



Meeting Minutes & Report

Chair person	Elisabetta Brumat	Venue	UNHCR, LEA building
Co-chair	Aimee Karam, MOSA	Date	28 May 2014
Minutes/report by	Toni Ayrouth, Elisabetta Brumat	Time	10:00AM - 12:30PM
Main Organisations attending	ALEF, Balamand, CARE, CLMC, COOPI, ECHO, HI/Help Age, IOM, IRAP, IRC, ICRC, Intersos, MC, MOSA, NRC, OCHA, OHCHR, Oxfam UK, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, URDA, WA, WRC, and WRF Details on Participants: (see annex A)		

Introduction / Administrative matters

- Minutes of 23th April PWG meeting previously circulated for comments amongst participants were approved.
- The chair encouraged the participants to systematically consult the Web Portal for sector updates
 - General portal <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=122>
 - Dedicated page Protection http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/working_group.php?Page=Country&LocationId=122&Id=25
- **Activity Info reporting**
 - Refresher session on Friday 30 May (General)
 - Activity Info reports for May to be finalized by 7th June at the latest (linked to RRP6 process)
- **Periodical snapshot on the progress for the PWGs in the field:** updated information from Mount Lebanon and Qubayat: in Mount Lebanon, IRC started to co-lead the PWG on a rotation basis; in Qubayat, NRC started to co-lead on a rotation basis. Technical groups are expanding. Legal partners for more in-depth analysis on legal issues, discussion and coordination of field activities (e.g. coverage of legal awareness sessions) are now present in all PWGs in the field. Protection/Shelter Evictions WG/ Committees, already established in Bekaa and Tripoli, are under discussion also in Qubayat and Tyre.
- **Update on the RRP6 revision process:**
 - a) Overall amount of Protection Sector (General Protection, SGBV and Child Protection)
 - from \$229m to \$175m (down 23.5%) *[NB on 3rd June UNHCR revised its budget upwards and the overall Protection Sector budget increased to \$183m]*
 - SGBV components (Objective 3) and Child Protection (Objective 4) decreased minimally: 8% decrease for SGBV (from \$32m to \$29m); 7% decrease for Child Protection (from \$59m to \$55m)
 - Government/MOSA component, included in the figures above, largely unchanged in all three areas of intervention(\$46m)
 - Few new appealing organizations included, but their budget levels have not offset the overall decrease
 - b) Current situation for the General Protection Objectives 1,2,5
 - Sensible decrease in general protection from \$138m to \$90m. *[NB on 3rd June UNHCR revised its budget upwards and the budget increased to \$98m]*
 - UNHCR budget from \$89m to \$49m *[NB on 3rd June UNHCR revised its budget upwards and the budget increased to \$57m]* largely due to shift of the cash component (some \$33m in output 2.3) and few other outputs to reflect current implementation rates /adjustments
 - Few partners withdrew December bilateral submissions (some \$6.4m)
 - One new partner – MAG (mine action)
 - Other partners decreased requirements due to funding projections, estimated capacity, other implementation agreements
 - UNHCR remains the highest appealing organization, followed by MOSA. Major NGOs partners: NRC and HI
 - Revised indicators were presented. They are in line with the Activity Info current reporting and have been calculated on the basis of the output targets submitted by the partners and the current level of AI reporting.

- **RRP6 Next steps:**
 - By 1st June: feedback from the RO Amman
 - 1st June – 15th June: Final review
 - 7th June: Deadline for partners for May data input to Activity Info
 - 15th June: Final country chapter submitted

Topic of the Month: Persons with disabilities: Understanding vulnerability and resilience	Presenter: Emma Pearce - WRC
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- The WRC Representative summarised the first results of the ongoing visit to Lebanon. The visit is a follow-up of the previous mission undertaken in 2013. On that occasion, the WRC entertained extensive consultations with persons with disabilities (PWDs). It recommended, amongst other issues, more attention to the needs of persons with new impairments in longer-term response planning; an increased integration of disability into training for registration and protection staff, outreach workers and case managers; the promotion of inclusive strategies for the community centres to increase accessibility for persons with disabilities and their families.
- The current WRC mission is following up on those recommendations, particularly looking into disability inclusion in relation to the activities of community centres/SDCs, case management and refugee outreach. During the current mission, consultations are taking place also with PWG and actors at field level in Beirut, Bekaa Valley, Tripoli and Akkar.
- The WRC stressed the necessity to continue devoting attention to PWDs. The WRC representative highlighted the recently published HA/HI survey, which indicated a high prevalence of this category of persons with specific needs amongst refugees. The WRC continued to indicate the importance to reach the most vulnerable categories amongst this group. The need for a proper identification of the protection concerns of PWDs, including at registration level and by community volunteers/ Refugee Outreach Volunteers, remains relevant and hence the importance to continue with training and sensitisation.
- However, the WRC representatives highlighted that the vulnerability and the high risk of PWDs goes well beyond their medical/ clinical situation and a mere referral to specialised agencies is not always the ultimate solution for all PWDs. PWDs may experience protection concerns as a result of multiple and intersecting social and economic vulnerability factors that are not only related to a medical condition and that are rather connected to isolation, stigma, psychological factors, socio-economic conditions. These cases may not represent high priorities from a clinical perspective, and yet they present high vulnerabilities that need to be addressed through a more comprehensive assessment, case follow-up, and adequate referral to service providers by social workers and case managers. Examples from the field were provided.
- While referral pathways and cases management is being strengthened for SGBV and Child Protection cases, some PWG members highlighted a risk that other protection cases, including PWDs, may not be properly addressed, also due to the limited number of case management agencies, and may be left without adequate support. *(See section 10 – Access to Services and Assistance)*

1) Access to Territory (new arrivals, border monitoring)

Follow up on previous action point	
New Issues & trends Action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports from the PWGs in the field (Bekaa, Akkar and Tripoli) did not highlight significant changes in access to territory for Syrian refugees up to the day of the meeting. The situation is closely monitored, in light of the recent declarations from the Government on border policies. Random refusal due to damaged documentation continues to be reported. ▪ Advocacy efforts continue from mandate agencies (UNHCR and UNRWA), including with public statements, while common messages on border restrictions have also been agreed within a group of protection-minded agencies. ▪ UNRWA update on PRS <i>(see also Civil Status Documentation)</i>: UNRWA reported that from the beginning of May, the Lebanese Government has implemented further restrictions to PRS seeking to enter Lebanon. The restrictions followed the events of 3rd May, when a group of

	<p>some 41 PRS, allegedly in possession of forged travel documents, was detained at the Beirut International Airport and subsequently deported. Following this incident, the Ministry of Interior issued a statement on 8 May limiting entry to Lebanon to PRS possessing an entry document pre-approved by the General Directorate of General Security (GSO), while other criteria previously in place were not anymore considered. PRS in possession of valid visas and valid plane tickets to a third country are generally permitted to enter for a maximum of 9 hours prior to the time of their flight. The measures were announced to be of temporary nature. From the last week of May, officers at the border started to send details of 'exceptional' cases seeking to enter Lebanon to Beirut to be reviewed, but the overall situation remains unpredictable. The restrictions have led to a significant increase in the number of PRS unable to access Lebanon.</p>	
<p>Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy</p>	<p>For PWG s in the field</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PWGs in the field to alert PWG Beirut on changes in any regime at the border for Syrian refugees and PRS entering Lebanon.
	<p>For PWG national level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In light of the evolving situation, PWG members to maintain close liaison with the field / presence at the border to signal restrictive changes.

2) Access to Registration (UNHCR, Municipalities, others)

<p>Follow up on previous action point</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inter-agency SOPs and the form to refer to UNHCR field offices the details of non-registered refugees have been disseminated. ▪ One-Off Desk review on non-registered refugees: form disseminated through PWG members with feedback requested by 26 May. As no feedback has yet been received, the deadline is postponed to 10 June. ▪ Registration information material uploaded on the web portal for easy access and downloading for distribution (Protection Page). ▪ Business Card Registration Leaflet: UNHCR announced a delay in printing.
<p>New Issues & trends Action taken</p>	<p>Registration update as of 26 May (UNHCR Registration Unit)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 72% of RRP6 projections reached ▪ Total registered in April approximately 50,400 individuals, i.e. 2% increase from March and in line with projections; approximately 50,000 Syrian refugees verified-renewed in April. ▪ 1,027,342 refugees registered; 57,683 awaiting registration. ▪ 5 day decrease in waiting period, currently at 25 days. ▪ Referral form for Refugee Outreach Volunteers to capture non-registered refugees: developed and training set for early June. ▪ Cooperation with UNICEF Polio Campaign exercise: first set of results show very few unregistered families ▪ Random Thematic Questionnaire for April focussed on Entry into Lebanon, Renewing and Legalizing Stay (1,260 refugee Households randomly consulted). Main highlights (the survey will also be posted on the web-portal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 59% entered officially through Masnaa; 8% through unofficial border. - Of those who entered through unofficial borders, 44% did so due to the proximity of the border, or as it was a cheaper option; 25% due to lack of documents. - 7.6% respondents faced problems at border; of those, 37% due to long waiting hours (3+hours); 19% had one or more family members denied entry. - 67% of those who had one/more family member denied entry to Lebanon did not specify a reason, 14% cited the lack of documents. - 35% of respondents willing to renew their residency permit do not know the modalities; 44% of respondents who do not intend to renew their residency permits are restricted by lack of financial means; 30% due to fear of returning to Syria. ▪ Renewal-Verification Survey in April (6,870 HH/ 26,947 Individuals Surveyed)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 55% Heads of Household stated they and/or their family member(s) returned to Syria; 43% HoH and/or family members returned only once. - <u>Reasons for Return</u>: 35% to obtain documents; 19% to check on family; 12% to visit friends and relatives; 10% for medical reasons - <u>Internal movement in Lebanon</u>: 15% (1,030 HH) of those verified changed their contact information. Movements of refugees to/from/within the Northern region was the highest; the lowest cadence was reported in the South. - <u>Problems faced in Lebanon</u>: 9% reported having faced problems since registration. Of those, 24% (137) due to lack of inclusion in targeted assistance; 23% (132) problems accessing services/assistance; 10% (59) due to lack of medical assistance. - Legal status in Lebanon: 33% (2,243 individuals) held an expired residency. Of those: 58% due to inability to pay the renewal fees; 23% due to entry through unofficial borders; 15% for multiple reasons (i.e. unable to pay, afraid to approach GoL, unaware of procedures) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ PWG members highlighted the value of these surveys, given their wide coverage and random sampling. Participants were invited to flag future potential themes of interest. Access to school (before the start of the school year) and factors influencing the refugees' choice of accommodation were mentioned. It was also noted that issues related to disabilities may not be optimal for these random surveys conducted during the registration. To be meaningful, they should rather require a more purposive sampling. 	
<p>Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy</p>	<p>For PWG in the field</p>	
	<p>For PWG national level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Re-dissemination of UNHCR form for the "One-off" desk review of non-registered refugees for partners willing to participate in this exercise (ref. conclusions of the 23 April PWG). Contributions to be sent to UNHCR Registration Unit ksaifi@unhcr.org by 10 June. ▪ Thematic Surveys during UNHCR registration process: PWG partners are welcomed to highlight some topics for consideration in future surveys. Topics may be signalled to UNHCR Registration unit ksaifi@unhcr.org (cc the sector coordinator).

3) Civil status documentation (birth registration, statelessness, residency permit)

<p>Follow up on previous action point</p>		
<p>New Issues & trends Action taken</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mirroring the fora already created at field level, a group of major legal partners is periodically convened by UNHCR at national level to discuss practices and developments that may require legal analysis and expertise. The discussion so far focussed on procedural aspects in the renewal of legal stay and on the legality of the confiscation of refugees' personal documents by hospitals as a guarantee for payment, in cooperation with the legal partners' forum in Tripoli. The protection coordinator has already provided feedback to some of the analysis and will continue the participation. Periodical information sharing with the national PWG is recommended. ▪ UNRWA update on PRS: aside the mentioned border restrictions, UNRWA reported an effective freeze of the visa/ residency permit renewals for PRS, even for individuals willing and ready to pay the required fees. Few exceptions were admitted for those PRS who had already paid LBP 300,000 to renew their legal status for a second year, who were granted a three-month renewal. Although these measures have not translated in deportations, they raised significant concerns. On 21 May, a GSO Circular gave PRS with irregular status one month to regularize their status with the GSO (until 22 June). Nevertheless, according to UNRWA there are anecdotic reports of PRS still unable to regularize their status at GSO offices and the situation continues to be monitored to gather better evidence and trends. 	

Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As necessary, liaise with the national legal partner forum for possible feedback and support on ongoing legal issues emerging at field level.
	For PWG national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As convener of the national legal partners meeting, UNHCR to provide periodical feedback to the national PWG. PWG members may bring to the attention of the legal partners' forum issues of concern that may deserve a more in-depth legal research.

4) Freedom of Movement / Detention (curfew, check points, arbitrary detention)		
Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	

5) Physical safety (treats violation, security incidents, minorities, exploitation, not covered under SGBV/Child Protection)		
Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	

6) Sexual and Gender Based Violence (update form SGBV Task Force)		
Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	

7) Child Protection in Emergency (update from Child Protection in Emergency Working Group)		
Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	

8) House, land and property		
Follow up on previous action point		
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG in the field	
	For PWG national level	

9) Relation with host community	
Follow up on previous action point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After an initial meeting with between the respective coordinators, it was suggested that the PWG at national level expands the dialogue with the Social Cohesion Sector to consider strengthening synergies between the two sectors. Due to the opportunity to host the intervention and the discussion of the WRC in the current PWG meeting, the agreed dialogue is temporarily postponed to a subsequent national PWG meeting.
New Issues & trends Action taken	
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG
	For PWG national level

10) Access to services and assistance (discriminatory practices, access information, PWSN)	
Follow up on previous action point	
New Issues & trends Action taken	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In connection with the presentation of the WRC, some of the PWG members highlighted that there is a need to strengthen the referral and case management system for protection cases, including PWDs. Since SGBV and Child protection referral pathways and cases management systems are comparatively well established, lessons learnt and best practices should be considered. PWG members, particularly UNHCR representatives, highlighted the need to improve risk identification and prioritisation of vulnerable protection cases (other than Child protection and SGBV) through a better mobilisation of community and outreach volunteers; through a deeper reflection on the current coverage and capacity of case-management agencies; through a better integration of PWDs in the activities of Community Centres/ SDCs to create a better supportive system.
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG
	For PWG national level
	<p>UNHCR to elaborate a short proposal to create a small and time-bound technical committee on case management within the national PWG to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> strengthen identification, prioritization, assessment of needed response/ services and tracking of persons at risk – with particular reference to cases not considered in the referral pathways already in place in the SGBV TF and Child Protection WG; strengthen community-based support systems for persons with specific needs, including in Community Centres/SDC and building also on the recommendations of the WRC.

11) Refugee outreach / Mass Communication and Information	
Follow up on previous action point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> INQAL update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active interest and participation to the initiative ensured by the field PWGs, who commented on the initial draft with several additional questions. Registration, civil documentation (birth, marriage, death), legal stay-related procedures, detention, resettlement are currently the main topics suggested, including at field level. Additional topics on PRS and Lebanese Returnees will be sought from UNRWA and IOM. A compromise is necessary to consider the frequency of requests for information on legal issues, amply mentioned by the refugees according to the field PWGs, and the complexity of these legal topics. While the INQAL will present the more general information, a suggestion for further consultation with legal partners will be included in the various answers. The Coordinator will consolidate the field inputs and circulate the draft amongst the PWG

	Core Group for final comments. This will be followed by an endorsement from the Sector. - Further support is being sought from all partners to compile a basic directory of addresses.	
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG in the field	
	For PWG national level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sector Coordinator to share the new INQAL draft with the Core Group for final comments and then with the PWG for final endorsement.

12) Protection mainstreaming, capacity building, Assessments		
Follow up on previous action point	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ While the overall MSNA report is under review by the MSNA Steering Committee, a final agreement has been reached by the PWG Core Group on the on the extended Protection Sector chapter. As other sectors' chapters, it will be soon posted on the Web Portal (as other sectors). MOSA may propose some additional remarks on the MSNA exercise in the overall MSNA report. 	
New Issues & trends Action taken		
Follow up required: Concrete Intervention Advocacy	For PWG	
	For PWG national level	