

Protection Working Group Meeting

Tuesday, 16 February 2016 – 10:00-12:00

UNHCR, Zamalek

1. Follow-up on action points from the last meeting held on 19/01/2016:

- a. UNHCR to circulate the assessment report from Save the Children: the report was attached to the invitation email to the current meeting.
- b. PSTIC to circulate the minutes of the NGO meeting on SGBV: Dr. Nancy briefly mentioned that there were no minutes but that the collaborative work of SGBV was discussed in Alex IAWG and that in March a training on SGBV identification tools is taking place.
- c. UNHCR to circulate an update on UNHCR partnership agreements in 2016: UNHCR referred to point 2. of the meeting agenda (*see below*).
- d. UNHCR to share information on the high level meeting of 30 March 2016 on global responsibility sharing through pathways for admission, on the World Humanitarian Summit of May 2016 and on the September 2016 New York Summit on large displacement situations: See email from UNHCR to PWG members on 10 Feb. UNHCR also informed the meeting on efforts currently made in preparation for the high level meeting of 30 March 2016 on burden sharing, to which 20 ministers have already confirmed attendance. The meeting will aim at looking into other legal pathways and alternatives to resettlement, including in the context of labor mobility mechanisms, education opportunities and medical referrals, in order to achieve responsibility sharing.

2. Overview of UNHCR protection partners in 2016

UNHCR informed the group on the partnership agreements it has concluded for 2016, noting that 3 project agreements with partners on livelihood, community mobilization and vulnerability assessments are yet to be finalized. The final list will be shared with the PWG once available.

Dr. Nancy raised the point of access to legal services and advocated for direct referrals of refugees by partners to legal aid providers. She noted that for emergencies reaching out to UNHCR for legal referral can be a lengthy process. UNHCR will re-share the list of focal points with the group to ensure timely response.

3. Overview of 2015 protection trends

UNHCR presented an overview of protection trends in 2015 noting that currently people of concern to UNHCR come from 65 different countries of origin. In 2015, the arrival of Syrians has decreased. In light of the new visa regime introduced in Turkey for Syrian

nationals, it is likely that the number of Syrians irregularly moving by sea will increase in 2016.

On arrivals for other nationalities, 2015 witnessed approximately 12,000 new arrivals and a total of 19,000 new registrations (including Yemenis and Somalis living in Yemen due to the conflict).

ICRC enquired about the Sudanese deported from Jordan. UNHCR noted that so far 120 of the group approached the office and advised the group to refer to our office in case further were identified.

Dr. Nancy raised a concern about the Somalis arriving from Yemen and the claim of the use of assistance given by UNHCR to travel to Egypt. She noted that the community has no capacity to share the burden as the new comers are families of big size, mainly single mothers. UNHCR noted that a meeting is scheduled with UNHCR colleagues in Yemen to discuss current assistance policies in Yemen.

UNHCR noted that, in 2015, its Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Unit conducted a massive exercise to reduce the waiting period for RSD interviews from 2020 to 2017. UNHCR however will continue to try to streamline its processes including through collapsed procedures expected to have an additional impact on reducing the waiting period for an appointment and decision.

Dr. Nancy raised a concern on pending RSD decisions and whether they are included on the new RSD schedule. Another concern was flagged by RLAP on LGBTI cases and their delayed RSD appointments or decisions. UNHCR confirmed working on all pending decisions and that cases of LGBTI should be flagged to RSD or Protection asap to ensure timely response.

RLAP mentioned a concern relating to communication with asylum seekers for their new RSD appointment as many lately do not receive the text message or only in English and hence miss their appointments.

UNHCR indicated that it met its 2015 resettlement quota with more than 5,600 people submitted and that for 2016 the quota is increased to 4,200 Syrians and 2,500 other nationalities. UNHCR also participated in the humanitarian transfer programme to Canada in December 2015 whereby UNHCR referred more than 600 people for resettlement to Canada. The increased quota in 2016 is needed to respond to the protection challenges and shrinking protection space in Egypt including for the increasing population in detention. The introduction of visa requirements for Syrians to Turkey and other developments in the region will likely affect the migration flows and might impact the number of those moving irregularly, who will be at heightened risk of arrest.

RLAP raised a concern about the asylum certificates that put people at risk of arrest. UNHCR noted that so far there is no foreseen changes of policy, however the new RSD schedule might help by reducing the waiting period for interview.

4. 3RP Protection Sector ActivityInfo reporting

The ActivityInfo software is used in the region for reporting purposes in the context of the Syria refugee response. It is now being rolled out in Egypt for all partners to report on all activities undertaken under the 3RP in 2016. A training will take place in March for PWG partners on the use of ActivityInfo.

5. Any Other Business

- a. UNHCR noted that the contingency plan on Libya will be updated and that in light of political and military developments in Libya, the ‘old’ migration route to Israel might be increasingly used again by smugglers in 2016.
- b. The field visit for donors will take place sometime in March. Dr. Nancy will revert on how the visit should be planned.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting shall take place on the 15th of March 2016 from 10:00-12:00, at UNHCR Zamalek Office.

END