Leading, Coordinating & Delivering for Refugees & Persons of Concern

Inclusivity | Predictability | Continuity
A bit of background: Refugee issues and implications on coordination

Why are refugees treated differently?

- International law and practice addresses refugee and internal displacement emergencies differently.

- Refugees are not citizens of the country of asylum and therefore have specific protection needs. They often have no or very limited access to services, material assistance, adequate housing, health care, education and employment opportunities and are sometimes restricted in movement (for example, confined to a camp), hence the status of being a refugee is a vulnerability in itself.

- The outflow of refugees across international borders creates an emergency situation which requires a coordinated response of its own, with regional dimensions, specific political sensitivities and obligations of governments under international law, and important long-term implications.

- Seeking to address these concerns, the UN established a specialised agency for refugee protection (UNHCR) to focus on refugees and their plight.

Background photo: Hungarian refugees arriving in Austria- 1956 © UNHCR
A bit of background: Refugee issues and implications on coordination

What is so different about UNHCR’s mandate for refugees and why is it ‘non-transferable’?

The UN General Assembly [GA] in 1950, established the Mandate of the High Commissioner, to ensure that s/he “would enjoy a special status within the UN … possess[ing] the degree of independence and the prestige which would seem to be required for the effective performance of his functions.”

The High Commissioner “acting under the authority of the General Assembly, shall assume the function of providing international protection … and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees.”

UNHCR’s legal obligations places the High Commissioner and his Office at the centre of the international refugee response system, including in respect to leadership and coordination functions.

“The High Commissioner shall administer any funds, public or private, which he receives for assistance to refugees, and shall distribute them among the private and, as appropriate, public agencies which he deems best qualified to administer such assistance.”

Background photo: Signing of the 1951 Convention in Geneva - 1951 © UNHCR
A bit of background: Refugee issues and implications on coordination

The High Commissioner and his Office undertake “through special agreements with Governments the execution of any measures calculated to improve the situation of refugees”

The High Commissioner has the Mandate in the “effective coordination of measures taken to deal with this problem [the refugee problem].” The High Commissioner is also empowered to “invite the co-operation of the various specialized agencies” and facilitate “co-ordination of the efforts of private organizations concerned with the welfare of refugees” to assist his Office in the performance of his mandate.

The Mandate for refugees is a global one regardless of the location of the refugees (camp/urban settings) in emergency, non-emergency and mixed movements involving asylum-seeker and refugees.

Bound by legal instruments and UN resolutions, the Mandate is “non-transferable” meaning in no situation, stand-alone refugee or mixed, can accountability for refugee and persons of concern be transferred or delegated to another UN entity or other actor.

See Note on the Mandate of the High Commissioner: www.unhcr.org/526a22cb6.html
A bit of background: Refugee issues and implications on coordination

Why are refugee operations coordinated differently from IDP or other humanitarian responses?

- In the cluster approach established in 2005, cluster leads are accountable to the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Emergency Relief Coordinator for coordination of cluster responses and finances. Since the Mandate and accountability for refugees and persons of concern is non-transferable, the cluster approach does not apply in refugee situations.

- Refugee protection and assistance is linked to the finding of durable solutions, which goes beyond the coordination of an emergency and humanitarian assistance and the intended scope and timeframe of the cluster approach.

Background photo: Signing of the 1951 Convention in Geneva - 1951 © UNHCR
A bit of background: UNHCR and IDPs/cluster system

UNHCR is committed to alleviating internal displacement and works within the cluster system to address IDP emergencies. It co/leads three clusters.

In 2014/15 UNHCR cluster work:

- 20 field locations
- 24 field locations
- 19 locations

Photo: Aid delivery for IDPs in Eastern Aleppo/Syria - 2014
What is the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM)?

A framework for leading and coordinating refugee operations that:

1. Outlines Office’s role and responsibilities in refugee & mixed situations

2. Reaffirms the integrity of the High Commissioner’s mandate and accountability, and the UNHCR tradition of refugee leadership.

3. Offers an inclusive platform for planning and coordinating refugee operations

4. Clarifies coordination modalities in relation to wider humanitarian system
Why do we need the RCM?

While UNHCR has effectively led and managed refugee operations for decades per its legal and statutory obligations, it has not articulated a model of refugee coordination that is widely understood by partners.

The purpose of the RCM is to:
1. Clarify how UNHCR leads and coordinates a refugee response to staff and wider humanitarian community

2. Deliver timely, effective and quality protection for refugees

3. Provide partners and others actors a compelling framework that resonates with them

4. Maintain accountability for refugees in a situations where there are other humanitarian and development systems

5. Demonstrate that UNHCR can and does coordinate and lead in a streamlined, predictable, effective and inclusive manner

“...We are bound by our shared duty towards the people we serve and to whom we must deliver protection, assistance and solutions.

That is why good coordination is so essential - good, light and effective coordination.”

UNHCR High Commissioner
ExCom Closing Remarks - 2014
In coordinating the refugee response UNHCR will:

1. Include partners in the contingency planning for the refugee response from the onset
2. Involve partners in strategic planning for refugee response plan and the protection and solutions strategy
3. Consult partners systematically on key decisions and strategies in the refugee response
4. Invite partners to co-coordinate sectors where expertise and capacity is available at the point of delivery
5. Provide partners with a fund-raising platform through the Refugee Inter-Refugee Response Plans
6. Establish Global Arrangements with partners to help address gaps in an emergency response in a predictable manner
7. Minimize duplication by streamlining coordination mechanisms and meetings in mixed IDP/refugee situations, particularly at the delivery level
Refugee Coordination In Mixed Situations

UNHCR-OCHA Joint Note on Mixed Situations
An agreement that outlines respective roles and responsibilities

Mixed situations: where IDP and/or other humanitarian response (natural disaster etc) exists with a refugee response in same country. IDPs and Refugees may be located in the same geographic areas.

Interface with other coordination structures/ use of sector or cluster capacities will be determined by operational context and

- Location of responses (geographically together, or separate)
- Size of refugee and IDP populations
- Capacity of UNHCR sectors / IDP clusters to deliver services according to the specific needs of both population groups

| Pragmatic | Collaborative | Efficient | Effective |
- **Primary responsibility to protect refugees rests with states.** Coordination of the refugee response is determined by capacity and approaches of host government and builds on resources refugees and hosting communities.

- The Refugee Coordination Model is applicable in all refugee situations and throughout the duration of a refugee response.

- Refugee response does not only include UNHCR’s operations, but those of partners as well.

- Certain aspects of the RCM may contract or expand when interfacing with IASC coordination mechanisms, there may be a combination of coordination arrangements.

- Refugee operations form an integral part of overall humanitarian response while at same time have flexibility to stand alone for international protection and accountability.
## Refugee Response Coordination – Key Elements

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<th>High Commissioner’s Mandate</th>
<th>Protection &amp; Solutions</th>
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<td><strong>LEADERSHIP</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR Representative works directly and in collaboration with the government to achieve the protection of refugees</td>
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### STRATEGIC PLANNING
UNHCR Representative with partners and development actors leads contingency and response planning which is underpinned by protection and solution strategy.
- Inter-Agency Contingency Plan
- Refugee Response Plan
- Protection & Solutions Strategy

### OPERATIONAL COORDINATION
Partner inclusive; efficient and predictable coordination
- UNHCR Refugee Coordinator/ Regional Refugee Coordinator
- UNHCR-led Refugee Protection Working Group
- Information management

### RESOURCE MOBILISATION
Partner inclusive platform for raising funds
- Refugee Response Plan

### DELIVERY
Sector service delivery with partners
- Co-chaired by Government/ partners and UNHCR

### ADVOCACY
UNHCR Rep advocates with the Government in close collaboration with other protection actors

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**Persons of concern**
Key Element: LEADERSHIP

UNHCR Representative:

- Leads the provision of international protection, humanitarian assistance and durable solutions for the entire refugee cycle.

- Maintains and exercises leadership and accountability for refugee operation with government, donors, humanitarian community and other stakeholders.

Additional actions in mixed situations (as outlined in the Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note)

- UNHCR Representative leads discussions with Humanitarian country team (HCT) and leads on the refugee matters ensuring coherence with overall humanitarian response.

- The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), through leadership of humanitarian coordination facilitates the collective outputs: shared situational analysis; strategic plan; advocacy messages; system-wide resource mobilization.
Key Element: STRATEGIC PLANNING

UNHCR Representative:
In collaboration and joint planning with government, operational and development partners and other relevant stakeholders leads the development of:

- Inter-agency Contingency Plan
- Inter-agency Refugee Response Plan (RRP), which is underpinned by a Protection and Solutions Strategy

Additional actions in mixed situations (as outlined in the Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note)

- Involves key HCT members in the development of the Refugee Response Plan (RRP)
- Based on the RRP, coordinate the development of the ‘Refugee Response Chapter’ in the Strategic Response Plan (ex-CAP) for the country
Key Element: RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

UNHCR Representative:
- leads inter-agency process to develop the appeal in which agencies involved in the response are given a fund-raising platform.
- launches the appeal and advocates for the refugee response plan with in-country donors and humanitarian stakeholders

Additional actions in mixed situations (as outlined in the Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note)

UNHCR Representative supports the Humanitarian Coordinator on:
- wider resource mobilization efforts
- CERF and Pooled Fund applications, management and reporting procedures for refugee chapter of SRP
UNHCR will have predictable and collaborative coordination and will:

- Designate UNHCR Refugee Coordinator and Multi-sector operations team which includes sector co-coordinating agencies

- Establish robust and transparent information management systems

- Establish UNHCR-Led Refugee Protection Working Group/Task Force

- Ensure coordination at point of delivery to maximize efficiency and impact for refugees and host communities
Key Element: OPERATIONAL COORDINATION

Additional actions in mixed situations (as outlined in the Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note)

- Refugee Coordinator will coordinate across and works closely with the Inter-cluster Coordinator and where feasible hold joint meetings with inter-cluster coordination group.

- Refugee Protection Working Group will work closely with the Protection Cluster and streamline meetings at field and capital level.

- Meetings can be held jointly or consecutively with Protection Cluster while retaining respective accountabilities. These meetings may be co-chaired by the Head of RPWG and Protection Cluster Coordinator.
UNHCR will ensure that

- agencies involved in response deliver quality and accountable services to persons of concern

- Sectors can be co-coordinated by Government or Partners where expertise and capacity is available at the point of delivery—based on clear criteria and consensus, with equal opportunity for local and national NGOs

- Rapid Emergency Response Agreements can be triggered for predictable response

Additional actions in mixed situations (as outlined in the Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note)

- Where IDPs and refugees reside in same locations, HC and ERC can decide to use UNHCR sectors or IASC cluster system based on considerations of capacity, optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

- Accountability for delivery to refugees rests with UNHCR, as for IDPs with the HC.
Key Element: ADVOCACY

UNHCR Representative:
- Maintains primary responsibility for advocacy with host government on refugee issues
- Mobilizes other protection and relevant actors and leads private/public advocacy on refugee issues

Additional actions in mixed situations (as outlined in the Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note)

The UNHCR Representative:
- Supports the overall advocacy efforts of the HC and HCT on other humanitarian issues
- Performs the specific advocacy role of the Protection cluster lead.
Coordination of Humanitarian Responses

Refugee Response

- UNHCR Representative
  - Drawing on HCT (standing agenda item at HCT)
  - UNHCR Ref Coordinator + Multi-sector Ops Team

- Sectors
  - Inter-Agency Refugee Appeal
  - UNHCR Representative

IDP Response

- Leadership
  - RC/HC

- Strategic Planning
  - HCT

- Coordination
  - OCHA Inter-Cluster Coordination

- Delivery
  - Cluster A
  - Cluster actor 1
  - Cluster actor 2
  - Cluster B...

- Resource Mobilization
  - CERF and Pooled Fund

- Advocacy
  - HC
Refugee Responses - Protection & Solutions

Cluster system

Refugee system

Development system

Leadership
UNHCR Representative

Strategic Planning
Protection & Solution Strategy

Coordination
UNHCR Ref Coordinator & Multi-sector Ops Team

Protection
Refugee Protection Working Group

Service Delivery
Sectors

Funding
Inter-Agency/Regional Appeals

RC

UNCT (UNDAF)

Programme Management Team

Human Rights/Protection Agencies

Thematic UNDAF Groups/structures

UNDAF Country Plan

HC

HCT

Inter-Cluster Coordination

Protection Cluster

Cluster A
Cluster Actor 1
Cluster Actor 2
Cluster B...

CAP, HNO, SRP

Development system

Refugee system

Cluster system

HC Leadership
UNHCR Representative RC
HCT Strategic Planning Protection & Solution Strategy

Inter-Cluster Coordination
UNHCR Ref Coordinator & Multi-sector Ops Team

Protection Cluster
Refugee Protection Working Group

Cluster A
Cluster Actor 1
Cluster Actor 2
Cluster B...

CAP, HNO, SRP

Thematic UNDAF Groups/structures

UNDAF Country Plan

Leadership
UNHCR Representative

Strategic Planning
Protection & Solution Strategy

Coordination
UNHCR Ref Coordinator & Multi-sector Ops Team

Protection
Refugee Protection Working Group

Service Delivery
Sectors

Funding
Inter-Agency/Regional Appeals

HC

HCT

Inter-Cluster Coordination

Protection Cluster

Cluster A
Cluster Actor 1
Cluster Actor 2
Cluster B...

CAP, HNO, SRP

Thematic UNDAF Groups/structures

UNDAF Country Plan
‘The UNHCR Representative, as a member of the HCT...ensures that the Refugee Response plan is an integral yet distinct part of the overall Strategic Response Plan’

- Excerpt from Joint UNHCR- OCHA Note
Note on terminology: The term “cluster” refers to sectoral coordination that uses the ‘IASC cluster approach’ introduced after 2005 as part of an effort to reform humanitarian response. However, the references to “cluster” in this guidance should be understood to refer to the range of sectoral coordination mechanisms that are in place in humanitarian response operations.

Note on coordination of refugee response: Where applicable, this guidance should be read in conjunction with the UNHCR’s Note on Refugee Coordination and the ‘Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations (IDPs & Refugees): Coordination in practice’, 24 April 2014 (http://www.unhcr.org/pages/538dd3da6.html)

Leadership, roles and responsibilities in producing a strategic response plan

Roles and responsibilities of the HC/HCT, OCHA, the inter cluster coordinator and cluster coordinators during the strategic response plan process are outlined below. Ensure that all involved actors understand the details. A smaller inter-agency group under the HCT can assist in developing the strategic response plan and ensure consistency and linkages between various stages of the process.

The UNHCR Representative leads on refugee preparedness and strategic response, in partnership with members of the HCT and government and development agencies. The Representative will ensure that the refugee response plan (RRP) is an integral yet distinct part of the overall SRP.

HC/HCT

The HC leads the strategic planning process and, together with the HCT, defines the overall vision and focus for humanitarian action. The HC/HCT should ensure the strategy is based on a thorough and consultative protection analysis and reflects the needs and concerns of the affected population.
Strategic Response Plan Template & Refugees

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REFUGEE RESPONSE CHAPTER

The refugee response chapter follows the cluster response plans and, ideally, uses the same format.

[END OF TEMPLATE]

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Publically available at OCHA website:
http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/programme-cycle/space/page/strategic-response-planning
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