suggests key coordination and partnership areas for the APC to strengthen.

However, it also highlights the APC's limited capacity to collect protection data and build up a more robust and comprehensive protection analysis. The main challenges have been identified as limited humanitarian access, sensitivity related to some protection thematic, a lack of information sharing among different agencies, limited capacity and knowledge to operationalize the protection risks equation, a lack of conflict sensitivity analysis and limited protection assessments. The available protection analysis is usually limited to the overall chronic issues in the country, while conflict and displacement related risks and threats remain less explored and assessed.

Those limitations can be overcome should the APC members prioritize the resources to fill those gaps and increase their commitment to the coordination system for the protection sector.

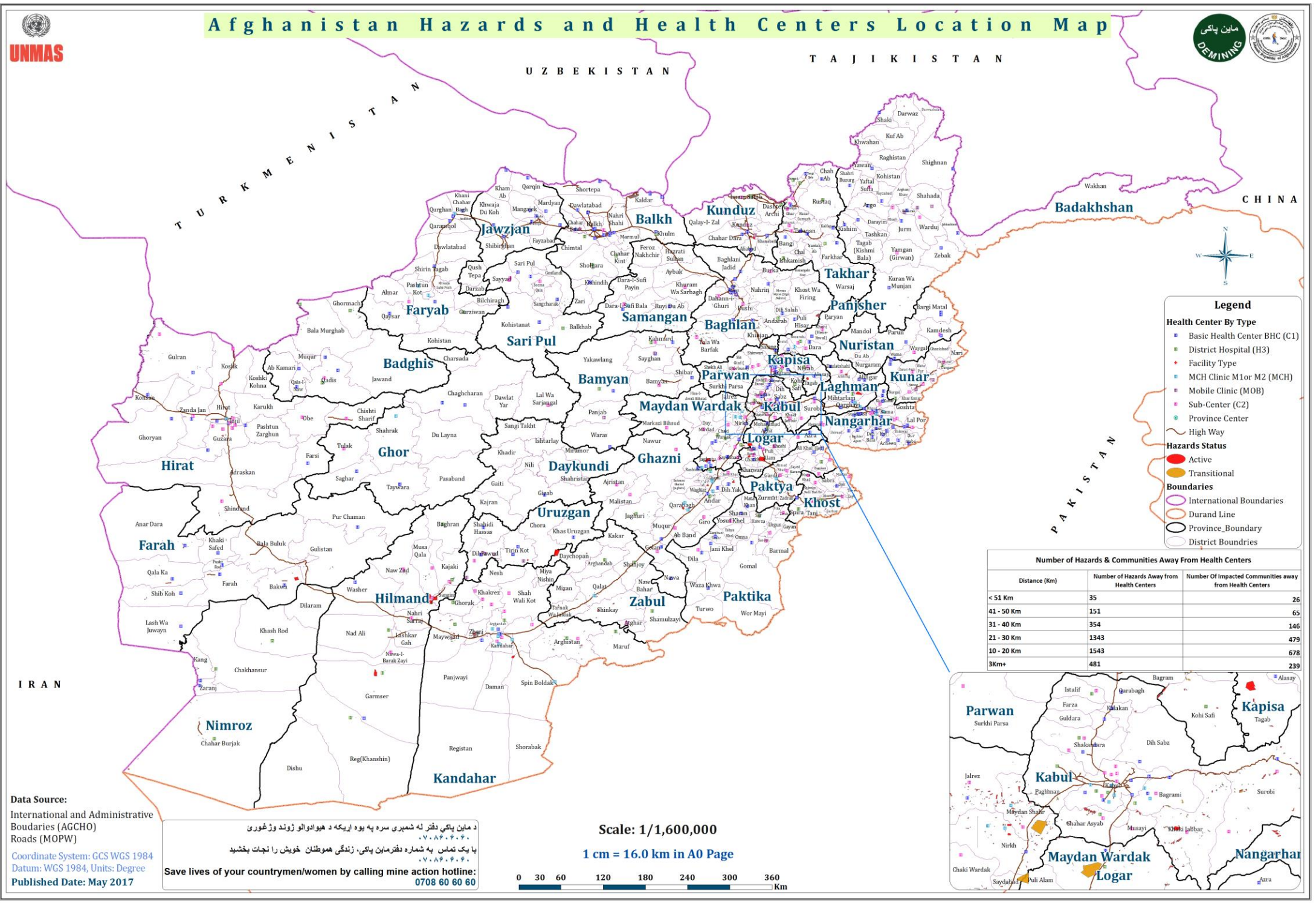
A workshop with APC members will be organized in the course of August 2017 which will provide an opportunity to produce a joint protection analysis that would support a prioritization exercise.

Integrated protection response plans are also under development at regional level and will provide a regional perspective of the protection context and priorities.

Strategic priorities	Protection of civilians	Displacement	Access to services
<b>Modalities</b>			
 <b>Advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring and reporting (civilians casualties, MRM)</li> <li>Engagement with parties to the conflict</li> <li>Support to the NUG to publish and implement its National Policy on Civilian Casualty Prevention and Mitigation (Cf. PoC key advocacy areas)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to DiREC</li> <li>Information products</li> <li>Briefing notes to HC/HCT, GPC, Donors</li> <li>Adherence to refugee law especially with regard to refoulement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to civil documentation and policies for the affected population to be able to access justice, education, finance and inheritance rights in the interim</li> <li>Linkage with Citizen Charter CDCs</li> </ul>
	Protection monitoring		
	HCT Protection strategy		
 <b>Access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conflict and stakeholder analysis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection integration in Health, FS, Shelter/NFI, WASH, cash based programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication and information strategy</li> </ul>
	HAG - Negotiated access strategies of international actors		
	Partnership and capacity building of local actors		
	Establishment of Community Network		
	Mobile outreach and remote monitoring		
 <b>Protection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mine action</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protection assessment and analysis</li> <li>Alert system</li> <li>Gender analysis</li> <li>Preparedness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PSN Network (Identification and referral)</li> <li>linkage with AIHRC to address areas of human trafficking, lack of access to essential services and justice through a human rights lens</li> </ul>
	Community Based Measures	Protection Mainstreaming in Health, FS, Shelter/NFI, WASH, cash based programming	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UNAMA PoC</li> <li>Local advocacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assistance and Mediation to issues related to HLP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Protection (support to CPANs, CFS, packet of services)</li> <li>GBV capacity (Identification and referral), legal assistance</li> <li>Access to tazkera</li> </ul>
	Call center		



# Afghanistan Hazards and Health Centers Location Map



**Legend**

**Health Center By Type**

- Basic Health Center BHC (C1)
- District Hospital (H3)
- Facility Type
- MCH Clinic M1 or M2 (MCH)
- Mobile Clinic (MOB)
- Sub-Center (C2)
- Province Center

**Hazards Status**

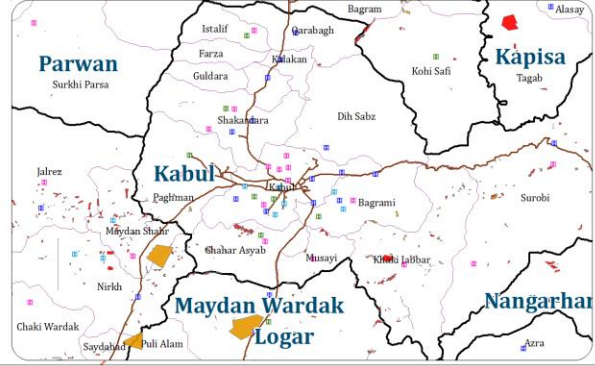
- Active
- Transitional

**Boundaries**

- International Boundaries
- Durand Line
- Province\_Boundary
- District Boundries

**Number of Hazards & Communities Away From Health Centers**

Distance (Km)	Number of Hazards Away from Health Centers	Number Of Impacted Communities away from Health Centers
< 51 Km	35	26
41 - 50 Km	151	65
31 - 40 Km	354	146
21 - 30 Km	1343	479
10 - 20 Km	1543	678
3Km+	481	239



**Data Source:**  
 International and Administrative Boudaries (AGCHO)  
 Roads (MOPW)  
 Coordinate System: GCS WGS 1984  
 Datum: WGS 1984, Units: Degree  
 Published Date: May 2017

د ماین پاکي دفتر له شمېرې سره په يوه اړيکه د هيوادوالو ژوند وژغوري  
 .۰۷.۰۸۶.۶۰.۶۰  
 با يک تماس په شمېره دفتر ماین پاکي، زندگی هوموطن خویش را نجات بخشد  
 .۰۷.۰۸۶.۶۰.۶۰  
**Save lives of your countrymen/women by calling mine action hotline:**  
**0708 60 60 60**

**Scale: 1/1,600,000**  
**1 cm = 16.0 km in A0 Page**

