

Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG)
Syrian, African and Iraqi Refugee Response in Egypt
Meeting minutes

Date: 23rd September 2014

Time: 10:15 am-11:55 am

Venue: UNHCR Cairo- Zamalek Office, Conference Room

Chair: Elizabeth Tan- **UNHCR** Regional Representative

Participants:

(Rasha Kamal), (Chris Rupke) – **Refuge Egypt**, (Reham Hussein) **MSF**; (Nader Wahba)- **UNICEF**; (Marian Fouad), (Gehane Georges), (Magdy Francis)- **Caritas Egypt**; (Dalia Al-Awqati)- **Danish Refugee Council**; (Fr. Jemil Araya)- **Sacred Heart Church**; (Hans Vikoler)- **WFP**; (Kris Ozar)- **CRS**; (Jacinthe Ibrahim)- **Plan International**; (Paul Bonard), (Jason Pronyk)- **UNDP**; (Lucia Oliveira)- **ACF**; (Nancy Baron)- **PSTIC**; (Amr Osman), (Hani Fares), (Ziad Ayoubi), (Marios Buga)- **UNHCR**

Agenda:

1. Overview & updates on protection related issues by UNHCR.
 2. Updates on Food Security Situation by WFP.
 3. Updates on 3RP process.
 4. AOB.
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Summary of the Minutes:

1- Overview & updates on protection related issues by UNHCR:

- *Irregular departures:* Number of irregular departures has remarkably increased with mixed groups of people departing from the North Coast to Europe. Syrians are no longer the biggest group of people choosing to leave illegally by boat but Eritreans come in the first place and some of them are registered with UNHCR. Among irregular departures, there are large numbers were unaccompanied and separated children.
 - *Detentions in Egypt:* UNHCR is aware of **1782** cases since the beginning of the year of which **362** cases are still in detention. The majority of Syrians are released while most of the Sudanese are deported back to Sudan.
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The advocacy with the government is more difficult when it comes to the African refugees. UNHCR is aware of **174** Syrians who went to a third country or back to Syria since the beginning of the year.

- [Visit of High Commissioner to UNHCR Egypt:](#)

A- On Syrian refugees, the High Commissioner addressed several advocacy related points during his recent visit to Cairo:

- Regarding illegal departures, prevention of refoulement is the top priority.
- Administrative issues could be eased especially regarding the residency permits (validity and decentralization); an invalid passport should not lead to the refoulement of the holder.
- Relaxations of Visas restrictions.

B- The High Commissioner discussed the Libya situation with the Egyptian officials. The Egyptian government pointed out security concerns with people crossing through the borders.

C- During the meeting with the Minister of Social Solidarity, the High Commissioner expressed the need to better facilitate the work of NGOs working on the Syrian refugee response. The Minister promised to continue working closely with UNHCR on this matter.

D- The High Commissioner endorsed the joint efforts which UNHCR is doing with other sister UN agencies and partners on assisting Palestinian refugees. However, the protection aspect is not addressed and UNHCR will need to push the agenda with the government on the protection issues.

- [African and Iraqi Refugees:](#)

- [Registration:](#) The monthly number of registered African and Iraqi refugees is high, around **950** per month and expecting to reach **1100** by the end of the year. The same nationalities are the ones registering: Sudanese, Ethiopian, South Sudanese, Eritrean, and Somali.
- [RSD Process:](#) By next month, UNHCR will be finalizing the RSD process for the North Sudanese registered over the period of 2004-2012. UNHCR started the RSD process for South Sudanese that has been on hold from many years. UNHCR planned to finalize their RD cases by mid-2015. As for the new arrivals, UNHCR will be working to reduce the waiting period which currently goes to mid-2016.

- *Resettlements:* A number of **1200** African and Iraqi refugees were submitted for resettlement; this figure is expected to reach **2000** by end of the year. By end of September, UNHCR have completed submission of the victims of trafficking. UNHCR has received a first report on trafficking of Eritreans in the north coast held by armed Egyptians.

2- Update on Food Security Situation by (WFP):

- *Hans Vikoler, WFP Emergency Coordinator* stated that WFP is facing financial constraints with regard to Syrian refugees. It will result to a cut in the value of the food vouchers. WFP will be clustering the families into family sizes, meaning the value of the food vouchers will be given on the basis of the family size and not by family member.

WFP has sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explaining the situation and the WFP Country Director approached UNHCR for a joint campaign to mobilize the donors in parallel with a massive information campaign to explain the new situation to the beneficiaries.

- Given the expected shortage, a discussion ensued on the best possible way to identify the most people in need.
- *Ziad Ayoubi, UNHCR Livelihoods Officer* briefed about the ongoing vulnerability assessment. He explained the reason to conduct a socio-economic survey is to identify the most vulnerable population from a socio-economics prospective. Ziad emphasized the point that no one will be excluded from the WFP assistance but it's the amount of the assistance that will be reduced. The cash program will be integrated into the referral system and UNHCR needs will be more responsive in the cash programs.
- *Elizabeth Tan (chair of the meeting)*, strongly encouraged all UN agencies to pass the message to the donors. If WFP faces such situation this year, it is expected thus to remain the same situation on the next year. We can avoid such situation by doing our best on the planning of the 3RP.

3- Update on 3RP process (UNHCR & UNDP):

- *Ziad Ayoubi, UNHCR Livelihood Officer* briefed attendees on 3RP workshop held in Amman. During this meeting, 3RP discussions were attended by sector leads/co-leads as well as some partners from all sectors working groups.
 - Each sector has been requested to brief on its budgetary needs.
 - Annex C which includes the objectives, outputs and budget indicators of the 3RP to be submitted on 23rd September.
 - It was discussed during the meeting which interventions should be kept or cut for 2015-2016.

- The 3RP is decomposed into two main components: the refugee response part which is lead by UNHCR and for the resilience part, UNDP takes the lead.
- o *Jason Pronyk, UNDP's advisor for the Regional office in Amman*, gave a comprehensive presentation on resilience based development approach and how resilience can complement the refugee response. Jason explained the importance of resilience and the difference between the last generations of RRP & 3RP. (The presentation will be shared).

4- AOB:

Marios Buga, UNHCR Senior Program Officer explained the call for expression of interest to implement UNHCR programs in 2015. Marios emphasized that all NGOs interested in a partnership with UNHCR- should submit a concept note. NGOs will receive feedback in 6 weeks from the date the concept note is submitted.

Summary of Action points:

- ✓ UNHCR protection's report on irregular departures to be shared.
- ✓ UNDP presentation on resilience to be shared.

Agenda items for next meeting:

1. Presentation by Caritas.

Others:

Next IAWG meeting will convene on:

Date: Tuesday, 21st October 2014

Time: 10:00 am

Venue: UNHCR office in Zamalek.