

Protection Working Group Meeting

Tuesday, 15 March 2016 – 10:00-12:00

UNHCR, Zamalek

1. **Attendees:** ACSFT, EFRR, ICRC, MSF, PSTIC, StARS, UNICEF, UNFPA and UNHCR.
2. **Follow-up on Action Points from the last meeting held on 16/02/2016**
 - a) **UNHCR to circulate the list of 2016 UNHCR's partners:** it was noted that UNHCR Partnership Agreements for 2016 have not been yet finalized, namely, on livelihood and community centers. UNHCR suggested to share the final list once all Agreements become final. MSF, however, requested a provisional list for the meantime until the finalized list can be shared.
 - b) **PWG Focal Point list:** PWG members still need to share their updates contacts with UNHCR.
3. **Update by UNHCR on 3RP Protection Sector ActivityInfo and reporting**

UNHCR provided an overview on the **ActivityInfo** process, which is a tool is designed to report and monitor on corresponding Objectives and Indicators set up as part of the *regional Syrian Refugee and Resilience Plan in response to the Syrian Crisis (2016-2017) (3RP)*. The information uploaded is segregated by age and gender to ensure detailed reporting also by countries. The tool also provides for a comparative overview on indicators by year.

The regular cycle for reporting on monthly basis is to start during the first week of the month (1st-8th if each month), while the report should be available by the 18th of each month. However, there will be an exceptional reporting cycle to report on January, February and March 2016 that will start from 17 to 23 March 2016, and reports will be available by March 28th. It was noted that a training was provided on the ActivityInfo to partners reporting to on 3RP by UNHCR.

4. Update from UNHCR External Relations/Public Information Unit (ER/PI)

UNHCR Senior ER/PI Officer informed the PWG on the following PI activities undertaken by UNHCR Egypt:

- a) **Cairo Service leaflet:** a new edition is expected to be finalized by April 2016. Partners are invited to inform UNHCR if they are willing to include their contact details on the new leaflet and to check if the information included in the current leaflet is still correct.
- b) **Posters:** UNHCR is developing a new **series of posters** with spot illustration to raise awareness among refugees about services and rights.
- c) **Videos:** Based a recommendation from a partner in the Communication WG, the next video should be on personal safety. UNHCR has invited the PWG members to share any ideas and priorities for the next videos.
- d) **Daily Episodes Series:** The MBC is preparing a series for Ramadan with daily episodes from countries in the region, five of which will be from Egypt. Egypt is the first country for the crew

to visit. The first pilot was already filmed in Masaken Osman, looking at the schools. All episodes include a “call for action” approach.

- e) **“Human interest story” Series:** Partners are invited to share any stories to be included in the ongoing “human interest story” series, showing different individuals refugee experiences.
- f) **Social media:** UNHCR reminded about its pages on social media including Facebook and Twitter “UNHCR Egypt”;
- g) **Communication WG:** Partners are invited to attend the CWC working group taking place on the first Thursday of each month to ensure that someone from their organizations is present to participate in the work on messaging and communication with the refugee communities, in particular on mixed migration. UNHCR to share the list of FPs within the ER/PI Unit to PWG members to follow-up on points (1, 2 and 5) above.

5. Detention: follow-up to the detention meeting and land crossings

UNHCR provided an update on **January and February 2016** sea incidents and land crossings:

- a) There were no sea incidents reported for attempting to depart Egypt irregularly by sea in January-February 2016.
- b) Reportedly, 15 individuals were deported during January-February 2016 from the northern coast for attempting to depart Egypt irregularly by sea.
- c) To our knowledge, 16 individuals remained in detention by the end of February 2016 in various Police stations in the Northern Coast. This included 14 children from Eritrea and Somalia (9 unaccompanied, and 5 others detained with their adult mothers), only 1 was registered with UNHCR.
- d) This continues to confirm a decreasing trend since last November in departures by sea from Egypt, although arrest and deportation for attempting to depart irregularly by land (through Libya) were reported in January and February 2016, mostly involving Sudanese nationals. In January, reportedly 26 Sudanese were arrested (4 registered with UNHCR, 3 released, 1 transferred to Qanatar Prison) and in February, 22 other Sudanese were arrested in two separate incidents (6 registered with UNHCR) attempting to depart irregularly through Libya.
- e) On the southern border with Sudan, we continued to observe arrest of Syrians for irregular entry in February and early March 2016. By 15 March 2016, UNHCR was aware of 59 Syrians (in 4 separate incidents) being arrested for attempting to enter Egypt irregularly by land through Sudan.
- f) Since UNHCR has limited access to the western and southern borders, the status of these individuals could not be verified. It is believed that among this group there were persons who are, or may be, in need of international protection.
- g) By end of February 2016, UNHCR was aware of at least 45 individuals detained in Qanatar Prison, who are, or may be, in need of international protection. UNHCR continues to advocate with the Government of Egypt to be granted access to these individuals and to determine their asylum claims, and their release accordingly.

PWG members stressed the need to devote more efforts and attention to irregular land crossings and those detention centers (PS) that are not accessible by partners. It was suggested to complete a matrix by partners and land crossings detention areas, indicating partners capacities to respond, access to services and to information, similar to the one developed at the Northern Coast, which can be updated monthly.

6. Update by PWG members

ICRC and MSF inquired about the group of Sudanese who were recently deported from Jordan to Sudan that have arrived to Egypt. MSF raised concerns about the deportation from Jordan and their arrival to Sudan, and mentioned that those who have approached MSF Egypt have indicated that they were subject to mistreatment and abuse upon return in Sudan, and that those who are in Sudan are at risk of persecution.

UNHCR mentioned that UNHCR Egypt has registered 124 cases to date, all of whom have been registered with UNHCR. No prioritization is currently being given to this group. All cases have so far been registered as asylum-seekers and received UNHCR Asylum-seeker Cards pending information on their status by UNHCR Jordan. UNHCR Jordan confirmed the status of 116 individuals while 8 individuals had wrong file numbers and will be further cross-checked. According to informal information received from UNHCR Jordan, few had strong refugee claims.

7. Any Other Business

Direct access to legal partners: PSTIC raised the issue of direct referrals to UNHCR legal partners in cases of emergencies and the need for appropriate and timely follow-up by UNHCR. UNHCR clarified that:

- a) PWG members can refer cases directly to UNHCR's legal implementing partners (EFRR and ACFT) in cases "of emergency" and "cases at risk" that are in need of immediate legal assistance, informing in parallel UNHCR of such cases, so UNHCR can follow-up accordingly.
- b) PSTIC and other partners will share a list of cases that require legal assistance or cases that have been referred by them to UNHCR's legal implementing partners, monthly, stating if any delay in responding have been observed by the legal partners. UNHCR will follow-up accordingly with EFRR and ASCFT.

8. Action Points

- a) UNHCR to circulate the report "Obstacle to Europe" (to be shared by MSF);
- b) UNHCR to receive the update contacts from all PWG members and to share the update lists;
- c) UNHCR to share the revised list of 2016 UNHCR partners;
- d) UNHCR to share an update on detention, sea and land crossings at the next meeting;
- e) UNHCR to share the list of PI focal points;

9. Next Meeting: the next meeting shall take place on the 19th of April 2016 at 10:00- 12:00, at UNHCR Zamalek Office.

END