Protection Monitoring Tool - UNHCR Iraq

UNHCR, the Protection Cluster Lead in Iraq, together with other protection partners, developed and implemented a digital household-level assessment, the Protection Monitoring Tool (PMT), across Iraq in order to move towards evidence-based advocacy, systematizing data collection to improve analysis, information sharing, and quality and breadth of information.

Before the PMT was used, UNHCR, Protection Cluster members and other protection partners had conducted protection monitoring for internally displaced Iraqis, however it was difficult to analyse trends across the country, as information collected was not harmonized.

Since September 2015, the PMT has been in use in all 18 governorates (provinces) in Iraq, including areas of internal displacement and areas of return. Protection monitoring is conducted where there is safe humanitarian access.

Development of the Protection Monitoring Tool
The PMT evolved from a household-level assessment initiated by UNHCR in early 2014 to assess IDPs fleeing conflict in Anbar Governorate. In the summer of 2014, as more than 1 million Iraqis were displaced, there was an urgent need to understand their protection needs, and the fluid dynamics of displacement.

As a result, in early 2015, UNHCR initiated collaboration with Protection Cluster members and protection partners to enhance the household assessment to address the wide-spread and urgent nature of forced displacement. Simultaneously, the PMT moved from a two-step paper form, to a single digital form using the KoBo Collect application on tablets. In February 2015, the PMT was field tested by UNHCR and Qandil in Erbil Governorate. It was then rolled out across Iraq, and by September 2015 it was used by eight partners.

In November 2015, UNHCR began a review process, gathering feedback from Protection Cluster members and other protection partners across Iraq, and from regional colleagues. Version 2 of the PMT was tested across Iraq in February 2016; and was launched in March 2016. Building on lessons from the field and the region, version 3 of the PMT will be prepared in late 2016 and launched in January 2017.

Organisations using the PMT in 2016
UNHCR (six offices), the Protection Cluster, and partners Harikar, Qandil, CDO, IRC, Al-Khair, ISHO, CAFOSIR

Selected population categories

In 2015, the PMT was designed to assess IDP and IDP returnee households. In 2016, the PMT was expanded to include stateless individuals and refugee returnees. Thus all protection monitors may use the same digital form for all four populations of concern. In early 2016 a separate PMT was developed and tested for Syrian Refugee households.

Some **outcomes** of the PMT are the following:

- Improved analysis by UNHCR and the Protection Cluster to obtain evidence-based data for programming on a wide-range of topics;
- Enhanced ability of UNHCR and the Protection Cluster to enable evidence-based advocacy with a wide range of stakeholders;
- Monthly dashboards by the Protection Cluster highlighting critical protection needs and trends across the country;
- Improved information sharing among protection actors;
- Protection monitors assessed about 54,000 households (more than 300,000 people) from May to December 2015, with thanks to generous contributions from DFID to develop and implement the digital PMT.
- Referrals for cash assistance for 26,000 households and for specialized services for more than 10,000 households.

Implementing **the PMT influenced the protection strategy** in many ways, including:

- The PMT allows the Protection Cluster, UNHCR and partners to use evidence-based data to better advocate with government authorities, donors, and humanitarian actors;
- Protection issues can now be analysed and assessed among governorates and districts as protection monitors across Iraq collect the same information;
- Protection monitoring information in a digital format is more easily shared with a broader range of partners and Protection Cluster members, informing more actors in analysis and programming;
- The PMT referral system allows for improved monitoring and follow-up of individuals needing specialized services, as well as monitoring the needs and gaps for services;
- Having the information directly entered into a database in the field by UNHCR and its partner protection monitors allows for real time information flow from across Iraq, assisting with faster decision-making, analysis and understanding of displacement events;
- Protection monitors are able to gather information more quickly using tablets allowing for a more comprehensive protection assessment, informing issues such as HLP issues, mine awareness, GBV, child protection, shelter, basic needs and future intentions.

- Direct digital data entry, and resulting reduction of data entry staff, frees up resources for protection programming.

Areas for **future development**:
- Improved analysis and data sharing;
- Harmonization of indicators with other operations in the region to allow for regional analysis of protection issues and forced displacement trends;
- Harmonization of indicators with UNHCR programme and Cluster indicators;
- Improved user-friendly features to enhance data collection in the field;
- Linking household data to monitor referrals and assistance received.