



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency

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INTERNAL NOTE

# HUMANITARIAN EVACUATIONS IN VIOLENCE AND ARMED CONFLICT



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Persons of concern<sup>1</sup> to UNHCR often suffer disproportionately in contemporary conflicts.<sup>2</sup> This suffering is due to the scope and brutality of the violence – which can be indiscriminate or, in many cases, deliberately target these populations. The targeting of civilians has led to both widespread and multiple displacements, as well as at the opposite end of the spectrum, severe restrictions on the freedom of movement of civilians as well as siege as a tactic of war. In such a context, humanitarian actors regularly confront dilemmas in determining how best to respond to the assistance and protection needs of populations at extreme risk, stranded in hard to reach areas, enclaves and besieged areas. A response to these dilemmas can be humanitarian evacuations, under certain circumstances.

Humanitarian evacuations, however, are only a measure of last resort, when other options to provide life-saving assistance and protection have failed or are unattainable.<sup>3</sup> They are likewise a temporary measure, and do not constitute a permanent solution under any scenario. Humanitarian evacuations can furthermore expose populations to different security and protection risks. Accordingly, organizations like UNHCR need to adhere to clear internal guidance, derived from principles and standards in international law and best practice, when deciding to engage as well as when planning, implementing and following up on humanitarian evacuations.

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- <sup>1</sup> In the context of armed conflict, persons of concern to UNHCR are “civilian” in nature, and may be described as such. The term ‘persons of concern’ rather than ‘civilian’ is used throughout this guidance in order to describe both individuals in armed conflict and in situations of violence that do not rise to the level of armed conflict.
  - <sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this guidance note, humanitarian evacuations refer to large-scale relocations of civilians, who face an immediate threat to life in a conflict setting, to locations within their own country where they can be more effectively protected.
  - <sup>3</sup> Though certain situations require cross-border humanitarian evacuations, the normative framework, partnership arrangements and security and political implications are such that separate guidance is necessary. The minimum standards and protection principles described in this guidance are nevertheless relevant for all types of humanitarian evacuations, including for refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR.

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to set out key protection and operational considerations, including minimum standards, for in-country humanitarian evacuations in situations of armed violence and conflict where individuals or groups face an immediate threat to life. It does so by synthesizing and building on pre-existing guidance as well as drawing from the lessons learned and tools developed by UNHCR and its partners from experience in contemporary conflict.<sup>4</sup>

With regard to guidance on humanitarian evacuations currently available, the Global Protection Cluster has included a section on humanitarian evacuations in the *Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*.<sup>5</sup> Here, humanitarian evacuations are emphasized as a measure of last resort, and accordingly, some of the protection risks associated with their implementation are briefly highlighted. The primary focus of this guidance is to set out clearly both operational issues and common standards for planning and implementing humanitarian evacuations. Meanwhile, several organizations, like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), have their own stand-alone internal tools for humanitarian evacuations, which also define criteria and standards to plan and implement humanitarian evacuations. Finally, the *IASC Non-Binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys*, although not explicitly covering humanitarian evacuations, provide a relevant methodology for analysis and decision-making.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See the note of the Global Protection Cluster's November 2014 thematic roundtable on *Humanitarian Evacuations in Armed Conflict*. Here it is explained that valuable and relevant guidance emerged from the 2014 inter agency humanitarian responses in CAR and Syria. In Central African Republic, the protection cluster developed standard operating procedures for the relocation of communities-at-risk, drawing from initial guidance provided by UNHCR's headquarters. In Syria, the UNCT adopted minimum standards for the humanitarian evacuation of civilians.

<sup>5</sup> Global Protection Cluster, *Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, 2010. <http://www.unhcr.org/4c2355229.html>

<sup>6</sup> IASC, *IASC Non-Binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys*, 27 February 2013. <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/523189ab4.pdf>

# 3. RATIONALE

Where hostilities are occurring, conditions for civilians and other persons of concern can deteriorate dramatically and quickly, thus demanding a rapid response by humanitarian actors. It is thus necessary in all situations of violence and armed conflict for UNHCR to highlight from the outset with its partners and the humanitarian leadership the potential need for humanitarian evacuations (i.e. humanitarian evacuations need to be a readily available part of the toolkit for all situations of violence and armed conflict). It will be necessary for partners involved in humanitarian evacuations to develop contingencies, including pre-identifying the resources as well as trained, qualified staff to plan and implement the evacuations. Humanitarian evacuations must also always be a component of a broader protection strategy for communities-at-risk.

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# 4. BALANCING A PROTECTION TOOL AND A LAST RESORT

Humanitarian evacuations are a life-saving measure for civilians and persons of concern facing an immediate threat of harm. These individuals and communities may be unable to depart on their own because they lack the means to do so; because parties deny freedom of movement; or because parties target specific groups. In view of their serious security, ethical, political and logistical implications, humanitarian evacuations are generally promoted as a measure of last resort. If poorly organized and implemented, humanitarian evacuations can create separate protection risks and even loss of life.

At the same time, the notion of last resort for humanitarian evacuations can be a source of controversy, especially in a heavily politicized context. While humanitarians themselves are not political actors, they need to be aware that humanitarian evacuations can be manipulated for political, or even military, ends. In some situations, individuals can remain stranded in hard to reach areas, enclaves or besieged areas for prolonged periods of time. Even if physical protection can be provided inside or around such locations, the individuals trapped can suffer psychologically from the ever-present threat that surrounds them. They can also be denied access to basic services, thus succumbing to malnutrition and disease.

# 5. EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION MAKING

In view of the foregoing, deciding whether to proceed with a humanitarian evacuation is rarely straightforward. Using a community-based approach wherever feasible, it is thus necessary to ensure thorough and ongoing information collection and analysis of the protection risks and humanitarian conditions for communities-at-risk. The same degree of information collection and analysis is equally important to apply to potential relocation areas (including in relation to the availability of water, food, medical care, freedom of movement, etc.).

The need for humanitarian evacuations can be identified by UNHCR, by one of its partners or by other national or international actors engaged in providing protection and assistance to at-risk populations. There can also be situations where humanitarian actors are asked by governments, UN missions or other members of the non-humanitarian system hierarchy to provide specific support for humanitarian evacuations. Regardless of the situation, there needs to be a risk assessment that includes an analysis of the perception of UNHCR's engagement in the evacuation, and UNHCR needs to ensure that the basic minimum standards described below are negotiated and agreed upon with the requesting party.

Such information and analysis will provide the evidence-base for advocacy and also inform decision-making. It should, for example, lead to a mapping of at-risk areas, a description of the causes of those risks and a set of response options, examples of which are included in a checklist and toolkit annexed to this guidance note. When a humanitarian evacuation proves to be the only option available to save lives, the analysis will need to be shared within UNHCR, with the Protection Cluster, and with members of the Humanitarian Country Team. It will be equally necessary in complex emergencies to engage relevant actors outside the humanitarian response (e.g. peace operations where deployed). Eventually, the analysis may be used to negotiate with parties to the conflict.<sup>7</sup> Before any movement can take place, humanitarian actors should seek to have the agreement of authorities in the area of evacuation and eventual relocation; this includes assurances that the relocation will be granted secure passage and not be the target of attacks.

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<sup>7</sup> UNHCR's inter-agency role in issues that include humanitarian evacuations is generally outlined in the Note on Protection Leadership in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies (February 2016), available at: <http://swigea56.hcrnet.ch/refworld/docid/56af06cf4.html>



# 6. MINIMUM STANDARDS

When deciding whether and how to engage in humanitarian evacuations, humanitarian actors will need to articulate clear standards derived from fundamental principles of international law. This readiness to act in accordance with agreed standards needs to guide negotiations with parties to the conflict. It must, at the same time, be matched by an equal commitment amongst humanitarian actors to ensure that any departure from the standards includes a clear and sound rationale.

The following **minimum standards**<sup>8</sup> are derived in large part from international humanitarian law<sup>9</sup>, and should be pre-requisites for participating in humanitarian evacuations. These principles are consistent with the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality and are applicable in a wide variety of conflict situations.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Minimum standards for participation in inter-agency humanitarian evacuations were initially developed by UNHCR in February 2014, immediately after the evacuation of civilians from the Old City of Homs in Syria. These were then discussed and adapted before being approved by the UNCT in Syria in February 2014. Subsequent consultations on minimum standards for more general situations of cease fire arrangements and humanitarian pauses in Syria have since taken place within the UNCT. The minimum standards appearing in this note are derived from those endorsed by the UNCT in Syria and adapted for potential use as a template in inter-agency guidance.

<sup>9</sup> Generally speaking, refugees are protected as civilians, and to some extent as “protected persons”, under the Geneva Convention IV Article 4 as long as they are not taking direct part in hostilities. Refugees have certain specific rights in International Armed Conflict. IHL: Geneva Convention IV Articles 4, 44, 70(2) and Protocol I Article 73.

<sup>10</sup> Armed conflict is distinguished from less serious forms of violence, such as internal disturbances and riots, because of the intensity of the hostilities and the involvement of organized armed forces in the conflict. See International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), *How is the Term “Armed Conflict” Defined in International Humanitarian Law?* March 2008, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/47e24eda2.html>. The minimum standards described in this section apply to humanitarian evacuations in response to forms of conflict that fall both above and below the threshold for armed conflict.

# MINIMUM STANDARDS

1

Civilians will be protected against attack, and be granted safe passage during an evacuation.<sup>11</sup>

2

Both civilians and any person detained/hors de combat must be treated humanely and in accordance with international law, regardless of whether they are included in a humanitarian evacuation.<sup>12</sup>

3

The parties to the conflict must allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need, which is impartial in character and conducted without any adverse distinction, subject to their right of control.<sup>13</sup>

4

Certain international humanitarian agencies such as ICRC will need access to any persons detained before, during, and after the humanitarian evacuation to register them and monitor their treatment.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> IHL: Common Article 3; Customary IHL, Rule 6

<sup>12</sup> IHL: Common Article 3; Customary IHL, Rule 87 – all provisions set out fundamental guarantees and that civilians and persons hors de combat must be treated humanely. Persons who are hors de combat are those who are no longer participating in hostilities/ playing an active role in the conflict because they have been captured by the enemy; surrendered; or are too injured or ill to take part in hostilities (definition found in Additional Protocol I Article 41).

<sup>13</sup> IHL: Common Article 3; Customary IHL, Rule 55.

<sup>14</sup> IHL: Customary IHL, Rule 123 – the personal details of persons deprived of their liberty must be recorded.

5

Civilians will not be arbitrarily deprived of objects indispensable to their survival, nor will their access to relief supplies be impeded.<sup>15</sup>

6

The sick and wounded must be cared for.<sup>16</sup>

7

Children must be afforded special protection.<sup>17</sup>

8

Humanitarian organizations should be able to undertake all measures to safeguard family unity, including tracing of family members.<sup>18</sup>

9

The safety and protection of humanitarian and medical personnel, as well as humanitarian convoys should be respected before, during and after humanitarian evacuations.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> IHL: Customary IHL, Rule 53 prohibits starvation as a form of warfare. This right encompasses the right to an adequate supply of drinking water (UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) Gen Comment 15, CHR Resn201/25). Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Article 25; International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Article 11; Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 24(2), 27; Arab Charter on Human Rights, Article 13.

<sup>16</sup> IHL: Common Article 3; Customary IHL, Rule 110.

<sup>17</sup> Protocol I Article 77 and Protocol II Article 4 state that children shall be protected against any form of indecent assault; receive an education; have steps taken on their behalf to facilitate the reunion of families temporarily separated; neither be recruited into nor allowed to take part in hostilities by the parties to a conflict when under the age of 15; be held in quarters separate from the quarters of adults if arrested, detained or interned; not be subjected to the death penalty; be removed temporarily from the area in which hostilities are taking place to a safer area within the country and ensure that they are accompanied by persons responsible for their safety and well-being.

<sup>18</sup> IHL: Customary IHL, Rule 105; IHRL: Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Article 16(3); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; ICESCR; Arab Charter on Human Rights, Article 38.

<sup>19</sup> IHL: Customary IHL, Rules 25, 28, 29 and 54-56.

# 7. KEY OPERATIONAL AND PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS<sup>20</sup>

While minimum standards provide the threshold for proceeding with a humanitarian evacuation, operational and protection considerations are necessary to guide humanitarian actors in the planning and implementation of humanitarian evacuations. The considerations explained below are based on lessons learned and best practices from experience in contemporary conflict, including in the former Yugoslavia as well as more recently in Central African Republic and Syria.

## → Use as a life-saving measure

Humanitarian evacuations are a life-saving measure for individuals and groups facing an immediate threat, where other protection interventions (e.g. community-based engagement, mediation, protection by presence, injections of humanitarian relief), have not had the desired impact (or are simply unattainable) as well as where security actors are either not present, unable to guarantee a sustained presence or unable to ensure physical protection through their presence.

## → Necessity of safe access to crisis-affected communities

To engage in a humanitarian evacuation, humanitarian actors must have safe and unhindered access to communities-at-risk. A meaningful engagement will enable humanitarian actors to undertake a more realistic assessment of needs and risks. They can likewise determine whether an evacuation is necessary, the concerned population is receiving reliable information and the evacuation is voluntary.

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<sup>20</sup> These points are based on “good practices” derived from a Global Protection Cluster roundtable in 2014.



## → Respecting voluntariness

As already noted above, humanitarian evacuations must be voluntary. Dialogue and direct engagement with communities-at-risk is essential in determining intentions, needs, and expectations, all of which will also feed into the design of the modalities of the movement and selection/preparation of a safe and secure relocation area. Where only part of a community agrees to a humanitarian evacuation, there is a risk that the remaining community would be further exposed to danger, something that must be factored into the analysis.

## → Preserving the civilian character

Preserving the civilian character of humanitarian evacuations is paramount. To this end, a basic screening can be used to ensure that individuals needing to be evacuated are unarmed and that no weapons, arms or ammunition are boarded on the civilian transport used for the movements.<sup>21</sup>

Humanitarian evacuations may, however, require additional security arrangements, such as armed escorts. As a general rule, all alternatives need to be sufficiently explored (including the mandates of peace operations) alongside a thorough security and risk assessment before armed escorts are used. It is also important to consider the *IASC Non-Binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys*.<sup>22</sup> Equally relevant is the human rights due diligence policy (HRDDP) on the United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> The identification of combatants is made by relevant government structures. See UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Operational Guidelines on Maintaining the Civilian and Humanitarian Character of Asylum*, September 2006, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/452b9bca2.html>.

<sup>22</sup> IASC, *IASC Non-Binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys*, 27 February 2013. <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/523189ab4.pdf>

<sup>23</sup> See the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations Support to Non-United Nations Security Forces, *Guidance Note and Text of the Policy*, 2015, available at: <http://goo.gl/Az55dw>

## → Multi-disciplinary responses

In most situations, no single organization will have the capacity and access to organize a humanitarian evacuation on its own; often by default a multi-disciplinary response is necessary. While humanitarian actors, including UNHCR, may have the contact with affected communities to determine the imperative of a humanitarian evacuation, their capacity to undertake such interventions in an ongoing armed conflict is limited. Humanitarian evacuations thus need strong leadership and the engagement of different actors across a broad spectrum, potentially including State and non-State, humanitarian, human rights, security, political, civil society and development actors.

## → Selection of safe and secure relocation sites

Selection of the final destination for the facilitated onward movements needs to be aligned, to the extent possible, with the intended destinations of the individuals concerned as well as the current location of immediate family members and members of the community who may have already fled and reached safety. Essential services, including food, water, shelter, medical care, etc. will need to be available in these locations. Relocation areas will likewise need to be secure and at a safe distance from hostilities, besieged or hostile areas as well as border areas. All of these elements should be part of consultations with persons of concern and negotiations with the host government and relevant non-state armed actors, who must remain the guarantors of the physical security of the evacuated populations.

## → Family-unity preserved

Children and parents should not be separated against their will or best interest, and family unity needs to be preserved when humanitarian evacuations are planned and implemented. This may require entire families to be moved in the same vehicles or convoys. If any separation of convoys becomes necessary, children and minors must remain with their parents or guardians.

Preparations should be made in case parents and children do become separated during a humanitarian evacuation, despite the best efforts of humanitarian actors. This will potentially include registering and/or documenting family members prior to the evacuation and ensuring that an

appropriate organization has tracing and verification capabilities ready to be deployed in the event of separation. It is also important to note that a separation would require alternative care arrangements and assistance for that care.

### → Right to return promoted

Individuals who are evacuated during a conflict have a right to return to their places of origin and residence at the end of the conflict or when conditions in the area of origin permit.<sup>24</sup> Monitoring and peaceful co-existence activities are often needed to promote the fulfilment of this right.

### → Mobilizing support

States have the overall responsibility to protect their citizens and international humanitarian actors are meant to complement, not substitute, State protection. There are situations, however, when the State is itself a party to the conflict, and may be unable or simply unwilling to protect their citizens.

When humanitarian evacuations are determined to be a life-saving measure of last resort but are being blocked by the national or local authorities for largely political or other reasons, humanitarian organizations need to reach a consensus on how to proceed in respect of humanitarian principles, including through agreement on minimum standards.<sup>25</sup> Evidence-based advocacy that is guided by international law (e.g. use of legal frameworks and recall obligations of the State and non-State actors), undertaken at all levels, is critical in mobilizing the necessary support for evacuations.

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<sup>24</sup> Article 49 of Geneva Convention IV applies during interstate armed conflict, and while there is no similar law regarding internal armed conflict, common practice and subsequent UN Security Council resolutions led to the right of return being described as principle 29 of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.

<sup>25</sup> In conflict situations, it is part of the ICRC's core mandate and traditional role to negotiate with parties to the conflict for the safe evacuation or transfer of the wounded, the sick and civilians, including IDPs, trapped in conflict. United Nations agencies and other international organizations, such as IOM, may also be involved in large-scale humanitarian evacuations and transfers in conflict situations.

# 8. CONCLUSION

Experience has taught us that humanitarian evacuations are a necessary component of any protection tool kit in situations of armed violence and conflict. Although a measure of last resort, humanitarian evacuations need to be considered and planned for in conflicts where the situation can deteriorate rapidly, resulting in an imminent threat to individuals and groups. Humanitarian evacuations almost always need to involve a range of actors; the risk and complexity of humanitarian evacuations are such that they often exceed the capacity of one organization and thus demand a multi-sector approach. Deciding whether to engage in a humanitarian evacuation will also rarely be straightforward, hence the need for organizations like UNHCR to work vigilantly to assess risks, agree on principles and standards and mobilize the interest and support of other actors. Leadership and support from the Humanitarian Country Team and UN missions is critical, and obtaining the necessary level of engagement from a broad range of actors will often be a key challenge. UNHCR protection leadership will need to be exercised in consultation with headquarters.

Internal Displacement Section  
**Division of International Protection**  
17 June 2016

# ANNEX I: CHECKLIST FOR PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING HUMANITARIAN EVACUATIONS<sup>26</sup>

## 1. DECIDING WHETHER TO USE HUMANITARIAN EVACUATIONS

### 1.1. Assess and analyze the options

- Identify and map areas and people that face an immediate threat to life, indicating the scale of the risk. *See figure B in Annex II for an example of a risk matrix indicating scale.*
- Map the causes and drivers for protection risks populations where the risk of loss of life is too high. *See figure C in Annex II for a tool that can help identification of causes.*
- Ensure that other diplomatic responses to the causes and drivers, such as mediation, mobilizing embassies, providing increased humanitarian supplies, inter-positioning of international military forces, are considered prior to humanitarian evacuations.
- Engage directly with the populations in question to understand their protection needs, community-based protection mechanisms and capacity, perceptions of threats and risks, intentions and options for their security and safety.
- Where the factors above suggest that humanitarian evacuation is necessary, verify the desire to evacuate with the population of concern as well as the information available to them on an evacuation.
- Through an ongoing engagement with the concerned populations, establish criteria for relocation areas; map and assess the availability of safe and secure in-country relocation areas.

<sup>26</sup> This checklist is largely based on UNHCR's accumulated experience in humanitarian evacuations in contemporary conflicts such as the former Yugoslavia as well as more recently in the Central African Republic and Syria. The Global Protection Cluster *Handbook for the Protection of Internally Displaced Persons*, UNHCR's *Emergency Handbook* as well as the internal guidance on humanitarian evacuations developed by ICRC and NRC were also valuable resources.

## 1.2. Consult and seek support

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- Advise and seek the support of the Humanitarian Country Team (and where applicable the leadership of the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator and/or Special Representative to the Secretary General) to prepare for a humanitarian evacuation, including the establishment of criteria and minimum standards for engagement in such interventions.
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- Consult with UNHCR headquarters to provide global support on the decision to evacuate.

## 2. PREPARING FOR HUMANITARIAN EVACUATIONS

### 2.1. Select a safe and secure relocation area

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- Reach agreement and understanding on relocation areas with the concerned population as well as the authorities and local communities at the destination. Where feasible, facilitate “go and see” visits by members of the concerned population to the relocation area.
- 
- Ensure that the relocation area meets basic criteria for protection and assistance or self-reliance including: safe distances from areas of conflict; access to social services; basic infrastructure; livelihoods options; and reduced risk for conflict (with host communities, local authorities or among the concerned population once relocated).
- 
- Negotiate with authorities to ensure provision of security for the area, national protection mechanisms, humanitarian access, freedom to move to other areas, and inclusion of the area in national development plans.

### 2.2. Engage with communities

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- Ensure an ongoing engagement with the concerned population (including focus group discussions as well as individual protection interviews and feedback mechanisms) to gauge continuous, ongoing protection risks (posed from within as well as outside the concerned population); ensure an ongoing assessment of the voluntary nature of the movement, including with individual members of the population and particularly with persons with specific needs, minorities, etc.

- 
- Complement the above-mentioned engagement with communications in relation to:
    - Reasons for the evacuation, timeframe for the movement(s), risks associated with the movement as well as the decision to stay, conditions in place during the movement and the intended destination, and the services available in the final destination.
    - Rights in relation to return and future reconciliation (e.g. to the extent possible, individuals need to travel with documentation related to property rights, identity documents, etc.)
- 
- Engage and communicate, to the extent possible, with future host communities. Information needs to be shared on the places of origin of the concerned population, reasons for the movements, guarantees taken to assure the humanitarian and civilian character of movements and the overarching intentions for reconciliation and return.

### 2.3. Profile the concerned population and assess needs

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- Obtain basic information and assess needs, in as confidential a space and manner as possible, on the individuals and groups requiring humanitarian evacuation, including:
  - The number of persons requiring assistance broken down by gender, age, ethnicity, religious affiliation and civil status;
  - Whether individuals are accompanied by or have been separated from immediate family members;
  - The place of origin of individuals as well as duration of and reasons for displacement;
  - The physical condition of persons requiring assistance and whether urgent humanitarian and/or health assistance is required;
  - Whether persons requiring assistance are traveling with personal effects or livestock;
  - Pre-screening to provide an initial indication of the possible presence of combatants among the civilian population. If needed, plan on the engagement of the State or UN mission to ensure the civilian character<sup>27</sup> of the population.

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<sup>27</sup> UNHCR's *Maintaining the Civilian and Humanitarian Character of Asylum* (see footnote 21).

## 2.4. Map requirements for the evacuation

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- Drawing on the above-mentioned needs assessment, map the requirements for an evacuation, including the human resources and material needs, as well as the capacity and comparative advantage of partners across sectors/clusters. The actors should also include short (transitional) and long term (infrastructure) assistance at the proposed destination.

## 2.5. Agree on modalities and standards

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- Consult with actors engaging in the humanitarian evacuation and agree on the timing and modalities. Develop standard operating procedures.
- In cases where the UN Designated Official for security decides that armed escorts are necessary, agree on who will facilitate the civil-military dialogue and interaction on behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team.<sup>28</sup> Ensure that the rules of engagement of those providing security is understood.
- Review and update the minimum standards for engagement in humanitarian evacuations. Ensure that those negotiating for issues such as the safe passage for convoys with parties to the conflict include and gain consent in discussions on these minimum standards and their practical implications.

## 2.6. Develop a plan of action

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- With all actors involved in the humanitarian evacuation, including the concerned populations and, as necessary, the parties to the conflict, seek agreement on:
  - The time and method of the movements;

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<sup>28</sup> For more information on the use of armed escorts, see Inter-Agency Standing Committee, *Use of Military or Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys*. Discussion Paper and Non-Binding Guidelines, 14 September 2001, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4289f1b54.html>



- Contingencies for potential risks before, during and after the evacuation, including with regard to preserving the civilian character of the movements (e.g. concerned communities will not be able to travel with weapons) and safeguarding the health and safety of individuals (e.g. for health reasons, concerned populations may not be able to travel with livestock);
- Needs required throughout the journey, including food, water, human waste, and shelter as well as special provisions for persons with specific needs;
- The means of communication and information sharing prior to a departure and during travel.

- 
- Building on the above-mentioned agreements, develop a division of labour and a plan of action that maximizes each organization's capacity and comparative advantage.

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- Use the action plan to mobilize resources as necessary with key stakeholders with donor countries.

## 2.7. Promote the right to return

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- Through engagement with the concerned population, generate understanding for the short-term nature of humanitarian evacuations and the need for longer-term solutions. Raise awareness on rights, particularly with regard to return.
- 
- Ensure the individuals and groups to be evacuated bring all civil documentation – passport, rental contracts, and property deeds, in addition to any other critical information, such as medical documentation, prescriptions, and school records.
- 
- As noted above, the concerned population as well their surrounding communities will need to be aware of the right to return, as well as efforts in place to foster reconciliation and peaceful coexistence to enable return. In this regard, advocacy will need to be stepped up in the areas where humanitarian evacuations are planned and implemented.

## 2.8. Train and prepare staff

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- Arrange training, as necessary, as well as sufficient dialogue and information sharing for all organizations and their staff involved in the humanitarian evacuation. Humanitarian evacuations require a multi-functional team, including security, logistics, drivers as well as medical (first aid) and protection expertise (e.g. child protection and SGBV).

## 2.9. Pre-position humanitarian relief for the evacuation

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- Pre-position the humanitarian relief and the corresponding human resources anticipated during the planning phase. The supplies that need to be pre-positioned, regardless of which actor is designated to do so, include:
  - Civilian transport (distinguishable from military transport) that is sufficiently provisioned and equipped to move persons with special needs as well as persons with serious injuries or medical conditions. The types of civilian transport and numbers of individuals will place restrictions on the quantity of baggage that each individual can take
  - Basic relief items (including food, water and non-food items)
  - Medical supplies and medical personnel
  - Sanitation measures for human waste
  - Shelter, along the evacuation route where necessary, and at the point of arrival
- Ensure specialized arrangements for persons with disabilities, elderly, pregnant women, and children. Such arrangements for persons with specific needs may entail additional resources and expertise (including SGBV or child protection), including dedicated staff. Depending on the size of the concerned population and the number of persons with specific needs (as well as distances to be travelled and conditions in the relocation area), it may also be necessary to consider a phased approach to the evacuation or multiple departures or steps.

### 3. IMPLEMENTING THE EVACUATION

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- Ensure a common agreement on how actors in a humanitarian evacuation will react on the serious protection issues that can arise during the actual evacuation. These issues for discussion and agreement include:
  - Individuals within the community either interfering with the evacuation or propagating misleading information
  - Part of convoy stopped or re-routed
  - Individuals detained by a party to the conflict
  - Attack on the convoy
  - Confiscation of documents

### 4. MONITORING AFTER THE EVACUATION

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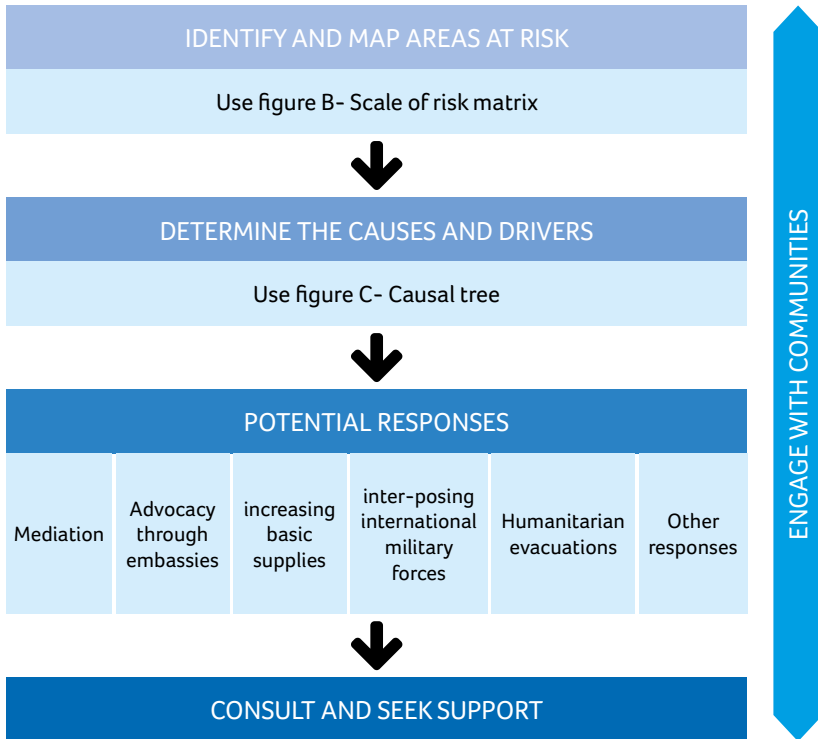
- Monitor the relocation area with regard to the protection environment as well as access to services and rights, including freedom of movement.
- Conduct a participatory assessment with relocated individuals and communities as soon as possible.
- Conduct a post-evacuation lessons learned exercise.

# ANNEX II: VISUALIZATION TOOLS

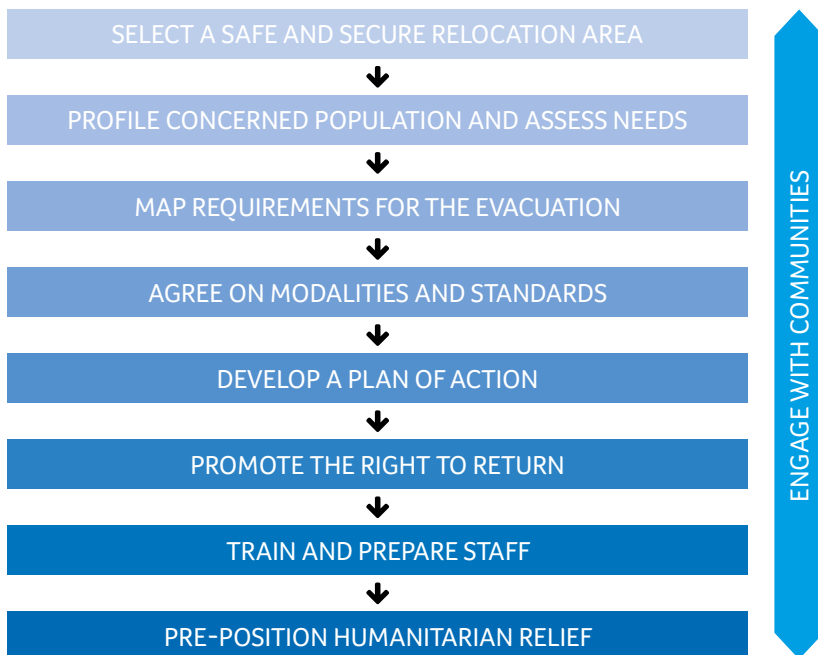
The tools below are designed to help visualize the decision-making steps leading up to a humanitarian evacuation. The steps of the checklist are described in a visual format (figure A). The risk analysis tool (figure B) can be used in the first step of the checklist to help compare and prioritize multiple situations where humanitarian evacuations are a possibility. The causal tree (figure C) will help with the second step of the checklist to map out the causes and drivers of a situation, leading to a better sense of what are the appropriate responses.

Figure A. Visualization of checklist

## Deciding on humanitarian evacuations



## Preparing for humanitarian evacuations



## Implementing the evacuation and monitoring

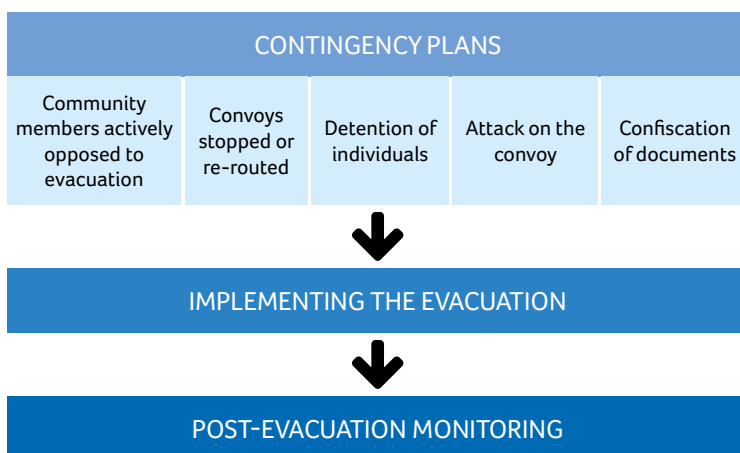
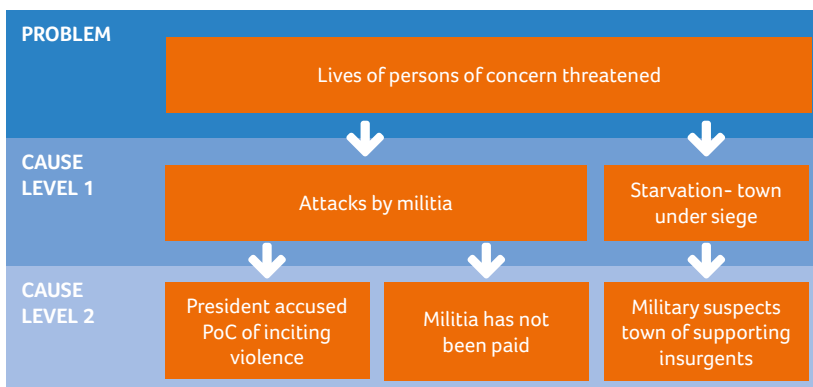


Figure B. Scale of risk matrix<sup>28</sup>

		Impact. Severity of an event				
		Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Severe	Critical
Likelihood that an event will happen	Very Likely/ Imminent	Low	Medium	High	Very High	Unacceptable
	Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Very High
	Moderately Likely	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	High
	Unlikely	Very Low	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	Very Unlikely	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Low

Figure C. Causal tree



<sup>28</sup> Risk assessments are used for a number of situations, including for example, for the implementation of the Human Rights up Front Action Plan, which requires a regular summary analysis of principal human rights concerns and risks of serious violations. While there is no single model for providing risk analysis, this tool, adapted from UNHCR's Emergency Handbook, can help when comparing multiple situations where humanitarian evacuations are a possibility. It is available at: <https://goo.gl/e7gvBA>.





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