

Protection Working Group Meeting

Tuesday, 12 April 2016 – 10:00-12:00

UNHCR, Zamalek

Attendees: ACSFT, EFRR, ICRC, IOM, MSF, PSTIC, STARS, UNICEF, UNHCR

1. Follow-up on Action Points from the last meeting held on 15 March 2016

- UNHCR to circulate the list of UNHCR's partners: it will be circulated the soonest, as the Agreements with Caritas, Terre des hommes and Plan International have just been finalized.
- FPs list of PWG: members of the PWG to share their contacts with Rasha Elsehawy, UNHCR Assistant Protection Officer, elshehaw@unhcr.org.
- Sharing MSF report "Obstacle Course to Europe". Link shared by MSF: https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/sites/usa/files/msf_obstacle_course_to_europe_report2.pdf
- Focal Point for the Communication WG: PWG members are welcomed to join the CWG, but they still need to designate and share their FP with their Communication WG (Public Information/External Relations Unit at UNHCR).

2. Update by the Child Protection and SGBV Working Groups (Elsa Bousquet, UNHCR Protection Officer CP/SGBV)

UNHCR gave an update on progress made by the Child Protection and SGBV sub-Working Groups. She noted that the sub-SGBVWG is chaired by UNHCR while UNHCR and UNICEF co-chair the sub-CPWG.

One of UNHCR's current priorities is to strengthen the link between the PWG and the two sub-Working Groups. She noted that the sub-CPWG has recently identified the following six priorities for the upcoming period:

- Consolidating the implementation of inter-agency case management standard operating procedures (SOPs);
- Enhance partners cooperation;
- Improve data collection & information sharing. There will be a meeting on this issue later in April.
- Advocacy and engagement with the authorities (i.e., National Council on Childhood and Motherhood);
- Training/Capacity Building of relevant partners and stakeholders;
- Inter-sectorial coordination (PWG, Education, SGBV, Livelihood and Health).

She further noted that sub- SGBVWG are currently defining their priorities and work plan for 2016.

3. UNHCR update on registration and detention/irregular movements

UNHCR provided an update on registration trends since January 2016:

- As of 31 March 2016, a total of 181,716 asylum-seekers and refugees from Syria (119,665 individuals or 66% of the total), Sudan (28,495), Ethiopia (7,516), Iraq (7,002), Somalia (6,465), South Sudan (4,314), Eritrea (4,097) and more than 50 other countries were registered with UNHCR in Egypt.
- The largest number of new arrivals in 2016 continue to be from Syria, representing 58% of the new arrivals (50% entering irregularly from Sudan). This is a significant increase as compared to 2015, where arrivals of Syrians decreased by 52.2%. **2,852** Syrians were newly registered with UNHCR, out of which **1,890** represents new arrivals in 2016.
- The number of new arrivals from other countries (Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia) continued, with **5,937** registered with UNHCR between January-March 2016, including 483 UASC, most of them undocumented, out of which 1,030 represent new arrivals. Ethiopians have become the third largest group of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Spontaneous departures of Syrian refugees to Syria or Turkey are decreasing as compared to last year. UNHCR recorded 442 spontaneous departures of Syrians in 2015 and only 13 spontaneous departures as at end of March 2016.

With regards to irregular movements and related detention, UNHCR provided a statistical overview as of 31st March 2016:

- According to UNHCR's knowledge, **394** refugees and migrants remained in detention in the Northern Coast for irregular migration by sea by the end of March 2016. This included **379** (mostly Somali followed by Ethiopians, Sudanese, Eritreans, Syrians, and Yemenis) detained for attempting to depart irregularly by **sea** in 2016 and **15** other individuals that remained in prolonged detention since 2015 for this reason. 57% of those detained in 2016 were registered with UNHCR, of whom 80% registered in the last 6 months. In total, seven sea incidents were reported in March alone, with 17 reported dead. UNHCR continues to cross checking information with the authorities and the refugee community since at least 4 out of the 17 deceased were reportedly registered with UNHCR.
- Adult males remain the largest group of detainees in 2016 (52%), followed by adult women and children. The number of children in detention, including undocumented UASC, has increased representing 20% of all detainees, as compared to 15% in 2015. The number of UASC detained (58) represented 78% of all children. This is a significant increase compared to 2015, when 26% of children were reported to be UASC.
- In addition, irregular **land crossing** continues in 2016, with 65 refugees and migrants, mostly Sudanese, arrested for trying to enter or exit the border with Libya irregularly since January, 10 of whom were registered with UNHCR. Irregular arrival of Syrians through the southern border increased, with 95 Syrians arrested since January, of which 47 were released by end of March.

- Reportedly, the majority of those who failed to depart by sea and were released after their detention, re-attempt to depart again by sea in the future, with intended multiple departure attempts being reported.
- Those registered with UNHCR, Syrians and humanitarian cases are generally released, whereas those not registered, undocumented or whose status cannot be verified are often subject to detention or deportation.
- UNHCR has been allowed to use **iris/fingerprint scanners** in Police Stations in the Northern coast to verify the registration status of detainees on the spot.

MSF asked if UNHCR has seen an increase in the number of Syrian and Yemeni nationals arriving from Sudan to Egypt given that the former does not impose visas on these nationalities. UNHCR indicated that arrivals of Syrians have increased, more than 50% coming irregularly through the southern border with Sudan. It is therefore assume that this trend will continue. UNHCR noted that there are not special procedures for Somalis arriving from Yemen, as they will be processed as any other asylum-seeker. Fast-track procedures will apply equally based on specific needs and vulnerabilities. Partners are encouraged to flag any specific vulnerable cases of Somalis arriving from Yemen to UNHCR.

StARS and **MSF** have called for a coordination meeting on provision of medical assistance in detention, to be held in mid-April. The outcome of this meeting will be reported to the next UNHCR detention meeting, to be held in May, following the next PWG meeting. Issues to be discussed include access to Qanatir and to border areas.

4. Update by PWG members

MSF has received a letter by the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS), by which a written permission is needed to operate at **border areas**. MSF is therefore unable to go to Aswan. IOM also noted that it no longer has access to Shellal Prison.

EFRR enquired about **UNHCR renewal procedures** of asylum-seekers Cards for those whose asylum applications have been rejected at first instance, pending an appeal procedure. STARS had indicated that in some cases, renewals have been rejected. UNHCR noted that it will consult RSD and Registration colleagues and will provide an answer in the next PWG meeting, but has encouraged partners to refer these cases to the Protection Unit (Rasha Elshehawy) with their details of the cases.

PSTIC indicated that a number of cases registered with UNHCR were told by Caritas that their case files were 'inactive'. UNHCR noted that it would have to look into these cases on a case-by-case basis as the reasons for inactivation and/or closure can be multiple. Such cases should be flagged to the Protection Unit (Rasha Elshehawy).

5. Any Other Business

UNHCR noted that combating child abuse in schools remains a key priority. It noted that any suspicions and evidence are always treated with the greatest care and confidentiality. UNHCR is working with the Ministry of Education on a MoU regarding the set-up of a child abuse referral model.

StARS: There is a Spring Bazar on Saturday 16 April, at St. Andrews.

IOM: As part of the “World Health Day” an event is being organized by IOM together with Tadamon. The theme is "beat diabetes" and there will be free diabetes screening and provision of eye glasses by Baraka (provided there is a prior registration for the eye service at the indicated number). More information is available at <https://www.facebook.com/events/1581296552182364/>

6. Action Points

- The Child Protection sub-Working Group will develop a 1-pager informative note for beneficiaries that shows what services are available by each partner.
- Issues related to registration procedures, inactivation/closure and renewal of UNHCR cards will be discussed at the next PWG meeting.
- FPs list for the PWG and for the CWG: contacts to be shared with Rasha Elsehawy and PI/ER colleagues respectively.
- UNHCR to share the updated list of UNHCR Implementing Partners for 2016.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on **17 May 2016 at 10:00- 12:00**, at UNHCR Zamalek Office. **UNHCR detention meeting** to be re-convened in May, following the PWG meeting.

**UNHCR
May 2015**