



Global Protection Cluster



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THE CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION REVIEW 2020



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Foreword

A persistent problem for people living through conflict and disaster situations is that it's often not one air strike or one displacement they are forced to grapple with. It is the repeated blows, each one bringing further struggle and insecurity, that knock them down, time and time again.

These layers of conflicts, pandemics, disasters, economic crises and eroded governance systems leave families with little capacity to react and impossible dilemmas.

They are, pushed into more harm on top of harm: leaving homes, selling assets, working in conditions of slavery, forced to take their children out of schools, youth seeing membership in an armed group as the only source of income and protection.

It doesn't stop there, because what then follows is what I believe often harms the most: invisibility.

Millions of people face all these issues in total solitude. Wondering if anyone knows or cares. Wondering if they matter at all.

In 2016, humanitarians committed to a simple and powerful proposition: protection is central to humanitarian action.

On the frontlines, for people we work for and with, the centrality of protection is crucial to combat two invisibilities:

First, the centrality of protection offers a powerful tool for rendering individuals and communities visible with their specificities again, amidst the chaos of crisis and the weight of overwhelming statistics. What are the protection risks that people and communities are faced with? How are some being disproportionately affected and why? What

are people's coping strategies and how can they be better supported to stay safe, access the life-saving assistance they need, and move towards strengthened rights and resilience?

Second, the centrality of protection is critical to reversing the invisibility of major crimes and abuses, making it clear where severe abuses are taking place and what is needed in terms of humanitarian response as well as the complementary accountability processes and political solutions that must be pursued.

To ensure protection risks and serious abuses are visible and being addressed, all humanitarian actors are made responsible, with clear accountability of Humanitarian Country Teams and Humanitarian Coordinators.

The humanitarian system committed to keep an eye on and address consequential trends and crimes, and to never again be in situations like in Sri Lanka and Bosnia, where specific needs were addressed, but widespread patterns of systemic killing, sexual violence, massacres and ethnic cleansing were not.

We must act upon the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights, which reiterates that human rights underpin the work of the entire UN system and that upholding them is essential to building sustainable and peaceful societies with equal opportunities and respect for the rights and freedoms of all.

I believe the centrality of protection and this call for us all to step up for human rights go hand in hand, one not possible without the other.

This year, a year in which the avalanche of crises is recognized, the proposition of a humanitarian system that is able to implement the centrality of protection is put to test.



We, in the Protection Cluster, will continue taking on responsibility for what we are accountable for in the protection policy of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and support others to meet their commitments.

We need collaboration, the contributions and the leadership of our allies across the humanitarian system to really make a difference for those living in invisibility. In light of the findings of the review, we see five opportunities to focus on:

First, we will continue reviewing the implementation of the centrality of protection and support actors at national level to fulfil their commitments.

Second, we will continue improving on our in-depth protection analysis in all operations and use a professionalized pallet of advocacy approaches at country and global level.

Third, we will continue supporting local members of the cluster who have de facto

been driving progress in implementing the centrality of protection in area-based approaches.

Fourth, we will prioritise the imperative of protection by presence, including through access negotiation. We will prioritise protection programmes and services, including through enhanced support to protection actors on the frontlines.

Fifth, we will continue to ensure protection is recognized as essential in peace and development.

I congratulate this year's review team and thank ProCap, our Operations Cell, Areas of Responsibility, Task Teams and Strategic Advisory Group for the drive behind it.

I look forward to our continued shared work in making the humanitarian system one that has protection at its core. For every single person amidst the millions living through crisis, they deserve nothing less.

William Chemaly, Global Protection Cluster Coordinator



Executive Summary

The 2020 Review by the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) of the Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action comes at a time when the world is still grappling with the full-blown effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Dubbed a crisis within a crisis in humanitarian contexts, the impact of the pandemic deepened existing vulnerabilities and inequalities. Protection deteriorated in ongoing crises across the globe in a year in which we saw, yet again, the highest figure on record of persons internally displaced as a result of conflict, violence, disasters and the adverse effects of climate change.¹

The review provides a general analysis of how the centrality of protection was implemented across the board in operations with a Protection Cluster in 2020, with some updated information and examples from 2021. The developments are analysed from the perspective of the Protection Cluster and the review reflects on persistent challenges in implementation, some of the reasons provided for these constraints, and efforts that are being undertaken to address them. The review also examines how core elements are being applied in implementing the centrality of protection. The elements were introduced in the 2019 GPC review to facilitate the operationalisation of the centrality of protection and the current review provides an initial baseline of their implementation at country level.

Protection has been perpetually underfunded and lack of resources is often cited as one of the main obstacles hampering the implementation of the centrality of protection. The review consequently reflects on the status of protection financing, emerging trends and cost-effective approaches. Even though significant gaps remain, 2021 is seeing a positive trend in protection funding.

Examination of the raised points lead to the following key findings:

Efforts in implementing the centrality of protection are not resulting in the reduction of critical protection risks due to overfocus on process instead of programming

Great strides have been made by protection clusters in putting in place structures and processes to achieve protection outcomes, yet data from the GPC database, feedback from surveys, events and consultations with protection actors at field and global level reveal that they are not resulting in effective reduction of critical protection risks and violations. Five years after the adoption of the IASC Protection Policy it is still unclear to humanitarian actors across the board what the centrality of protection concretely means in practice and how it should be translated into measurable outcomes. The focus continues to be on process and establishing structures, or complying with processes – such as developing Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) protection strategies or having protection as a standing agenda item at HCT meetings – has become a goal in itself. The link with critical protection issues and subsequent planning, programming or advocacy to achieve protection outcomes that reduce risks, threats, violations and vulnerabilities is missing.

The focus on process is also reflected in the initial baseline results of selected elements of the centrality of protection that were introduced in the 2019 GPC Review. Even though the elements are process-oriented, they are intended as an initial step in putting the necessary procedures in place to draw out and inform required actions for addressing critical protection risks, threats and vulnerabilities. Results from the exercise measuring the baseline reveal that relevant processes are well-established, but are not followed by concrete actions, making qualitative aspects less apparent.



Lack of ownership and leadership by the HCT on the centrality of protection is hampering strategic decisions and action on critical protection risks and violations

Protection cluster members point out that while good progress is being made with inter-cluster colleagues in strengthening analysis for the HCT to address the most critical protection risks, humanitarian leadership appears to be struggling and, in some cases, reluctant to assume its role of responsibility and accountability. Regular briefings on critical protection issues provided by the Protection Cluster to the HCT do not effectively inform strategic decision-making. In many operations, protection data and analysis are merely acknowledged as shared information, with no leadership on possible follow-up actions for operations, programming or advocacy.

Despite a renewed Call to Action for Human Rights, a substantive number of protection clusters reported an apparent lack of political will by the HCT to take strategic decisions and action against gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL). Competing agency mandates, lack of resources, sensitive protection contexts and lack of institutional and technical support are among the cited reasons for inaction; but the de-prioritisation of protection in favour of more tangible and quantifiable services such as food security; shelter; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) was also mentioned as a factor.

There is need for an effective accountability mechanism to ensure that the implementation of the centrality of protection is not largely placed on the shoulder of the Protection Cluster

A recurrent theme that has also been highlighted in previous GPC annual reviews is that protection clusters are often charged with the development, implementation and

monitoring of HCT protection strategies. This means that a mandatory, strategic responsibility of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and HCT is de facto placed on the shoulder of a single operational entity. It defeats the entire purpose of the centrality of protection and points to the lack of an effective accountability mechanism at global and field level, leaving failure to address critical system-wide protection risks with hardly any repercussions for humanitarian leadership. The default assumption in some cases that the Protection Cluster is responsible for anything related to protection also reduces the likelihood of the HCT and other clusters playing a more active role in addressing critical protection risks. Efforts by non-protection actors in implementing the centrality of protection also become less visible, because they do not get recorded or acknowledged.

Successful efforts in achieving protection outcomes are mainly person- rather than system-driven. Strong engagement of the HC, a good understanding of protection, together with solid coordination and advocacy at inter-sectoral level are highlighted as prerequisites for effective implementation of the centrality of protection.

The need for collaboration with all relevant actors to achieve protection outcomes through a holistic and cost-efficient approach became more compelling in 2020

The immediate and long-term impacts of the pandemic have highlighted the importance of a coordinated response that addresses both immediate needs and underlying drivers of crises. This requires humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, human rights, local and other relevant actors collaborating together and joining up programming. Making use of the comparative advantage of all actors is a cost-efficient way to achieve programme objectives with limited resources and a possible means for closing programme funding gaps. This is becoming even more compelling, because protection has been



underfunded for at least the past eight years, while development actors are responsible for a growing proportion of funding for humanitarian assistance. Attracting more funding for protection is, however, not the sole focus. Rather, the issue is using limited resources effectively, by targeting the risks, threats and vulnerabilities that need to be addressed urgently and showing the impact more funding would bring.

The crucial role of local actors in implementing protection activities is more apparent than ever, yet they are still not adequately supported

The pivotal role of local actors became more evident during the pandemic, as they remained the sole provider of critical protection services when COVID-19 restrictions halted access to field operations by international actors. In some contexts, more than 50% of all humanitarian activities were already being implemented by local actors before the pandemic, due to

access issues. Yet, local actors currently receive only 9% of protection funding, which is not commensurate with their crucial work in ensuring humanitarian access and providing protection services. It is, moreover, far below the target of 25% that the GPC is aiming to achieve as direct protection funding to local actors.

The findings of this GPC annual review are also being considered in the ongoing review of [the IASC Protection Policy](#) that is currently looking into the implementation of the policy across the humanitarian system and in a range of humanitarian crises. The review of the implementation of the policy is expected to be finalised in the first half of 2022 and intends to provide the IASC Principals with an analytical assessment of the policy, as well as recommendations for strengthening protection outcomes, manifested as the reduction of protection risks over the next five years.



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Introduction

This review intends to provide a general analysis of the status of implementation of the centrality of protection by the Protection Cluster over 2020, with updated information from 2021 on provided data, where available.² It considers the challenges that are being faced and offers examples of how some of these obstacles are being tackled by protection and non-protection actors in the various operational contexts. The findings and conclusions are based on information from the GPC database, desk review, surveys, bilateral consultations with Protection Cluster (co-) coordinators;³ Areas of Responsibility (AoR) coordinators at global and field level; specialised protection and non-protection specialised colleagues at global and field level; protection colleagues from donor organisations; and colleagues from specialised protection projects based in field operations.⁴

Consultations with protection cluster coordinators, AoR coordinators and co-coordinators in selected operations⁵ zoomed in on the key takeaways from the session on the centrality of protection that was held during the technical GPC Global Protection Forum (GPF) event in April 2021.⁶ Participants at the session listed the following issues as main constraints in implementing the centrality of protection:⁷

- Lack of leadership, commitment and accountability on the centrality of protection by senior humanitarian management at field and global level
- Inaction by humanitarian leadership on critical protection risks due to lack of political will
- Lack of ownership by humanitarian leadership at country level in developing and implementing HCT protection strategies
- Implementation of HCT protection strategies falls on the shoulder of the

Protection Cluster

- Need to strengthen continuous protection analysis
- Protection is often de-prioritized in favour of assistance services

The consultations probed further on these issues with a range of questions that sought to examine whether:

- Protection analysis that was shared with the HCT, Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and non-protection specialised cluster/sectors informed decision-making, prioritization of processes, planning and programming; and resulted in the reduction of identified protection risks, threats or vulnerabilities of the affected population
- The HC/HCT, ICCG, or UNHCR (as protection cluster lead agency) had taken leadership in reducing or addressing prioritized system-wide protection risks, threats, vulnerabilities or violations
- The HCT Protection Strategy was implemented by other actors than the Protection Cluster and AoRs
- There was a monitoring and accountability mechanism in place for the implementation of the HCT Protection Strategy that effectively led to actions being implemented and responsible actors being held accountable if issues had not been addressed
- System-wide protection risks related to physical safety, violence, coercion, deliberate deprivation, etc., were collectively addressed with development, peacekeeping, human rights, local or other actors; and whether collaboration – where it existed – was



through other strategies, frameworks or approaches than the HCT protection strategy.

The outcome of the consultations affirmed the constraints that had been raised during the GPF segment and is reflected in the review.⁸

The review moves on to provide an analysis of the implementation of elements on the centrality of protection that were suggested in the [2019 GPC Review of the Centrality of Protection](#). The elements are process-oriented and intended as an initial step for putting the necessary procedures in place to draw out and inform required actions for addressing critical protection risks, threats and vulnerabilities. The review provides an initial baseline of the extent to which selected elements are being implemented.

The measuring exercise for establishing the baseline is based on desk review and interviews with Protection Cluster coordinators of selected operations,⁹ with specific questions on how core elements were being implemented.

While the Protection Cluster is not responsible or accountable for all the elements, it is acknowledged as one of the main actors involved and informed about the implementation of the centrality of protection in the country, and therefore able to provide substantive data.

The established baseline can be used at country level to measure general progress in having the necessary processes in place to facilitate the implementation of the centrality of protection in years to come. The elements can also be used in tandem with the system-wide process benchmarks for measuring the implementation of the centrality of protection that are currently being developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) Results Group on Operational Response.¹⁰

Building on the recommendation to annually reflect on the status of protection financing in the study [Breaking the Glass Ceiling](#), the review proceeds to consider the highs, lows and in-betweens of protection funding; analysing observed trends and cost-effective approaches.



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Key insights from the review

Impact of COVID-19 on protection issues and concerns

Virtual working modalities brought their own challenges to coordination and capacity building efforts, but more significantly, lockdown measures increased mobility restrictions in contexts where movements were already constrained¹¹. The measures posed serious challenges to humanitarian access, service delivery and hampered field monitoring activities. The dependence, in many instances, on exclusively local actors to carry out these activities in unprecedented circumstances highlighted, once again, their indispensable role in providing humanitarian assistance and protection services. The compounded effect of economic decline and loss of livelihoods or income moreover severely impacted on the psychological well-being of affected communities.¹² This led to an increase in adverse coping mechanisms for socio-economic survival and a significant rise in Gender-based Violence (GBV) cases.¹³

Efforts in implementing the centrality of protection are not resulting in the reduction of critical protection risks due to overfocus on process instead of programming

The undiminished, and in many cases increased, incidence of other protection issues arising from violence, armed conflict, forced displacement, disasters and the adverse effects of climate change made the need for system-wide measures and action to address these protection concerns ever more evident. Yet, data from the GPC database, feedback from surveys, events and consultations with protection actors at field and global level reveal that while great strides have been made by protection clusters in putting in place structures and processes to achieve protection outcomes, they are not resulting in effective reduction of critical protection risks and violations.

Severity levels of most critical protection risks and concerns in 2020

Distribution of operations according to reported severity levels of protection risks and concerns

SPECIFIC RISKS, CONCERNS AND ADVERSE COPING MECHANISMS	SEVERE %	EXTREME %
Violence and armed conflict	50	21
Forced movement and displacement of people including forced returns	43	14
Psychological distress and mental health	74	15
Gender-based violence or abuse	71	18
Violence against children	50	7
Risks related to housing, evictions, land and property	43	7

Source: – [GPC Global Protection Update November 2020](#)



A general observation from the consultations is that it is still not clear for humanitarians across the board what the centrality of protection concretely means in practice and how it should be translated into measurable outcomes. At operational level, the focus of the Protection Cluster is on processes, rather than programming. Establishing structures or complying with processes – such as developing HCT protection strategies, or having protection as a standing agenda item at HCT meetings – are often perceived as actual implementation of the centrality of protection. The processes are therefore seen as the objective itself, rather than the means to the goal. However, processes alone cannot lead to protection outcomes – i.e. the reduction of risks, threats and vulnerabilities – if they do not relate to substantive issues and are not translated into planning, programming and advocacy. Protection Cluster members cited the focus on heavy humanitarian processes, such as the Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) and a multitude of structures with frequent meetings, as the main reasons for lacking enough operational space to focus on programming that effectively reduces protection risks.¹⁴ By contrast, some actors, such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and local actors, fare better in achieving protection outcomes, partly because they are less immersed in continuous, set humanitarian processes and are able to maintain operational space for programming. They often succeed in reducing protection risks and vulnerabilities through a pragmatic problem-solving approach and collaboration with relevant actors to achieve solutions outside set frameworks, if required. An example of such an approach is found in Honduras where efforts are made to enhance safety and security in a context of gang violence, through informal partnerships and coordination with a range of actors, such as faith-based organisations, development, peacebuilding and humanitarian actors, by identifying collective methods of support and action.¹⁵ Another example from the same context is the initiative by a civil society organisation in building a relationship of trust

with actual and former gang members, as well as their communities, and engaging them in programmes to reduce the threat of gang violence and the risk of young children joining gangs.¹⁶

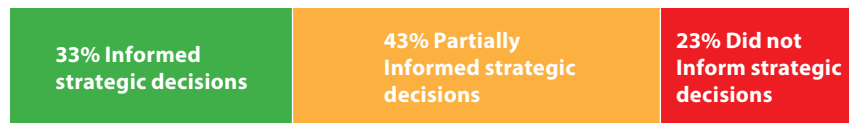
Lack of ownership and leadership by the HCT on the centrality of protection is hampering strategic decisions and action on critical protection risks and violations

A majority of consulted protection clusters indicated that while they were making efforts to strengthen analysis for the HCT to address the most critical protection risks and violations, the HCT appeared to be struggling and, in some cases, reluctant to assume responsibility and be held accountable in addressing critical protection issues. As an illustration, regular briefings on critical protection issues were provided to HCTs in over half of all operations with a protection cluster, yet only a third of those briefings concretely informed strategic decision-making.¹⁷ Even in those cases, there was little transparency as to the measures or action that were subsequently taken to effectuate decisions. In many operations, protection data and analysis provided to the HCT were merely acknowledged as shared information, with no leadership on possible follow-up actions for operations, programming or advocacy.



Inform Humanitarian Strategic Decision-making

Overall Assessment



Source: GPC data November 2020

Particularly concerning is the general perception of protection clusters that the HCT lacks political will to take strategic decisions and action against gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL), despite a renewed Call to Action for Human Rights.¹⁸ Competing agency mandates and lack of resources were cited by consulted protection actors as some of the reasons for inaction. They also pointed out that many of these violations occur in politically sensitive contexts where a mere reference to protection could result in the blockage of humanitarian access or an enforced halt to operations. With little political clout and support from the highest echelons of the system to face these constraints, HCs and HCTs opted to maintain the status quo, than risk detrimental political and operational consequences. Even in less sensitive contexts, protection tended to be perceived as a thematic or, at best, a security issue instead of a core operational responsibility and was often de-prioritised in favour of more tangible and quantifiable services such as food security; shelter; and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). It was observed that rather than addressing critical protection risks, humanitarian actors repeatedly chose to conduct activities in which they had experience, had already planned or had funding for; or considered a priority based on their mandate, expertise or capacity; and which had been ongoing for years, but without significant impact.¹⁹

This, despite the broad acknowledgement that, in many instances, protection issues are the main driver as well as consequence of humanitarian crises. Consequently, even assistance needs such as food security can never be entirely addressed if underlying risks, threats and vulnerabilities are not equally tackled.

There is need for an effective accountability mechanism to ensure that the implementation of the centrality of protection is not largely placed on the shoulder of the Protection Cluster

From the consulted Protection Cluster coordinators, 77% declared that the HCT did not assume concrete ownership of the development and implementation of HCT protection strategies.²⁰ Protection clusters were subsequently left in charge of their implementation and monitoring, which means that a mandatory, strategic responsibility of the HC and HCT²¹ was de facto placed on the shoulder of a single operational entity. This defeats the entire purpose of the centrality of protection and points to the lack of an effective accountability mechanism at global and field level, leaving failure to address critical system-wide protection risks with hardly any repercussions for humanitarian leadership.



Successful efforts in achieving protection outcomes are mainly person- rather than system-driven and are not always based on HCT protection strategies. Strong engagement of the HC, a good understanding of protection, as well as solid coordination and advocacy at inter-sectoral level are re-emphasised as prerequisites for effective implementation of the centrality of protection.²² The example of Palestine is highlighted below, but other examples include Mali and Ukraine. In Mali, the HCT took action on critical protection risks

through pro-active engagement by a Deputy HC with a strong protection background, a ProCap advisor²³ who supported the HC on the centrality of protection, together with a well-functioning Protection Cluster. The cluster strengthened its analysis on protection risks and regularly briefed the HCT on them, but it became less clear whether the HCT acted upon the recommendations from the cluster when the Deputy HC, ProCap advisor and cluster coordinator left the operation.

Palestine – Strong leadership in addressing system-wide protection concerns

The operation in Palestine has never developed an HCT protection strategy, but addresses system-wide protection issues through the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which are firmly grounded in protection. There is strong engagement by humanitarian leadership in addressing human rights violations, supported by a strong ICCG that is spearheaded by a highly protection-oriented coordinator, who pushes for all operational action to be rooted in protection.



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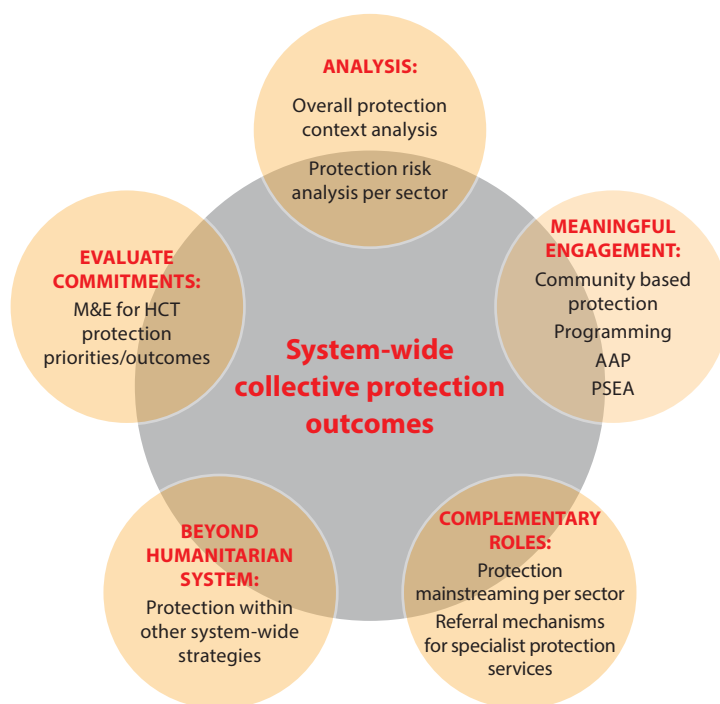
Several agencies have launched initiatives to strengthen institutional understanding and implementation of the centrality of protection: the World Food Programme (WFP) updated its [protection and accountability policy in 2020](#). It comes with an implementation and resourcing plan, and charts the course for operationalising the policy over the next five years. The policy details the resources that will be required to implement key actions that need to be taken in five result areas, including leadership and institutional set-up. The framework is completed by an accountability and action plan for senior management at country offices and regional bureaus to track their performance in operationalising the protection policy. Results will be annually reported to WFP managers and Executive Board.²⁴ Another example is that of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which is defining an institutional approach to protection (DIAP), by engaging all sections and levels within the organization in establishing a uniform approach and commitment to

protection. The exercise commenced in February 2021 and is expected to be finalised in 2022. [The Real-Time Accountability Partnership \(RTAP\)](#) is also finalising a toolkit to implement the [GBV Accountability Framework](#) that was adopted in 2018.²⁵

An ongoing review of [the IASC Protection Policy](#) is currently looking into the implementation of the policy across the humanitarian system and in a range of humanitarian crises. The review is meant to provide the IASC Principals with an analytical assessment of the implementation of the policy, as well as recommendations for strengthening protection outcomes, manifested as the reduction of protection risks, over the next five years.²⁶ The issues that have been raised in this review are also being considered in the process.



Baseline for centrality of protection elements



In an effort to facilitate the operationalisation of the centrality of protection, the GPC suggested in its 2019 annual review a number of elements to support achieving system-wide collective outcomes. The elements are a set of processes that are intended as an initial step in putting the necessary procedures in place to identify, draw out and inform required actions to address critical protection risks, threats and vulnerabilities. They reflect the commitments in the IASC Protection Policy and can be adapted at country level. The elements also feed in into the broader benchmarks that are currently being developed by IASC's Results Group on Operational Response for assessing the implementation of the centrality of protection. Those will be process benchmarks, intended for widespread use at all levels of the humanitarian system as a system-wide planning support tool on practical steps that can be taken towards achieving protection outcomes and monitoring progress.²⁷

Ahead of the finalisation of the IASC benchmarks, the GPC measured the implementation of some of the core elements suggested in the 2019 review to establish an initial baseline at country level.

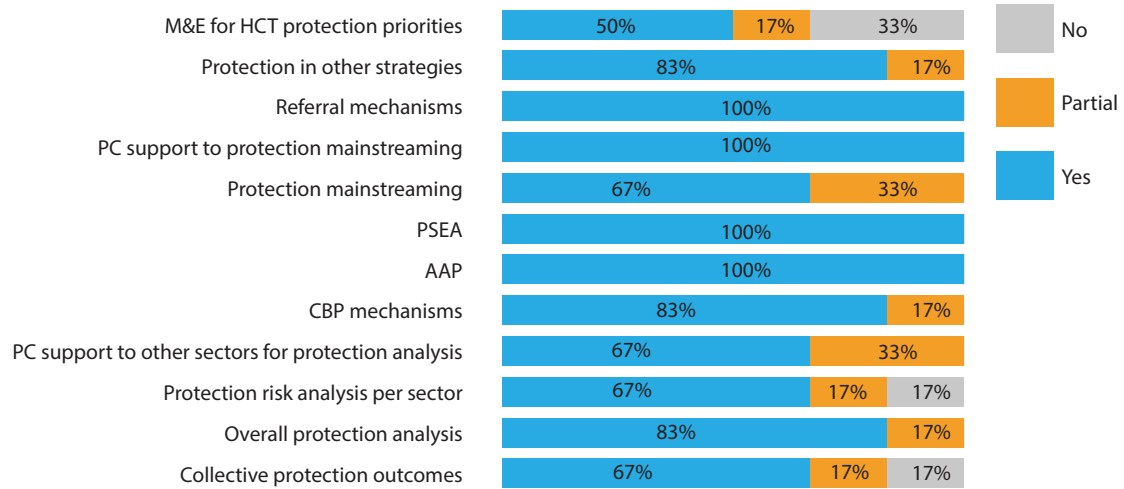
The elements are selected as indicators and solely used to get an initial snapshot of how they are being implemented at country level. They do not reflect all the elements that were introduced in the GPC 2019 review²⁸.

The measurement is based on a survey and consultations with Protection Cluster coordinators in selected countries.²⁹ The collected data is therefore from the perspective of the Protection Cluster and shows how it is contributing to the implementation of the selected elements. While the Protection Cluster is not responsible or accountable for the implementation of all the elements, it is one of the main entities involved and informed about the implementation of the centrality of protection at country level, and therefore able to provide substantive data.

The baseline measuring exercise is not intended to measure the outcome or impact of undertaken protection activities, as the elements are process-oriented. The exercise therefore rather considers whether established processes inform consequent action (activities, programming or advocacy).



Implementation CoP Elements at Country Level



IMPLEMENTATION OF CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION ELEMENTS – BASELINE

67% of consulted operations have established **collective protection outcomes**. These are mostly recorded in HCT protection strategies/ action plans and HRPs.

83% of consulted operations have conducted an overall **protection context analysis**.

33% of consulted Protection Clusters/ Sectors support regular **protection risk analysis for other sectors** and the ICCG.

83% of consulted operations have mechanisms in place for **meaningful engagement with crisis-affected populations** in developing and implementing protection programmes.

100% of consulted Protection Clusters/ Sectors provide **protection mainstreaming support** to other clusters/sectors.

100% of consulted operations have established **referral mechanisms** for protection services.

83% of consulted Protection Clusters/ Sectors support **inclusion of protection in other system-wide frameworks** than HCT protection strategies and HRPs.

50% of consulted operations have a **monitoring and evaluation plan** for HCT protection priorities/ outcomes.



Collective protection outcomes

A majority of consulted operations have formulated collective protection outcomes in HCT protection strategies or HRPs, but the protection outcomes and priorities do not always reflect the most urgent or critical protection risks in the crisis. This is partly due to the fact that protection priorities are not regularly updated, but more largely due to reluctance to take on protection risks that are challenging to address. While some operations have set up a working group to oversee the process (e.g. Somalia and Ukraine), implementation of HCT protection strategies remains limited and is predominately seen as the task of the Protection Cluster, which reflects the findings of [GPC's 2020 HCT Protection Strategies Review](#).



Overall protection context analysis

Overall protection context analysis is usually led by the Protection Cluster and regularly updated with ongoing protection monitoring.³⁰ The analysis is made available to the ICCG and clusters to facilitate sectoral analysis. In most operations protection is included as a regular or standing item on the HCT meeting agenda. However, the most urgent and critical risks are not always prioritised and, in situations where such risks are presented to the HCT, it is not always clear to the Protection Cluster coordinators what action is taken at strategic level to address them.



Protection risk analysis support to other sectors

Protection clusters are prepared to support other clusters in conducting sectoral protection analyses, but only a third of the consulted clusters are called upon to provide assistance. The Protection Cluster shares protection analyses with other clusters and supports programming that is informed by analysis in operations where support is requested. Many humanitarian funding mechanisms, such as country-based pooled funds, require cluster projects to include a protection risk analysis as part of the proposal. The data suggests that these analyses are conducted without support from the Protection Cluster. In most cases the analyses provide a projection of how protection will be conducted, but not how it is implemented in practice.



Meaningful engagement with affected populations

All consulted operations have AAP and PSEA mechanisms in place and a large majority has systems in place to involve affected communities in planning protection activities.³¹ The Protection Cluster mainly engages with affected communities through protection monitoring activities, which are well developed in most of the operations. The AAP mechanisms are predominately set up as complaint and feedback mechanisms, but do not reveal whether response feedback is provided to communities, or whether received data is used to adjust programming. The mechanisms therefore seem static and do not appear to provide a platform for substantive engagement in programming by affected communities.³² A more effective way for engaging with affected communities has been explored by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in its [Signpost](#) project and methodology. The project is based on the premise that the aid sector must learn to listen, communicate and be responsive to those we work to support.³³ Other meaningful ways are also showcased by InterAction in [Mindshift – a collection of examples that promote protection outcomes](#).



Protection mainstreaming

All consulted protection clusters have developed relevant protection mainstreaming tools and trainings. They provide protection mainstreaming support to other clusters and non-protection specialised actors. In some operations, the Protection Cluster reviews protection mainstreaming inputs for HRP project proposals and supports efforts to develop integrated programmes with other clusters.



Referral mechanisms

All consulted operations have referral mechanisms in place for specialised protection services, but they are not always well resourced to provide the required support. There is a general lack of services due to lack of funding and lack of operational actors. The vast majority of consulted protection clusters operate and coordinate within and beyond the humanitarian system to provide protection support.





Inclusion of protection in other system-wide frameworks than HCT protection strategies and HRPs

Examples include collective outcomes or protection analysis in durable solutions frameworks (Iraq and Somalia); coordination with peacekeeping colleagues (Mali); and protection considerations in development frameworks (Mali, Somalia and Ukraine). There is, however, limited evidence on whether these contributions go beyond written inclusions in strategies and plans, and result in practical action.



Monitoring and evaluation plan for HCT protection priorities/outcomes.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plans are included in half of the operations that have developed HCT protection strategies.³⁴ The plans are, however, hardly implemented or regularly updated. In the operations where they are followed up, M&E leads to adjustments to the HCT protection strategy action plan.

The overall picture from this initial data indicates that core processes for operationalising the centrality of protection are relatively well established. Protection outcomes are mainly implemented through HCT protection strategies and action plans at country level, while most HRPs also include at least one protection outcome in their strategic objectives. However, the data also shows that the established processes are not necessarily informing required action to prevent, reduce or end critical protection risks: qualitative aspects – such as concrete activities, the link to actual programming or subsequent impact – are therefore less apparent.

Although inter-cluster collaboration is generally good, in reality the implementation of most elements is taken on by the Protection Cluster. This suggests that efforts to achieve identified protection outcomes are rarely collective or fully coherent across the system. The default assumption in some cases that the Protection Cluster is responsible for anything related to protection reduces the likelihood of other clusters and the HCT playing a more active role in addressing critical protection risks.³⁵ Efforts by non-protection actors in implementing the centrality of protection also become less visible, because they do not get recorded or acknowledged.

There is, on the whole, not much evidence of integrated programming to achieve collective protection outcomes. Activities are not usually planned, designed and implemented jointly for

the purpose of collectively reducing identified risks. Institutional interests, siloed sectoral approaches and competition for funds often stand in the way of more holistic ways of programming. Still, some good examples exist, like the collaboration by the Housing Land and Property (HLP) AoR and Food Security and Agriculture Cluster (FSAC) in Afghanistan, in integrating HLP considerations in food security and urban agriculture to enhance sustainable settlements of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and returnees;³⁶ the joint action on displacement and evictions in Iraq and Somalia by the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster and the HLP AoR;³⁷ integration of protection and GBV activities (civil documentation, psycho-social support, GBV case management) within the Common Health Framework, funded by ECHO³⁸ in several towns in Mali through 11 NGOs; as well as harmonisation of referral pathways by the Food Security and Protection Sector in Nigeria to ensure safe assistance and service provision to communities. Other examples are highlighted below.

Protection clusters in the consulted operations make great efforts in advocacy within and beyond the humanitarian system by producing regular briefing notes and reports.³⁹ They provide the HCT with advocacy messages on critical protection risks and violations and recommend necessary actions, but in most cases it is not clear to protection clusters whether or how the recommendations are followed up, or what the impact is of actions that are taken by the HCT.



Ukraine Protection Cluster – Advocacy activities

The Protection Cluster issues [monthly fact sheets](#) which provide an overview of the main protection issues and trends. They aim to raise awareness and engage stakeholders on collective advocacy efforts and protection responses. The cluster also issues [thematic notes](#), which cover specific issues of major concern and are occasionally drafted with other sectors. The notes intend to reach a wide audience in order to raise awareness and advocate for responses to key protection issues. Recent examples include:

- [Note on the Impact of Decentralization in the Eastern Ukraine](#) – prepared by Protection, Health and WASH Clusters;
- [Advocacy Note on exploring access to healthcare services in Ukraine](#) – prepared by Protection and Health Clusters.



The results of the measuring exercise reveal the need to evaluate the concrete impact of the centrality of protection processes that have been established; i.e. the extent to which they actually lead to activities that reduce critical protection risks, threats and vulnerabilities on the ground. Formulating outcome and impact indicators to measure protection outcomes, could be a next step in the process at country level, using this initial baseline. One of the tools that could be helpful in the process is DG-ECHO's protection mainstreaming key outcome indicator and

monitoring tool, which provides a method to systematically measure the effectiveness of project implementation.⁴⁰ InterAction is also suggesting new ways of approaching the entire process of measuring protection outcomes.⁴¹

The established baseline can also provide a basis for analysing the obstacles and gaps in achieving protection outcomes. It can further be useful to identify required resources and where they should be focused to strengthen implementation.



Good practices

Protection actors are making substantive efforts to implement the centrality of protection and some of these efforts are showcased below. The examples are obtained from desk review, inputs from and interviews with humanitarian actors at global and field level.

Protection outcomes

Iraq – Tenure documentation through advocacy

UN-Habitat used advocacy as part of their strategy to secure land for the Yazidi minority, which had been forcibly relocated from the Sinjar Mountains. Due to discriminatory policies, Yazidis had never been granted documentation to secure tenure rights. UN-Habitat and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) raised the issue with the government of Iraq and began registering HLP claims of Yazidis, using [the Social Tenure Domain Model \(STDm\) tool](#), which enables registration of informal and customary tenures. Tenure documentation of ownership has now been issued in 95% of cases and has been legally recognized by the government. Gender equality was also observed and for the first time in Iraq husbands and wives can be equal co-owners of land.

[Leave No One Behind: Land Tenure in Post-Conflict Iraq – Urbanet](#)

Mali – Signed agreement with non-state actors against attacks on health facilities through advocacy

[Joint advocacy initiatives by the Protection and Health Cluster](#) against attacks by non-state actors on health facilities contributed to the signing of a unilateral agreement by two groups of armed non-state actors to refrain from attacks on health facilities in Mali.

Analysis

Yemen – Area-based response plans

The response plans provide data and analysis of protection issues and are prepared by the Yemen Protection Cluster, in collaboration with the Child Protection (CP) and GBV AoRs. The data includes the types of protection incidents, their geographic location and the number of people affected. The data also contains general analysis and information, as well as specific data and analysis for each hub. The plans are complemented by regularly updated [response and gap analysis, with snapshots of each country hub](#).

Somalia – Eviction risk mapping

CCCM and HLP colleagues jointly collect data on evictions on a monthly basis, which is shared in an [updated eviction risk map](#) that all sectors can use for programming. Flash alerts are issued when evictions response support is required, while knowledge on conflict resolution is shared with partners.

Meaningful engagement with affected populations

Mali – Community-based protection monitoring system⁴²

The Protection Cluster has developed a community-based protection monitoring system, based on a network of 57 protection monitors, 188 community focal points and 168 local protection committees covering the six regions of Mali that are affected by the conflict. The system comprises six categories and 33 types of protection incidents and the data feeds into the Protection Cluster's [Protection Monitoring](#)



[Dashboard](#) used by protection partners, the humanitarian community and donors to easily access information, observe protection trends and tailor protection interventions.

Serious incidents or threats – such as imminent threats or attacks on villages, mass population movement, attacks against civilians or civilian infrastructures – are reported within less than 48 hours, through flash alerts by the community focal point. They are channelled through the cluster coordination team and shared in a timely manner with a wide range of actors, including civil-military coordination mechanisms, the Human Rights and Protection of Civilians (PoC) Units of MINUSMA, and other protection partners.

Furthermore, a monthly [Protection Risk Index](#), covering protection threats, risks, trends, vulnerabilities and capacities of affected communities, has been developed to establish the severity of the protection situation, based on the perception of communities in 200 municipalities. The tool is shared with protection partners, the HCT and MINUSMA's PoC units to inform advocacy, policy development, programming and support resource mobilisation efforts. The Protection Cluster has also produced an analysis on [community-led approaches to protection](#), sharing a series of good practices. An example is the role of child protection committees in leading dialogue and advocacy with armed groups for the prevention of child recruitment, which has resulted in the demobilisation of hundreds of children by the communities themselves.

Protection mainstreaming

Somalia – Protection Mainstreaming Index (PMI)

[The PMI](#) is an analytical framework developed by the Protection Cluster that can be used to measure a project's ability to mainstream protection. The Protection Cluster encourages the PMI to be used by actors in monitoring and evaluating their project plans. This enables the collection of data to measure the extent to which protection has been mainstreamed in the projects. Protection Cluster partners are available to provide support in establishing and implementing the PMI.

The collected data is scored as follows, using 12 indicators based on the protection mainstreaming elements of safety and dignity, do no harm, meaningful access, and accountability and participation:

Traffic light	Description	Criteria
Green	Good	All minimum criteria met and at least 1 out of the 4 non-minimum criteria met
Yellow	Sufficient	At least one of the minimum standards has not been met as per criteria set in column I
Red	Need for improvements	All minimum criteria met but none non-minimum criteria met
White	Poor	None of the minimum criteria is met



Iraq – Mainstreaming Mine Action

The overarching durable solutions approach in Iraq and the subsequent decision to close IDP camps in 2020 increased risks for IDPs returning to areas that were still contaminated by mines. The Mine Action (MA) sub-cluster closely coordinated with the CCCM cluster to identify needs and prioritise explosive ordnance risk education to IDPs in camps and areas of return. The sub-cluster contributed to the development of three mine action indicators in the 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). It further ensured that mine action was mainstreamed in the response plans of other clusters, resulting in the prioritisation of children affected by explosive ordnances in the 2021 Child Protection Sub-Cluster plan.⁴³

Referral mechanisms

Iraq – Referral mechanisms for specialised protection services

The Protection Cluster has developed standard operating procedures and forms for referrals to specialised protection services. There is also an [online platform](#) where protection partners can record their available services and provide details on how to access them. The online platform can be accessed by all actors to directly contact service providers and make referrals. Actors can alternatively contact local protection working groups to help identify suitable protection partners to receive referrals or provide required protection support.

Basic Protection Package in Emergency Response – DG-ECHO

DG-ECHO is currently rolling out a rapid response package in a number of countries, including Myanmar and the Philippines, that consists of:

- Disseminating protection information on rights and access to services as a first step
- Training all responders on basic psycho-social support (psychological first aid)

- Identifying persons with protection needs; including persons with special needs
- Active referral and accompaniment of identified persons to the right services, including to special services such as family reunification and legal documentation
- Referral indicator to monitor the system

Collective engagement – collaboration with actors beyond the humanitarian system

Palestine – Collective advocacy campaign

The Palestine operation is running the [Life with Dignity campaign](#), which is led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and shares the stories of Palestinians in occupied Palestinian territory (oPt). It is a coherent cross-sectoral coordinated communications and advocacy approach, with multiple UN entities and NGOs pushing the same messages across at the same time, to the same audiences, instead of one agency leading a particular campaign. The campaign has generated substantive funding for advocacy in oPt.

Iraq – Nexus approach and localisation – Child Protection AoR

In the ongoing process of post-conflict transition in Iraq, the CP AoR adopted a nexus and localised approach. It first identified prevailing CP risks among IDPs, refugees and host communities that were being addressed by humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors (i.e. child labour, child marriage and violence). It then reached out to government and local organisations working on the identified issues and assessed their capacity, challenges, funding gaps and logistical issues (e.g. formal registration, infrastructural capacity, etc.) to provide services.

As a next step, donors were encouraged to:



- a) Partner with the government and local organisations addressing the identified issues
- b) Take on national organisations as implementing partners
- c) Strengthen their capacity, where needed, through clear coaching and mentoring plans.

Adding an incentive to this, pooled fund allocations are only allowed to be granted to consortiums that include national NGO members.

Other steps comprised the inclusion of staff of government and national organisations in inter-sector capacity-building initiatives on case-management, MHPSS, parenting programmes, etc. A monitoring platform was created for humanitarian and non-humanitarian actors to allow the latter report to the sector. Documents were translated into local languages to enable national partners understand the UN coordination structure and use the platforms. Referral pathways were established between humanitarian and non-humanitarian partners, particularly for specialistic CP care, which is largely provided by non-humanitarian partners. Forty-nine percent of all CP partners are non-humanitarian actors, consisting of national actors and INGOs. Almost half of the achievements reached by the CP AoR in 2020 were attained by non-humanitarian partners.

The entire initiative is also being replicated at sub-national level and gradually more national CP coordinators are coordinating sub-national working groups in governorates and cities, co-led by local authorities.

Somalia – Solving eviction issues with local authorities, through cross-sectoral collaboration

In Baidoa, discussions with landowners and site leaders led to the development of an effective relocation scheme, by working with the government to ensure that local authorities were

aware of IDP sites under extreme risk of eviction. Land was secured for the relocation of IDPs from at risk sites, where they could receive support and a land title for their demarcated plot over a period of years. The initiative was successful due to buy-in into the process across sectors (i.e. WASH, Health, Nutrition, the Durable Solutions Working Group and others) and, crucially, because of the partnership with local authorities, who were seeking a permanent solution for the continuous process of repeated displacement. The success of the approach has led to similar initiatives in other parts of Somalia, where sectors are jointly working with local authorities to identify sites with eviction threats and flood risks.

Colombia – Collaboration with development and peacebuilding actors

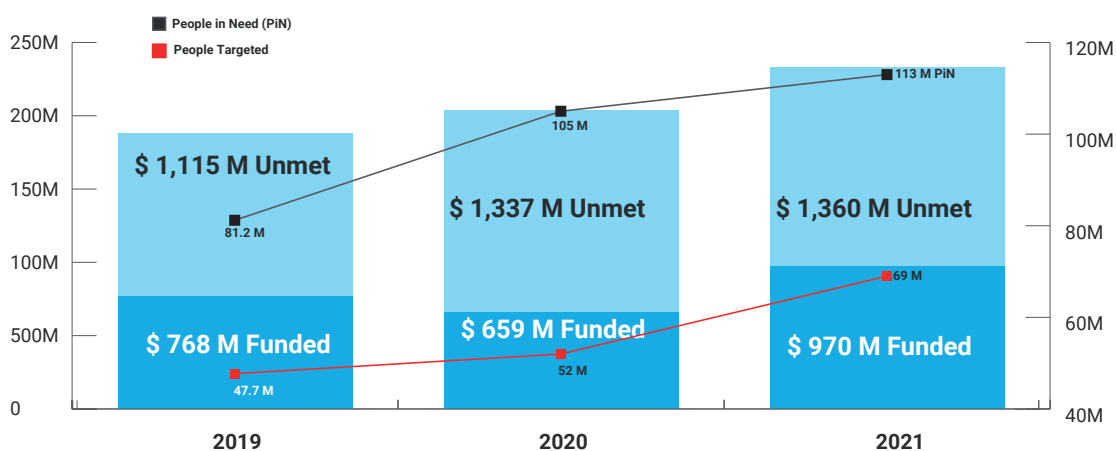
As a way of improving multi-disciplinary strategies for protection, the Protection Cluster in Colombia invited both development and peacebuilding actors to join the cluster as regular members. This allowed for a diverse perspective within the group to analyse key issues and contributed to fostering joint initiatives to address protection concerns. In addition, donors in the country initiated monthly dialogues between the Humanitarian Donor Group and the Development Donor Group to build trust and collaboration, as well as encourage funding for multi-disciplinary responses to achieve protection outcomes.⁴⁴



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Protection financing



Lack of resources has been cited by some HCs as a main reason for not fulfilling their mandatory responsibility on the centrality of protection.⁴⁵ Consequently, suggestions have been made to tie a budget to the HCT protection strategy and other system-wide protection frameworks to ensure implementation.⁴⁶ Protection activities have been underfunded for at least the past eight years,⁴⁷ even though a positive trend in funding was seen in 2021. In 2020, 38% of required protection funding was received, while 41% had been received at the end of November 2021.

Protection is not considered as life-saving as food assistance, nutrition, shelter or provision of health services⁴⁸, but the reasons for underfunding have also been linked to low performance by the Protection Cluster and lack of impact of HCT protection strategies. However, well-functioning clusters attract more funding and protection clusters have significantly strengthened structures and processes such as monitoring and analysis⁴⁹ to inform protection programming. Donors are now keen to see more integration into programming and several of them are tying funding to actual implementation of the centrality of protection and making it less process-oriented. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) supported WFP in the development of its Protection Accountability

Framework and has been supporting non-protection specialised organisations such as Action Against Hunger (AAH) in integrating protection in nutrition programmes. DG-ECHO and the Swiss Embassy are members of the Implementation Support Group (ISG) overseeing the implementation of Somalia's HCT protection strategy. As mentioned above, DG-ECHO has also developed protection mainstreaming key outcome indicators to measure the implementation of projects.

The issue is therefore not only about attracting more funding for protection, but using limited resources effectively, by targeting the risks, threats and vulnerabilities that need to be addressed urgently and showing the impact more funding would bring. Moreover, the immediate and long-term impacts of the pandemic have highlighted the importance of a coordinated response that addresses both immediate needs and underlying drivers of crises.⁵⁰

This requires integrated programming with humanitarian, development, peacebuilding, local and other relevant actors. Making use of the comparative advantage of all actors is a cost-efficient way to achieve programme objectives with limited resources and a possible means for closing programme funding gaps.

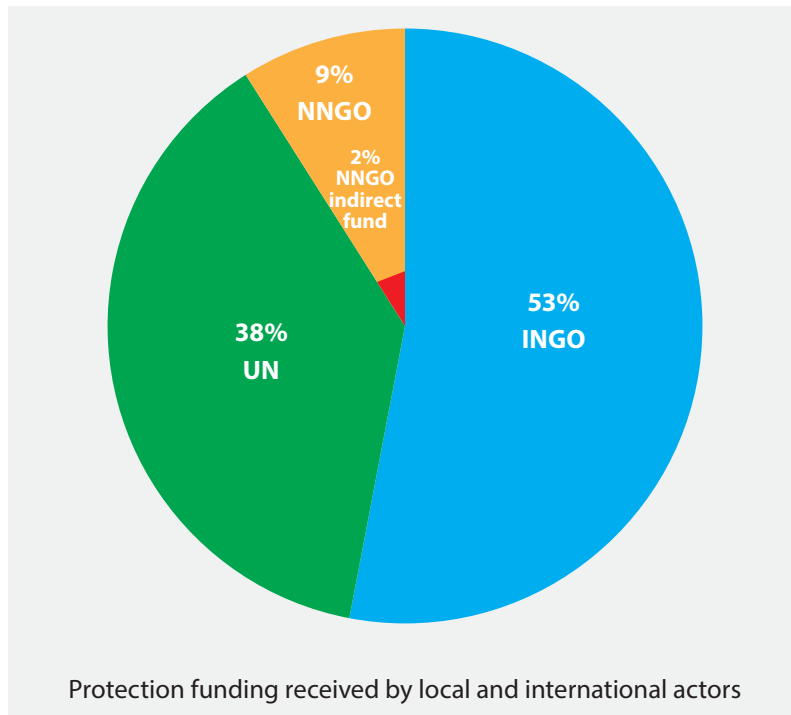


IOM is developing a case study to promote the approach of proportional funding for GBV mitigation. The approach allocates a fixed percentage of funding to activities and comes with a concrete action plan for GBV mitigation, which is proving beneficial for getting buy-in for the proposal. IOM Ecuador has committed to the approach for its GBV mitigation activities in 2022, targeting its response to the Venezuelan crisis.



Humanitarian financing only covers a fraction of the protection services that are provided in particularly protracted crises, and development actors are providing a growing proportion of humanitarian assistance funding. As an example, the total amount of official development assistance to countries experiencing crisis rose from 47% (US\$51 billion) in 2010 to 65% (US\$94 billion) in 2019;⁵¹ almost three times the total required amount for the global humanitarian appeal of that same year. Collaboration with non-humanitarian actors can therefore indirectly broaden the pool of resources humanitarian actors could tap into.

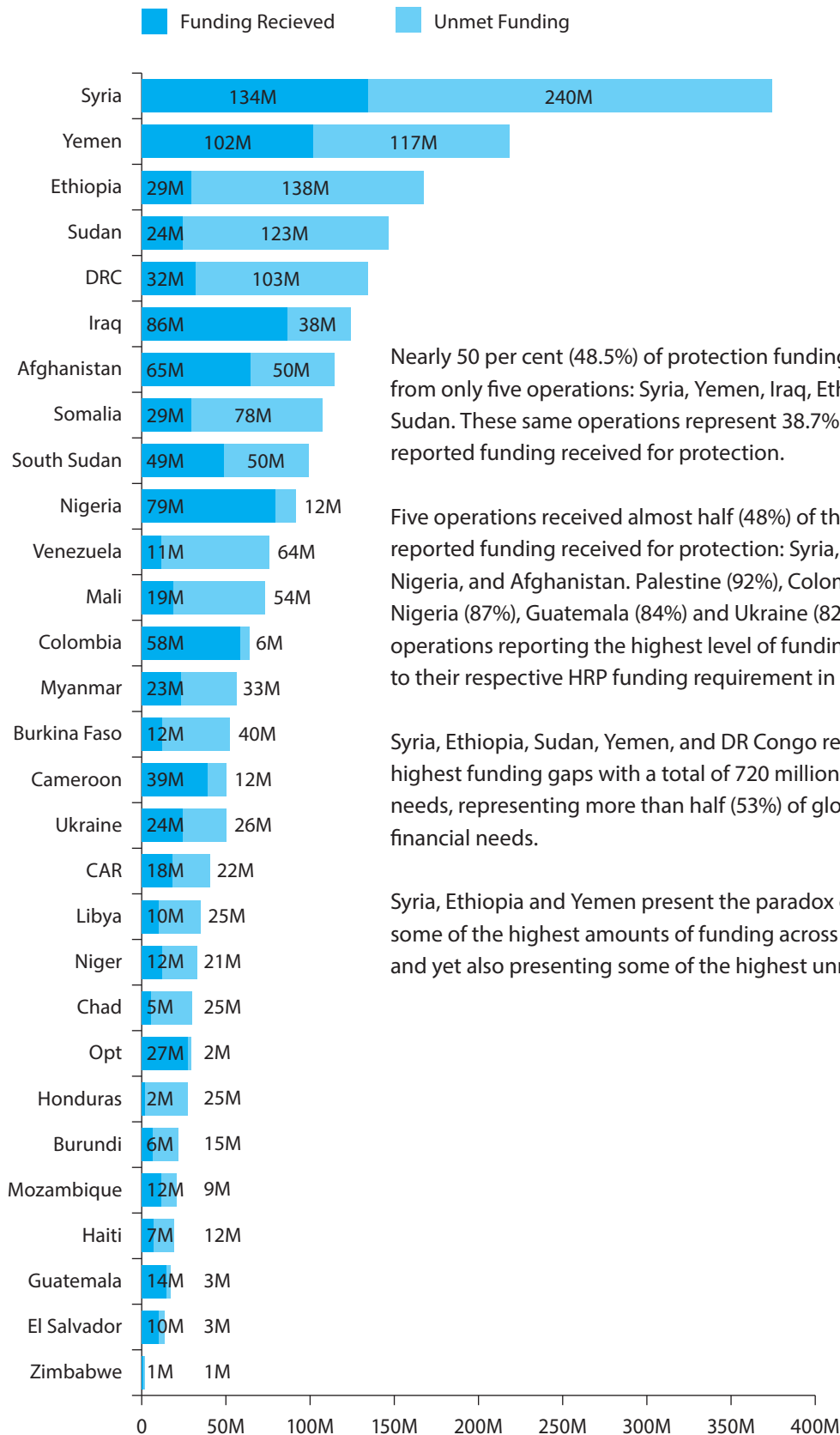
Local actors currently receive only 9% of protection funding,⁵² which is far below the 25% the GPC is aiming to reach as direct funding to them. Their pivotal role became ever more evident during the pandemic, as they remained the sole provider of critical protection services when COVID restrictions halted access of international actors to field operations. In some contexts, more than 50% of all humanitarian activities were already being implemented by local actors before the pandemic, due to access issues.⁵³ The financial and institutional support they receive should therefore be commensurate with their crucial work in ensuring humanitarian access and providing protection services.



Source: [GPC PROTECTION FUNDING – Where do we stand mid-year 2021](#)



Country funding January – November 2021



Nearly 50 per cent (48.5%) of protection funding requests are from only five operations: Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Ethiopia, and Sudan. These same operations represent 38.7% of the total reported funding received for protection.

Five operations received almost half (48%) of the total reported funding received for protection: Syria, Yemen, Iraq, Nigeria, and Afghanistan. Palestine (92%), Colombia (91%), Nigeria (87%), Guatemala (84%) and Ukraine (82%) are the five operations reporting the highest level of funding compared to their respective HRP funding requirement in 2021.

Syria, Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen, and DR Congo report the highest funding gaps with a total of 720 million USD unmet needs, representing more than half (53%) of global unmet financial needs.

Syria, Ethiopia and Yemen present the paradox of receiving some of the highest amounts of funding across operations, and yet also presenting some of the highest unmet needs.



Endnotes

- 1 The IDMC 2021 Global Report on Internal Displacement reported that 55 million people were internally displaced by the end of 2020 due to humanitarian crises: IDMC GRID 2021 Report: <https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021/>. This is up from 50 million in 2019.
- 2 Updated information covers the period up to November 2021.
- 3 Reference to the Protection Cluster in this review also includes protection sectors.
- 4 The desk review, surveys and consultations were conducted in the period from November 2020 till October 2021. The consulted colleagues at field level were based in the following operations: Afghanistan, Burundi, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, Occupied Palestinian Territory (oPt), Somalia, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen. They include consultations with Senior Protection Advisors from the Protection Standby Capacity Project (ProCap) deployed in the operations. The consulted non-protection specialised sectors were the Food Security Cluster at global and field level (Nigeria); and the Camp Management and Camp Coordination Cluster at field level (Somalia). The other consulted colleagues at global level were members of the GPC Strategic Advisory Group.
- 5 The (co-)coordinators were from the same operations listed above.
- 6 The event was dedicated to protection field cluster coordinators, AoR coordinators, co-coordinators and protection Information Management Officers.
- 7 The key takeaways are based on a survey that was conducted during the session and outcomes of discussions. The survey had a response rate of 40% of the participants.
- 8 A breakdown of the outcome of the consultations: 77% of the consulted protection actors in the selected operations affirmed the key takeaways from the GPF segment. Twenty-three percent declared that the HCT and ICCG were actively engaged in implementing the centrality of protection and that protection and non-protection actors were collaborating together in achieving collective outcomes.
- 9 Consultations on the implementation of the elements were held with Protection Cluster (co-)coordinators in Iraq, Mali, Somalia, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen.
- 10 See: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/results-group-1-operational-response>
- IASC Results Group 1 on Operational Response has a Sub-group on the centrality of protection, which is co-chaired by OCHA and InterAction. One of its deliverables is to identify agreed, specific and measurable indicators on the centrality of protection in practice.
- 11 Arbitrary limitation on freedom of movement was reported as a moderate to extreme protection concern by 79% of operations – [GPC Global Protection Update November 2020](#).
- 12 All operations reported an increase in psychosocial distress and mental health needs, with 89% of the operations rating them severe to extreme: [Global-Protection-Update_191120.pdf \(globalprotectioncluster.org\)](#)
- 13 Almost all operations (96%) reported a significant rise in GBV cases, characterizing the situation as severe to extreme: [Global-Protection-Update_191120.pdf \(globalprotectioncluster.org\)](#). See also: [the IASC Key Protection Key Advocacy Messages – COVID-19](#).
- 14 See also: [Embracing the protection outcome mindset – InterAction](#), p13
- 15 See: [Embracing-the-Protection-Outcome-Mindset.pdf \(interaction.org\)](#), pp 13-14.
- 16 [Mindshift – A collection of examples that promote protection outcomes](#), pp 17-20.
- 17 Data from the GPC Operational Footprint, baseline analysis – November 2020, and consultations with Protection Cluster coordinators.
- 18 Building on the 2013 Human Rights Up Front Initiative, the [Secretary-General’s Call to Action for Human Rights \(un.org\)](#) reiterates that human rights underpin the work of the entire UN system and must permeate everything it does – in the field, at regional level and at Headquarters. It states that upholding human rights is essential to addressing the broad causes and impacts of all complex crises, and to building sustainable and peaceful societies with equal opportunities and respect for the rights and freedoms of all.
- 19 See [GPC’s 2019 Review on the Centrality of Protection](#), p5.
- 20 See endnote 8.
- 21 See the Handbook for the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, IASC, March 2021, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/leadership-humanitarian-action-handbook-resident-and-humanitarian-coordinator>, pp. 54-58, and the IASC Standard Terms of Reference for HCTs, which include the following mandatory responsibilities for collective approaches: (1) Centrality of Protection; (2) Accountability to Affected People (AAP); (3) Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA); and (4) Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV): https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/hct_tors.pdf
- 22 These are outlined as necessary elements for the implementation of the centrality of protection in the [IASC Protection Policy](#) and the [IASC Principals’ Statement on the Centrality of Protection](#).
- 23 I.e. Senior Protection Advisor from the Protection Standby Capacity Project (ProCap)
- 24 See: [Update on the implementation plan of the WFP protection and accountability policy](#) and [PowerPoint Presentation \(wfp.org\)](#)
- 25 The GBV AoR launched its 2021-2025 Strategy in September 2021, with the following strategic objectives: 1.



Support strong and effective coordination of GBV action in humanitarian contexts; 2. Strengthen partnerships and facilitate joint advocacy to ensure that action on GBV is integrated into all humanitarian response efforts and is central to humanitarian action; 3. Promote learning, set standards and communicate good practice and inclusive approaches for GBV prevention and response services; 4. Support a strong, diverse and inclusive GBV community that continues to innovate and work in partnership across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

26 See: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/results-group-1-operational-response>

27 See: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/results-group-1-operational-response>

28 The following areas of commitment in the IASC Protection Policy are reflected in the elements table that was introduced in the GPC 2019 review: achieving system-wide collective protection outcomes; continuous analysis; meaningful engagement with affected populations; addressing protection risks that cross formal mandates and sector-specific responsibilities; collective engagement; collaboration with actors beyond the humanitarian system; and monitoring and evaluation of progress. Elements were introduced for each area of commitment in the GPC 2019 review.

29 See endnote 9. Consultations were conducted through a semi-structured interview with specific questions on how the selected elements are being implemented. An initial survey was sent out to the selected cluster coordinators before the consultations.

30 On the whole, 73% of operations undertake joint protection analysis, but most only do it during the HNO/HRP process, and about a third do it at least on a quarterly basis: [Global-Protection-Update_191120.pdf \(globalprotectioncluster.org\)](https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/global-protection-update-191120.pdf), p9.

31 While 83% of the consulted operations reported to engage with affected communities, only 61% of all operations report to do so: [GPC Global Update September 2021](https://www.gpc.org/global-update-september-2021), p12.

32 An AAP accountability framework and results tracker are currently being developed by [IASC's Results Group on Accountability and Inclusion](https://www.iasc.org/our-work/working-together/our-approach-to-accountability-and-inclusion) and expected to be finalised by end 2021. The tools could be useful in enhancing meaningful engagement with affected populations.

33 See: <https://www.signpost.ngo/where-we-work-2> for countries where this communications methodology has been rolled out and implemented.

34 This data is provided to add to the overall picture, even though monitoring and evaluation of HCT protection strategies do not fall under the responsibility of the Protection Cluster.

35 The assumption in some cases that the Protection Cluster is responsible for anything related to protection is also a finding that has come out in all previous GPC annual reviews.

36 [integrating_hlp_food_security_afghanistan_urban_agriculture_brief.pdf \(fscluster.org\)](https://www.integrating-hlp-food-security-afghanistan-urban-agriculture-brief.pdf)

37 [CCCM_HLP_Working_Group_meeting_report_20th_April_2021.pdf \(globalprotectioncluster.org\)](https://www.globalprotectioncluster.org/cccm-hlp-working-group-meeting-report-20th-april-2021.pdf)

38 I.e.: the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

39 As an example, the Protection Cluster in Mali reinforced its protection monitoring system and was able to provide comprehensive analysis of protection risks, threats and most vulnerable groups. Monthly protection analysis was provided to the ICC and HCT, as well as quarterly thematic protection notes to the HCT. See e.g. the quarterly note about targeted attacks on livelihoods in Mali, highlighting the link between protection and food security: [cp_mali - note de protection - securite alimentaire - avril 2020 - final.pdf \(humanitarianresponse.info\)](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/mali/cp_mali_note_de_protection_securite_alimentaire_avril_2020_final.pdf)

40 [dg_echo_protection_mainstreaming_indicator - technical_guidance.pdf \(europa.eu\)](https://www.europa.eu/eu-external-action/echo/echo-protection-mainstreaming-indicator-technical-guidance.pdf)

41 See, for example, InterAction: [Measuring Protection Outcomes: Emerging Efforts and New Opportunities | Results-Based Protection \(interaction.org\)](https://www.interaction.org/publication/2021/03/measuring-protection-outcomes-emerging-efforts-and-new-opportunities-results-based-protection)

42 [GPC Global Update September 2021](https://www.gpc.org/global-update-september-2021), p7.

43 [UNMAS 2020 Annual Report](https://www.unmas.org/annual-report-2020), p21

44 Source: Embracing the protection outcome mindset – InterAction

45 This information was received from donors and ProCap advisors supporting HCs on the centrality of protection.

46 See, for example: [Breaking the Glass Ceiling- A Smarter Approach to Protection Financing](https://www.breakingtheglassceiling.org/), p7

47 The protection sector has perennially been underfunded both in terms of its requirements in humanitarian plans and relative to other sectors. Between 2013 and 2019 it received 38% of the total required funding: [Breaking the Glass Ceiling- A Smarter Approach to Protection Financing](https://www.breakingtheglassceiling.org/), p5

48 See: [Breaking the Glass Ceiling- A Smarter Approach to Protection Financing](https://www.breakingtheglassceiling.org/), p19

49 As an example, the Protection Analytical Framework (PAF), a joint collaborative effort by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and the GPC was launched in 2021 to strengthen context-specific analysis: [Protection Analytical Framework | Global Protection Cluster](https://www.protectionanalyticalframework.org/). It is currently being rolled out in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Colombia, Mali, Myanmar, oPt and South Sudan.

50 See the 2021 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report – Development Initiatives, p18: [The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2021 | Summary – Development Initiatives \(devinit.org\)](https://www.devinit.org/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2021-summary-development-initiatives)

51 See: the 2021 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report – Development Initiatives, p14: [The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2021 | Summary – Development Initiatives \(devinit.org\)](https://www.devinit.org/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2021-summary-development-initiatives)

52 Within the Protection Cluster, the GBV AoR has the highest proportion of local actors accessing funding, at 16%: [GPC PROTECTION FUNDING – Where do we stand mid-year 2021](https://www.gpc.org/gpc-protection-funding-where-do-we-stand-mid-year-2021)

53 E.g.: Colombia, Somalia and Syria.





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