



GLOBAL PROTECTION UPDATE

JULY 2024



Nampula, Mozambique | © UNHCR/Hélène Caux



THE CONTINUITY OF PROTECTION IN A CONTEXT OF MISSION WITHDRAWALS

CONTEXT

New and ongoing conflicts have driven forced displacement across the globe. In its latest [Global Trend Report](#), published in June 2024, UNHCR estimates that at the end of 2023, 117.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, and human rights violations. This increase in number is largely due to new conflict and displacement in Sudan, Myanmar, and the occupied Palestinian territories. Out of the 117.3 million, 58% are internally displaced persons (68.3 million). Sudan has the largest internally displaced population ever reported with an estimated 9.1 million people, followed by Syria (7.2 million), and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (6.7 million). Based on operational data, UNHCR estimates that forced displacement has continued to increase in the first four months of 2024 and by the end of April 2024 is likely to have exceeded 120 million.

2024 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Security Council's consideration of the protection of civilians as an item on its agenda. It also marks the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, a cornerstone of international humanitarian law. In this context, the UN Secretary-General published in May 2024 its annual report on [Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict](#) calling the state of the protection of civilians 'resoundingly grim' given the outbreak of deadly conflicts in Sudan and Gaza, and the continuation of existing conflicts in DRC, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Sahel, Somalia, Syria, and Ukraine, resulting in thousands of civilians killed and injured and millions displaced. The Secretary General urged for a redoubling of efforts to strengthen compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law and ensure accountability for violations.

The UN Secretary-General also published his [annual report on Children and Armed Conflict](#) in June 2024, highlighting that violence against children caught in armed conflict reached "extreme levels" last year, with a "shocking" 21% increase in extreme violations. Throughout 2023, children were killed and maimed in unprecedented numbers in places such as Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories, notably Gaza, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Ukraine. The alarming increase was primarily due to the evolving nature, complexity, and intensification of armed conflicts, as well as the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Government forces were the main perpetrators of killings and injuries, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access. The conflict in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories has led to a 155% increase of grave violations against children.

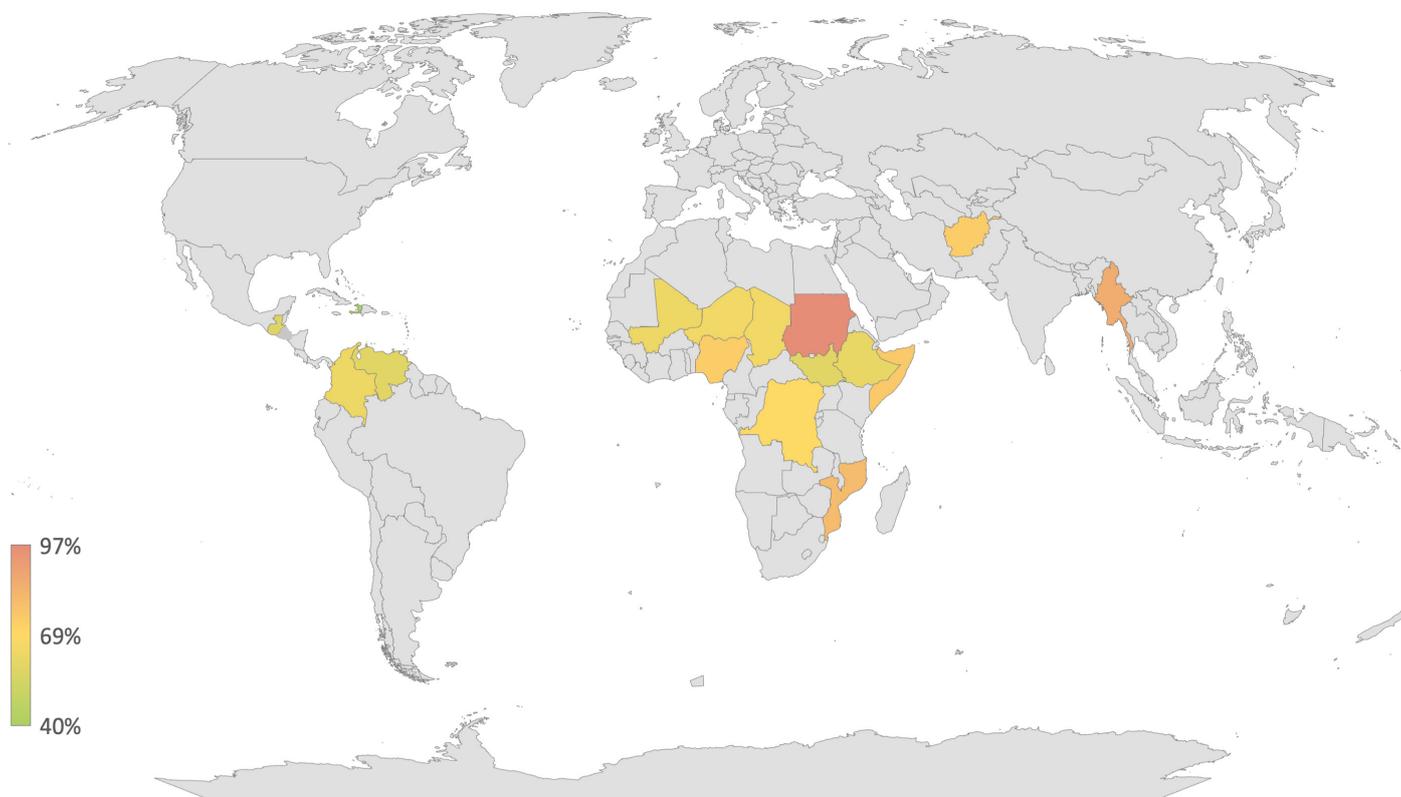
As the conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine have continued to dominate headlines in 2024, emergency aid needs are going unmet in several neglected crises around the globe. In June 2024, the Norwegian Refugee Council published its annual flagship report on the [world's ten most neglected displacement crises](#). Burkina Faso maintained its position as the world's most neglected displacement crisis for the second year running, while all other nine crises (Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Niger, Honduras, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Chad, and Sudan) featured in this year's report are protracted and have been affecting the lives of communities for years, sometimes even decades.

Across the Horn of Africa, humanitarian needs continue to be driven by conflict, El Niño-induced flooding, and the lingering impact of extreme back-to-back droughts that have destroyed livelihoods. The 2024 flood season in South Sudan is predicted to be one of the worst of the last 100 years¹. The areas likely to be affected by floods are home to over 3.3 million people, many of whom have already been affected by conflict or previous floods. In Zambia, the Government issued a drought response plan to assist 6.6 million people, and the Protection Sector response strategy was activated in 21 districts, aiming to enhance safety and well-being for affected children and families, providing access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), medical care, legal assistance, safe shelters, and livelihood support. It also targets GBV risk mitigation, prevention, and rights-based awareness for women, girls, and boys. Hurricane Beryl, the strongest hurricane in history to form in June in the Atlantic Ocean, has left an estimated 60,000 people in need of humanitarian assistance across Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

¹ [South Sudan Protection Cluster, Flood Protection Guidance, Preparedness and Response Plan](#)

Protection Risks in Cluster Operations

The map below illustrates the level of combined severity of the 15 protection risks monitored by Protection Cluster per each Country. The highest values illustrate the largest number of risks with high severity.



PROTECTION ANALYSIS UPDATES

93% of 29 Protection Clusters have produced 81 Protection Analysis Updates, including 48 national, 29 sub-national and 4 thematic since the 1st of January 2022. The PAUs are produced on a regular basis with the aim of informing the protection response – including in terms of identifying pressing gaps, needed programmatic and advocacy actions and protection priorities. They are grounded in the Protection Analytical Framework. The following PAUs were produced thus far in 2024*.

PAU PUBLISHED IN 2024*			
Somalia	JANUARY	Ethiopia	MARCH
Mozambique	FEBRUARY	Nigeria	APRIL
DR Congo	MARCH	oPt (Gaza)	MAY
oPt (West Bank)	MARCH	Afghanistan	MAY
South Sudan	MARCH	South Sudan	JULY
		Ukraine	JULY

*Click on the country to access the latest PAU (if public).

KEY COUNTRY NEWS

More than 1,000 days have now passed since girls over 12 were first banned from returning to school in **Afghanistan**, estimated to have now impacted some 1.4 million Afghans.

Approximately one in every 10 people in **Burkina Faso** are now displaced, facing insecurity and high levels of malnutrition.

Cameroonians are grappling with a second fuel price hike in a year, adding to the strain already felt by many vulnerable communities.

The UN peacekeeping mission in **CAR** has expanded its presence in the country's southeast to prevent further violence in areas heavily affected by conflict. The additional deployment also facilitated the delivery of humanitarian aid in the remote Haut Mbomou region.

Host communities in eastern **Chad** are suffering enormous consequences from the Sudanese crisis, with local communities lacking necessities such as food and water.

In **Colombia** armed groups continue to wield violence against communities. The numbers of ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) members are increasing, with military forces indicating that the group has grown from 4,000 to around 5,000 members.

Despite a humanitarian truce on July 5 between the government and the M23 rebel group operating in eastern **DR Congo**, violent conflict continued in North Kivu.

An estimated 3,000 children – including some as young as 12 – have been swept up in **El Salvador's** mass detentions since President Nayib Bukele began his crackdown on gangs two years ago.

Fighting over disputed land along borders of **Ethiopia's** Tigray and Amhara regions has displaced close to 29,000 people, with many requiring urgent life-saving assistance.

Despite the swearing in of a new Government and the deployment of an international police force in **Haiti**, the protection situation in the country remains dire, with reports of almost 600,000 people now displaced.

The ongoing political instability, widespread violence and environmental hazards continue to limit the capacity to mitigate the risks faced by more than one million people in **Honduras**.

Movement restrictions, imposed by armed groups seeking to fully control the movement of goods and people, further limited access to in-need populations in **Mali**. The 2023 withdrawal of the 13,000-strong MINUSMA operation has led to an increase in clashes between the state's military and non-state armed groups in the north of the country.

An alarming increase in the use of explosive devices by non-state armed groups was recorded in Cabo Delgado, **Mozambique**.

Recent attacks and occupation of humanitarian facilities in Rakhine State and other areas of **Myanmar** are elevating risks for both humanitarian personnel and populations they serve.

Niger and its neighbouring countries in the central Sahel are at the forefront of battling a growing jihadist threat. This comes as the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel in country goes ahead with a September deadline.

Northeastern **Nigeria's** Borno State government has begun the closure of one of the last remaining displacement camps in Maiduguri, the region's capital, as part of its policy to send people back to their areas of origin. In many of these areas, security concerns persist.

For the second time since the war began, residents of **Gaza City**, an estimated 250,000 people, have been ordered to evacuate south to the central Gaza Strip. Repeated attacks on civilian infrastructure including residential buildings, hospitals and education facilities have intensified and aid continues to be largely blocked, while hunger continues to grow.

The Gu (April to June) heavy rains and flash floods have spread to more areas of **Somalia** and have affected at least 203,438 people. The floods have destroyed and damaged infrastructure including shelters, latrines, schools and killed livestock.

The 2024 flood season in **South Sudan** is predicted to be one of the worst in the last 100 years, with areas likely to be affected by floods home to over 3.3 million people.

The UN Security Council adopted a resolution on 13 June that called for an end to the siege of El Fasher in **Sudan**. Expansion of the conflict towards Sennar State marks a continuous deterioration of the conflict and raises concerns for neighbouring states such as Gadaref, White Nile, and Blue Nile.

Northeast **Syria** continues to grapple with a multitude of crises, including conflict, terrorism, human rights violations, economic collapse, and environmental disasters. Social and political tension inside Northwest Syria and surrounding areas have affected the perception of security and led to population movements within the region.

Intensified attacks on **Ukraine's** civilian infrastructure continues unabated, causing extensive damage to energy facilities, compromising water supply and disrupting electricity access for millions of civilians. Intensification of attacks in Kharkiv Oblast demonstrates the humanitarian impact of the ongoing hostilities.

Protection concerns continue in **Venezuela** with violent protests erupting following disputed results of the July 28th presidential elections. The heavy rainy season has also increased river levels, posing flood risks in various states of the country.

After months of relative stability in **Yemen** between Government and Houthi forces, there has been a gradual increase in fighting in several locations, as well as consistent threats by all sides to return to war.

EMERGING PROTECTION TRENDS

CRISIS WATCH

ALARMING SITUATIONS

GAZA

The human rights and humanitarian situation in Gaza is continuously deteriorating given the mass and systematic destruction of civilian objects and killing of civilians by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Particularly intense strikes and shelling have been reported in Gaza City and Middle Gaza in early July, with an intensification of attacks on schools, most of them sheltering IDPs. Over 38,000 Palestinian fatalities have been reported since the start of the conflict in October 2023. Palestinian armed groups continue to launch projectiles which are inherently indiscriminate into Israel and to hold 120 hostages, of which over 40 have been declared dead. Following mass forced displacements from Rafah in the month of May, with the vast majority of the IDP population fleeing to Khan Younis and Deir al Balah, IDF issued three evacuation orders to residents in Gaza City, in addition to one evacuation order to residents in eastern Khan Younis, causing further displacements in early July. Approximately 1.9 million people out of a total population of 2.2 million are currently estimated to be displaced in Gaza.

EASTERN DR CONGO

The security situation in eastern DR Congo has resulted in alarming levels of violence and widespread civilian displacement. The situation is of grave concern over the rapid growth of the armed group Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in North and South Kivu provinces. The group overtook strategic locations in North Kivu, including Kanyabayonga, Lubero, and Rutshuru territories in June, causing further displacement and exacerbating an already catastrophic humanitarian and human rights situation. About 7.3 million people in the country are displaced, with the majority in the east. A rise in cases of sexual and gender-based violence has also been reported. The region is also particularly perilous for humanitarians, with more than 170 security incidents directly targeting humanitarian workers since the beginning of the year, causing at least four deaths and 20 injuries. Alongside insecurity, limited resources are also constraining aid efforts. DR Congo remains one of the world's most neglected crises.

SUDAN

More than 14,000 people are believed to have been killed and 33,000 injured amidst ongoing heavy fighting in Sudan, which has also created the world's largest displacement crisis, with over 11 million people forced to flee their homes. Since 10 May, the city of El Fasher has been the scene of intense fighting, looting and burning of houses, leading to large-scale displacement, affecting both the city and rural areas. The risk of widespread famine in Sudan caused by war was confirmed by leading hunger experts who warned that the country faces 'the worst levels of acute food insecurity ever recorded', with no less than 14 areas at the highest level of risk. The Designated Expert on Sudan of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also sounded the alarm, warning that the scale of human rights violations and abuses in Sudan was unprecedented. An immediate ceasefire and renewed international efforts, both diplomatic and financial, as well as unhindered and sustained humanitarian access are urgently needed to enable the humanitarian response to be further expanded.

PROTECTION RISKS

SPOTLIGHT

HIGHLIGHTS ON PROTECTION RISKS

**PRESENCE OF MINES AND OTHER EXPLOSIVE
ORDNANCE**

40% of cluster operations report this risk as high or very high. This represents an important increase compared to the last period, back to the high levels of June 2023.

37% of cluster operations (7) report the risk as high or very high. This represents an important reduction compared to the previous period.

CHILD, EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGE
**ABDUCTION, KIDNAPPING, ENFORCED
DISAPPEARANCE, ARBITRARY OR UNLAWFUL
ARREST AND/OR DETENTION**

35% of cluster operations (7) reported the related risks as high or very high. This represents an important decrease compared to last period (-15%)

MONITOR

TRACKING OF 15 PROTECTION RISKS ACROSS EMERGENCIES

The Global Protection Cluster and its Areas of Responsibility monitor and track 15 protection risks² across crises with active Protection Cluster operations. In June 2024 the Global Protection Risk Tracker has been changed from a survey-based system to an in-country joined-up analysis mechanisms based on a convergence of evidence and structured value judgement. The tracker is currently embedded in the Protection Cluster approach to contribute to the JIAF and the Humanitarian Needs Overview³.

PROTECTION RISK		VERY LOW	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH	VERY HIGH
ABDUCTION & DETENTION	Abduction, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention		7	6	4	3
ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS	Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects	2	4	4	4	6
FAMILY SEPARATION	Child and forced family separation		4	13	1	2
MARRIAGE	Child, early or forced marriage		3	8	5	3
DISCRIMINATION	Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access		3	7	6	3
DISINFORMATION	Disinformation and denial of access to information	1	4	10	3	1
FORCED RECRUITMENT	Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups		5	6	4	5
GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE	Gender-based violence			2	10	8
LEGAL IDENTITY	Impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies and justice	1	1	8	5	4
PRESENCE OF MINES	Presence of mines and other explosive ordnance	6	2	4	3	4
PSYCHOSOCIAL	Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress	1	1	7	8	3
THEFT & EVICTION	Theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property		4	5	6	4
TORTURE & CRUELTY	Torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment	3	8	5	2	1
TRAFFICKING & LABOUR	Trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices	1	5	7	4	2
MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT	Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement	0	2	6	8	4

² [GPC Protection Risks Explanatory Note, March 2023](#)

³ [Protection Cluster Joined-Up Approach to Protection Analysis, June 2024](#)

AT A GLANCE

MOST SEVERE PROTECTION RISKS REPORTED IN THE LAST QUARTER

Since April 2024, the protection risk related to 'forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups' has been among the 8 most severe risks reported by Protection Clusters, despite a slight reduction in reporting (-5%). This is mostly due to a reduction in reporting of high or very high levels of 'presence of mine and other explosive ordnance'. The other 7 protection risks reported as most severe in April 2024 remain, with a general decrease of countries reporting high or very high levels across all protection risks. 'Gender-based violence' remains the top reported protection risk, with a slight increase in the countries reporting it as high or very high.

 <p>GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE</p> <p>100% of operations report gender-based violence as being the most concerning. 90% describe the risk as high or very high.</p>	 <p>MOVEMENT & DISPLACEMENT</p> <p>100% of operations report forced displacement and impediments to freedom of movement as a risk. 60% describe the risk as high or very high.</p>	 <p>PSYCHOSOCIAL</p> <p>95% of operations report psychological/ emotional abuse or inflicted distress amongst the affected populations. 55% rate the risk as high or very high.</p>	 <p>THEFT & EVICTION</p> <p>100% of operations report theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property. 53% rate the risk as high or very high.</p>
 <p>ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS</p> <p>Attacks on civilians or infrastructures are occurring in 90% of operations. 50% describe the risk as high or very high.</p>	 <p>DISCRIMINATION</p> <p>Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access is a risk across 100% of operations. 47% describe the risk as high or very high.</p>	 <p>LEGAL IDENTITY</p> <p>95% of operations impediments and/or restrictions to access to documentation, remedies and justice. 47% describe the risk as high or very high.</p>	 <p>FORCED RECRUITMENT</p> <p>Forced recruitment and association of children with armed forces is a risk across 100% of operations. 45% describe the risk as high or very high.</p>

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

AFGHANISTAN	HAITI	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	oPt	SOMALIA
SUDAN	VENEZUELA	CHAD	COLOMBIA	DR CONGO	EL SALVADOR
ETHIOPIA	HONDURAS	MYANMAR	NIGER	SOUTH SUDAN	SYRIE - NE
GUATEMALA	NIGERIA				

In **South Sudan**, there has been a 10% increase in reported sexual violence prevalence in the first half of 2024. Conflict-related sexual violence has been reported in Tambura during the last quarter while heavy floods have led to increased displacement, further exposing people to high risk of gender-based violence. In **Haiti**, 1,793 GBV incidents – 75% being sexual violence – have been reported in the last quarter. In **NE Syria**, GBV incidents are considered the most common cases in the camp contexts. **Venezuela** is reporting high frequency of cases of GBV in all the states in a systematic manner aggravated due to limited presence of service providers and case management. There is also a significant decrease in specialized services for GBV survivors and a low capacity of the State to provide comprehensive responses to GBV cases. The centralization of the response in the capital of the state, with limitations on transportation, creates obstacles to seeking justice. In 2024, 127 women have been violently killed in **Honduras**, while 120 are reported missing. The Inter-Institutional Commission for Monitoring Investigations of Violent Deaths of Women and Femicides in Honduras presented a bill to the Honduran Parliament called the "Purple Alert" which aims to establish a legal framework to help prevent the disappearances of girls and women and to aid in the search for missing women. Gender-based violence is reported as one of the most severe protection risks not only in Cabo Delgado, but also in the areas that are affected by natural disaster and drought in **Mozambique**. Fear of reporting GBV cases persists in **Colombia**. Nevertheless, there are situations of forced marriages or forced unions as part of the territorial control strategies of non-state armed groups. There has been an upsurge of gender-based violence including intimate partners violence in **Sudan** linked to the changing role in the family where the male heads of households have lost their livelihood and the stress that comes from the inability to provide for the basic needs of the family.



Armed conflict and the resulting forced displacement in **DR Congo** are aggravating factors putting women, girls, and other vulnerable groups at risk of GBV due to the weakening or disappearance of traditional protection structures and the disruption of traditional gender roles, in addition to the erosion of state authority. Protection monitoring and rapid assessments have regularly highlighted that women are victims of physical violence, rape, and other violations of their rights, particularly during the collection of firewood or water. The use of negative coping practices such as survival sex, early/forced marriage, the increase in female genital mutilation, child labour and sexual exploitation are also increasing. GBV is very high in **Afghanistan** including reported cases of suicide due to limited access to GBV services. Reports indicate that a staggering 52% of women aged 15-49 in **Somalia** have endured physical violence, while 14% have faced sexual violence, according to GBVIMS data, with a high prevalence of rape recorded in IDP sites. Women and girls in IDP sites are especially vulnerable, grappling with the compounding risks posed by overcrowded living conditions, inadequate shelters and a lack of security. This underscores the severity of this crisis with a 20% rise in GBV incidents in IDP sites in 2024 compared to 2023. Limited-service provision, fear of reprisal, societal shame, and a deep-seated distrust in authorities all contribute to the significant underreporting of GBV incidents. According to the GBV AoR, less than 30% of cases are reported. Survivors often lack confidence in the protection and support they might receive if they choose to come forward, further deterring them from reporting their experiences. This widespread underreporting creates substantial data gaps, hindering the development of effective policies and interventions. Consequently, the true scale of the crisis remains obscured, making it exceedingly challenging to address and combat GBV comprehensively. In **Mali**, the number of GBV incidents increased by 30% in the first quarter of 2024 compared to 2023. Issues related to sexual assault, sexual harassment, verbal harassment, and threats of violence are among the main concerns of women and girls, particularly in regions affected by insecurity. An increase in GBV has been reported in **Ethiopia** in relation to areas affected by conflict/violence, and in areas affected by climatic shocks such as drought, where GBV rates have increased and the affected population sometimes also resort to forms of GBV related negative coping mechanisms (e.g. transactional sex, child marriages and related increase in FGM).

UNLAWFUL IMPEDIMENTS OR RESTRICTIONS TO FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, SIEGE AND FORCED DISPLACEMENT

AFGHANISTAN	oPt	SOMALIA	SUDAN	COLOMBIA	DR CONGO
HONDURAS	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NIGER	NIGERIA	SYRIA - NE
CHAD	EL SALVADOR	HAITI	MALI	SOUTH SUDAN	VENEZUELA
ETHIOPIA	GUATEMALA				

236,000 displacements were recorded within **Somalia** in 2024, with the Hiraan, Lower Juba, and Bay regions reporting the highest number of displaced population inflows, primarily due to flooding / Gu' rains that was experienced between April to June. The rains affected some 268,359 people and killed 10. Destruction of farms, public infrastructure, and other livelihood assets has also been reported. Since the start of the year, more than 940,000 people have been newly displaced in **DR Congo**, bringing the total number to around 7.3 million IDPs. Forced displacement parallels the limitation of freedom of movement, which is mainly hampered by the various illegal roadblocks erected by armed groups or by the National Defense and Security Forces. It is worth noting that two provinces in Eastern Congo have been under siege since 2021 (Ituri and Nord Kivu). Pervasive landmine contamination, explosive hazards, and fighting with heavy weapons and aerial bombardment continues to drive displacement and exacerbate already severe humanitarian needs in **Myanmar**, with more than 3 million people estimated to be internally displaced. Movement restrictions in camps remain a prominent challenge, exacerbated by the lack of documentation and newcomer cards in Deir ez-Zor and Raqqa (**NE Syria**). Violence is the main cause of forced displacement in **Honduras**. Furthermore, forced recruitment, extortion, gender-based violence and climate change related disasters are amongst its main triggers. Forced displacement significantly impacts housing security, education continuity, and income stability. The first two quarters of the year witnessed the forced displacement of 91,000 persons in Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces in **Mozambique** due to attacks from Non-State Armed Groups. The first half of 2024 in **Colombia** shows a trend of increased humanitarian emergencies compared to the first half of 2023. To date, about 85 mass displacement events have been reported, affecting more than 32,000 people. Likewise, around 52,000 people are affected by confinements, with impediments or restrictions to humanitarian access, generating impacts on mental health, food security and rights in general.

PSYCHOLOGICAL / EMOTIONAL ABUSE OR INFLICTED DISTRESS

AFGHANISTAN	oPt	SUDAN	COLOMBIA	DR CONGO	EL SALVADOR
MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NIGERIA	SYRIA - NE	VENEZUELA	CHAD
ETHIOPIA	HAITI	MALI	NIGER	SOMALIA	SOUTH SUDAN
HONDURAS	GUATEMALA				

People with disabilities and older people in **NE Syria** experience significant psychological distress due to a lack of specialized services. Children affected by conflict are deprived of their rights to protection and education, suffering from severe emotional distress. There is limited or non-existent availability of psychosocial services and a lack of specialized professionals to attend cases in **Venezuela**. There is also a lack of community networks and resilience and a lack of awareness about mental health and what constitutes as emotional abuse. MHPSS needs are identified to be a severe need in **Mozambique**. With no sight of the end of war in **Sudan**, the population's apprehension is mounting each day amidst economic crisis and prices of commodities skyrocketing. The prolonged exposure to violence in zones affected by conflict in **DR Congo** causes profound and often long-lasting impacts on the mental and psychosocial health of individuals, and particularly devastating effects on women, children, and youth. The magnitude of this risk is aggravated by the limited specialized services and actors. Many people have reported being psychologically distressed in **Afghanistan** mostly due to increasing levels of poverty, forced returns, and natural hazards like floods and earthquakes.

THEFT, EXTORTION, FORCED EVICTION OR DESTRUCTION OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

NIGERIA	oPt	SUDAN	SYRIA - NE	CHAD	HONDURAS
MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	NIGER	SOMALIA	AFGHANISTAN	DR CONGO
EL SALVADOR	MALI	SOUTH SUDAN	COLOMBIA	ETHIOPIA	GUATEMALA
VENEZUELA	HAITI				

Increasing cases of tent thefts in various camps in **NE Syria** are exposing residents to the risk of assault. Social tensions and disputes over the priority of receiving humanitarian aid were among the main reasons for evacuations from informal camps in Deir ez-Zor by the local community. **Honduras** has less than 30% of its land clearly identified in images or maps, in a national cadaster, and less than 27% of the land officially registered. Generalized violence and extortion severely impact housing, land, and property, causing dispossession and wrongful or illegal seizure, aggravating the impact to those at-risk or forcibly displaced internally. In **Mozambique** this year, houses, personal properties and local markets have been destroyed during the attacks of Non-State Armed Groups in Cabo Delgado and in two districts of Nampula province. With the dramatic increase in internal displacement in **Sudan**, the number of 'gathering sites' sheltering internally displaced people across the country continues to grow. Displacement is now protracted. Return to areas of origin is impeded, and there are limited alternatives to 'gathering sites', which are not equipped or appropriate for longer term shelter. With the Government's announcement to reopen schools, there is now an urgent imperative to find solutions that both support children's return to education, and ensure access to appropriate, safe and sustainable shelter. However, with a very limited level of humanitarian funding and overstretched resources of host communities, there are no tangible shelter options for the growing number of IDPs in 'gathering sites' and in general. This has led to a worrying trend of forced eviction from schools. In **Somalia**, the HLP AoR indicates that a total of 46,194 IDPs, mostly residents of camps in the Banadir region, have been forcefully evicted. Forced evictions disproportionately affect vulnerable populations among both those who have been newly displaced and those who have been displaced for a protracted period of time. Those most impacted by forced evictions are people with disabilities.

ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS AND OTHER UNLAWFUL KILLINGS, AND ATTACKS ON CIVILIAN OBJECTS

HAITI	MYANMAR	NIGERIA	oPt	SOMALIA	SUDAN
DR CONGO	MALI	MOZAMBIQUE	NIGER	COLOMBIA	CHAD
ETHIOPIA	HONDURAS	AFGHANISTAN	EL SALVADOR	SOUTH SUDAN	SYRIA - NE
GUATEMALA	VENEZUELA				

In the **West Bank (oPt)**, a new wave of settler violence is taking place allegedly aimed at forcibly displacing further Bedouin and herding communities encircled by outposts and settlements. Israeli authorities adopted series of dramatic measures towards settlements expansion and annexation. Casualties and extensive destruction of civilian infrastructure were recorded throughout the reporting period following Israeli militarized raids in Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank. In **DR Congo**, a notable intensification of violence against civilians was observed in the first half of the year, particularly in the east (Ituri, Nord Kivu, Sud Kivu) as well as in western part (Mai-Ndombe, Kwilu, Kwango). This escalation has led to severe attacks on civilians, with 5,534 incidents recorded from January to May 2024 by the protection monitoring systems. In addition to attacking the population and their property, attacks have also targeted health centres, schools, agricultural fields, grazing areas, livestock fish farms, etc.



The prevalence of armed conflict as well as military offensives from government forces against Al-Shabaab in **Somalia** in 2024 have had a severe impact on the protection of civilian populations with no clear end of the hostilities in sight. These populations face specific protection needs in the 30 conflict-affected districts across 12 regions in Somaliland, Puntland, Hirshabelle, Galmudug, Jubaland and Southwest State in Somalia. As fighting continued and expanded in **Sudan**, both parties to the conflict including their affiliated armed forces continued to disregard the safety of civilians and civilians' objects, with intense shelling and aerial bombardment. Increased armed attacks by Non-State Armed Groups in **Mozambique** continued during the first half of the year. Civilian fatalities between the last quarter of 2023 and first quarter of 2024 increased by 300%. 75% of reported fatalities are civilians and 83% are children. Burning and looting of houses, religious centres, markets, and aid organizations were also reported. The first quarter of 2024 was the most violent in **Haiti** in the past two years, with more than 2,500 people killed and 845 injured due to gang-related violence. According to the Observatory for Children's Rights of Casa Alianza in **Honduras**, a young person is violently killed every 37 hours, marking a 13% surge in violent killings of children and youth during the first quarter of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023. In Mali, 1,620 people have been killed in the first half of 2024. Confrontation continues between the State Security Forces and NSAG's leading to civilian casualties in all regions of **Cameroon**. Whereas in the Far North, unidentified armed groups continue to harass civilians and theft of food and non-food items have been reported.

DISCRIMINATION AND STIGMATIZATION, DENIAL OF RESOURCES, OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND/OR HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

AFGHANISTAN	oPt	SUDAN	CHAD	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR
NIGER	NIGERIA	SOMALIA	DR CONGO	EL SALVADOR	ETHIOPIA
MALI	HONDURAS	GUATEMALA	SOUTH SUDAN	COLOMBIA	SYRIA - NE
VENEZUELA	HAITI				

Community tensions and conflict between host communities and IDPs in **Mozambique** is resulting from strained resources and limited access to humanitarian assistance and services. Women and girls are highly discriminated against in **Afghanistan**, as they are denied education, not allowed to work, or start a business. In addition, religious and ethnic minorities are discriminated against, with some unable to access civil documents, own land, and access essential services. Alleged diversion of humanitarian assistance, intimidation, abuse, and exploitation by powerful influencers in aid distribution in **Somalia** have blocked equitable distribution of assistance and access to those most in need. This has been exacerbated by communities frequently having limited and inaccessible information on how to seek assistance, with minorities, persons with disabilities, and other marginalized groups most affected. Discrimination, especially targeted at LGBTQ+ groups, is prevalent in **Venezuela** compounded by a lack of public policies that protect them. Numerous cases of suicides were reported in the last quarter, in addition to systematized violence.

IMPEDIMENTS AND/OR RESTRICTIONS TO ACCESS TO LEGAL IDENTITY, REMEDIES, AND JUSTICE

AFGHANISTAN	MYANMAR	oPt	SUDAN	EL SALVADOR	MOZAMBIQUE
NIGER	SOUTH SUDAN	SYRIA - NE	CHAD	COLOMBIA	DR CONGO
ETHIOPIA	HONDURAS	GUATEMALA	SOMALIA	VENEZUELA	MALI
NIGERIA	HAITI				

In **South Sudan**, there are only two locations where nationality and identity documentation are being issued (Wau and Juba), leaving many people without access to legal identity documents. Additionally, reports indicate that identity cards have not been available in South Sudan for the past four months and ID costs have risen almost 100 USD. The lack of civil documentation services including for birth registration in conflict-affected areas in **Niger** is reported as a major concern. In **NE Syria**, the lack of identity cards, passports, family booklets, marriage contracts and birth registration have been reported as major risks, hampering access to services and freedom of movement. Impediments and/or restrictions to access legal identity documents, remedies and justice are identified in Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces of **Mozambique** as a main protection risk to address. The conflict in **Sudan** has resulted in the breakdown and collapse of rule of law. In **Afghanistan**, women lawyers have been restricted from practicing in courts of law. Many people lack civil documentation due to the complex process, limited services, and costly procedures. Widespread attacks on state infrastructure in **Haiti**, including courts and police stations have caused a breakdown of rule of law institutions and rendered it almost impossible to access justice for the affected population.

FORCED RECRUITMENT AND ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN IN ARMED FORCES AND GROUPS

COLOMBIA	MOZAMBIQUE	MYANMAR	SOMALIA	SUDAN	DR CONGO
HAITI	HONDURAS	SYRIA - NE	CHAD	GUATEMALA	MALI
NIGERIA	NIGER	oPt	AFGHANISTAN	EL SALVADOR	ETHIOPIA
SOUTH SUDAN	VENEZUELA				

In **Guatemala**, forced recruitment of children by criminal groups is reported as one of the main protection risks. According to a recent report by a child protection partner, more than 30% of the members of armed gangs in **Haiti** are children and adolescents. Child recruitment still remains a sensitive subject in **NE Syria** with minimal data and few reports published showing the level of recruitment – however, the UN Secretary General report indicates over 1,000 children were recruited in NES. In **Honduras**, where an estimated 20,000 children are in a street-like situation, confronted with forced labour and vulnerable to drug trafficking, children and youth are increasingly exposed to the risk of forced recruitment by organized criminal groups. Force recruitment of children is reported as one of the most severe protection risks in Cabo Delgado, **Mozambique**, due to the increased number of attacks of Non-State Armed Groups, and increased number of areas under their control. The risk of recruitment, use and utilization of children persists in the Pacific, Amazon, Venezuelan and Ecuadorian borders and in the Bajo Cauca Antioquia and Sur de Bolivar sub-regions of **Colombia**. Ethnic, indigenous and Afro-descendant communities are being disproportionately affected by constant threats from armed actors. In addition, schools are being weakened as protective environments due to attacks on educational institutions and the effects of the conflict on teachers and administrators. Both parties to the conflict and their affiliated armed forces are actively mobilizing and recruiting children. In a context of increased armed conflicts in **DR Congo**, the exposure of children and adolescents to the risks of violence, abuse, recruitment and use of sexual violence, including in IDP sites, is increasing. In the first quarter of 2024, preliminary data show that nearly 750 grave violations against children have been verified by the United Nations, more than half of which concern the recruitment and use of children by armed actors. **Somalia** is among the countries that recorded the highest number of grave violations against children including the use and recruitment of children by armed forces and groups. According to the Monitoring & Reporting Mechanism, a total of 658 children were recruited and used by armed forces and groups. In addition, a total of 278 children were detained for their alleged association with armed groups by Government security forces.

The Protection of Civilians remains a central but challenging undertaking in contexts of armed conflict globally.

2024 marks 25 years since the UN Security Council added the Protection of Civilians (PoC) in armed conflict to its agenda. The decision was followed by the adoption of Resolution 1270 in 1999, authorizing the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) with the first explicit mandate to protect civilians from threats of physical violence. Since then, significant normative progress has been made with the concept of protection of civilians in UN peacekeeping, with 16 peacekeeping missions mandated to protect civilians, five of which are currently active ([MINUSCA](#) in CAR, [MONUSCO](#) in DR Congo, [UNIFIL](#) in Lebanon, [UNISFA](#) in Abyei and [UNMISS](#) in South Sudan).

The Secretary General's (SG) [New Agenda for Peace](#) launched in July 2023, called for reflection on the limits and future of peacekeeping to enable more effective mission models in a changing geopolitical landscape. In his recent report on the overall performance of UN peacekeeping operations, the SG acknowledged these questions, wondering whether the missions were fit for purpose and why there was a gap between their mandates and what they deliver.

Currently, there are a number of Protection Clusters that are affected by ongoing discussions on peace operations and protection of civilians – including Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan. Several of these contexts are experiencing transitions and withdrawals of missions, with complex implications for protection of civilians. Other Clusters contexts, like in Haiti or Mozambique, have related considerations with different international forces.

Protection Clusters face specific challenges when operating in the same country contexts as UN missions, often due to misperceptions on responsibilities for Protection of Civilians and overlapping mandates on the provision of direct protection interventions. The withdrawal of UN missions in different country contexts has led to system shocks that have added to more complexity in the available capacities and mechanisms to support the PoC as well as complexity with expectations over the tasks of Protection Clusters – particularly in their PoC and advocacy roles.

A number of these challenges were addressed through high-level side events during the [Protection of Civilians Week](#) in New York this year. DPO, the McGill Center for International Peace and Security Studies (CIPSS), OHCHR and Member States co-hosted an event on the [Future of PoC in UN Peacekeeping](#). Acknowledging the need to adjust existing tools and practices to ensure that peacekeeping remains fit for purpose, speakers and attendees emphasized the importance of investing in early warning systems, strategic communications and capacity building of host states. As part of an event on civilian-centred approaches to the [Protection of Civilians](#), the Permanent Missions of El Salvador, the Netherlands, Philippines and South Sudan, together with partners such as Nonviolent Peaceforce, Oxfam, HPG/ODI and others, including the Global Protection Cluster, came together to share research and promising practices in relation to how civilian-centered approaches to protection complement traditional protection methods and expand protection responses and outcomes.

The Global Protection Cluster and UNHCR also organized, with Member States, UN and NGO partners, a high-level side event during PoC Week that brought together speakers from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, and Mali to address different perspectives and experiences with supporting the [Continuity of Protection During and After UN Transitions and Mission Withdrawals](#). The event unpacked the different impacts of the transitions/mission withdrawals on protection of civilians and changing protection capacities, mechanisms and protection environments. An overarching theme the speakers pointed to was the importance of planning for mission withdrawal from the outset, supporting strengthened protection capacities of national authorities and investing in locally-led and civilian-centered approaches to protection throughout the lifespan of the mission.

The examples on the following page showcase different responses and advocacy efforts by Protection Clusters during UN Mission Withdrawals:

DR CONGO

CLOSING THE WORLD'S LARGEST PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS



Deliberate attacks on civilians



Community-based protection approaches and self-protection initiatives

For over two decades, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) has faced a series of armed conflicts, resulting in millions of civilian casualties, large-scale displacement, and humanitarian crises. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) was established by the Security Council resolution 2556 (2020) with the mandate to protect civilians from physical violence.

Once the world's largest and most expensive peacekeeping mission, MONUSCO is in the process of closing field offices and military bases and reducing its presence across the country. MONUSCO's withdrawal is guided by a Joint Transition Plan drafted by the Mission and Congolese government in 2021.

Since January 2024, the number of acts of violence and deliberate attacks against civilians has increased and is likely to continue to worsen with MONUSCO's phased withdrawal from DR Congo. This is particularly the case in eastern Congo, in the province of South Kivu, North Kivu and Ituri. The Protection Cluster recently published a [Protection Analysis Update on the Protection Situation in South Kivu, in the context of MONUSCO Withdrawal](#), highlighting emerging protection risks and related advocacy calls.

In addition, the reduction in MONUSCO's geographical and operational footprint is likely to hamper the sustainability of certain early warning systems and community-based protection mechanisms, established by MONUSCO, such as Community Liaison Assistants (CLA) and Local Protection Committees (CLP), which are essential for rapid response to protection threats. Without measures to maintain these gains, alongside the restoration of state authority and presence, the protection of civilians risks further deterioration.

IDPs are also among the main target of attacks by armed groups in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. MONUSCO presence is a deterrent to attacks on IDP sites and an essential link in the physical protection of IDPs. If appropriate measures are not taken beforehand, the withdrawal of MONUSCO troops is likely to create a security vacuum, easily exploited by armed groups, with a high probability of increased attacks on IDP sites and other gathering/hosting places for people affected by displacement.

The Protection Cluster in DR Congo has been collaborating with several of the Mission's mechanisms – including being an active member of the Senior Management Group on Protection at a provincial level and of the MONUSCO-led Protection Working Group alongside UN OCHA and other agencies, at the national level. UNHCR, as the lead of the Protection Cluster, is a member of the Senior Management Group on Protection at national level, under the leadership of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General and chief of MONUSCO.

During this phase of the transition, there have been increased efforts to look at succession arrangements and maintaining continuity of PoC mechanisms. The Protection Cluster is actively engaged in the transfer process facilitated by MONUSCO of their early warning systems to state actors (Civil Protection) and through a provincial response plan developed by the Provincial Humanitarian Coordination (COHP) group in South Kivu which aims to increase community-based protection capacities. The Protection Cluster and its key partners are promoting and strengthening the community-based protection approach, in order to make sure protection mechanisms are established and supported at local level and that communities can undertake self-protection initiatives. The Protection Cluster, through UNHCR, is also developing a mechanism for consolidating early warnings systems and protection monitoring mechanisms (alertbook) in collaboration with the Civil Protection department from the Ministry of Interior.

SOMALIA

DRAWDOWN AMIDST A PROTRACTED HUMANITARIAN CRISIS



Protection crisis with Protection of Civilians at its core



Joint analysis and strategic objective of cluster's response

The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS), a peacekeeping force, authorised by the African Union and mandated by the UN Security Council through Resolution 2628 (2022) is expected to withdraw by December 31, with full transition of security operations to the Somali National Armed Forces. Since ATMIS started its drawdown in June 2023, some of the Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) have either been closed or handed over.

So far, the ATMIS drawdown has not resulted in large scale population movements, or a perception from communities that their security is being negatively impacted. However, some concerns remain that ATMIS withdrawal may result in a reduction of security in districts such as as Dhuusamarreeb, Kismaayo, or Jowhar which already host large numbers of displaced population including minorities and other vulnerable groups. These districts may face the arrival of newly displaced populations to urban areas increasing the pressure on available resources and the risk of inter-intra clan grievances.



Similarly, forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups has been identified as a prevalent protection risk in the districts of Kismaayo and Jowhar. Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UASC), children on the move, children from minority and marginalized groups often face the risk of recruitment into armed groups. Communities and protection actors noted that the presence of a FOB was occasionally perceived by the population as a potential deterrent to child recruitment and use.

Al-Shabaab keeps its ability to conduct complex operations on civilians and security targets with recent examples such as the complex attack on Somali Security Forces in El-Dheer – Galmudug region, and the mortar attack on the ATMIS camp in Baidoa, Southwest State. On 7 July, an ambush and a roadside IED attack targeted an ATMIS convoy along the Balcad-Jowhar main supply route. Reportedly, there has been an increase in Al-Shabaab attacks along this route.

Somalia remains a protracted humanitarian and protection crisis with protection of civilians at its core as highlighted by the [Protection Cluster response plan for 2024](#) and HCT Centrality of Protection Strategy. The drawdown of ATMIS and anticipated protection risks due to complex security dynamics requires an intersectoral response to prevent and mitigate threats and to transition some interventions currently undertaken by ATMIS. Complementarity between humanitarian and political action is critical to ensure the protection of civilians is upheld.

The Protection Cluster also continues to advocate for urgent frontline protection support in hard-to-reach and newly accessible areas to alleviate existing protection risks and humanitarian needs among the displaced and vulnerable civilian populations – ensuring the protection of civilians is central in ATMIS transition.

In addition, the Protection Cluster is providing timely and evidence-based protection of civilians' analysis in hard-to-reach and conflict-affected areas. The Protection Cluster has conducted ex-post analysis of phase 1 and 2 of the drawdown. These ex-post analyses were integrated as part of the Joint Technical Assessment (JTA) report submitted to the UNSG EC.

In such context, engagement with conflict affected communities and parties (national and international) to the conflict is key in order to minimize the targeting of civilians and civilian assets. Community-based protection mechanisms and self-protection initiatives are also being strengthened as an important step forward. However, predictable and sustainable funding for the follow-on arrangements remains a critical challenge.

MALI

PEACEKEEPING MISSION ENDS AFTER 10 YEARS



Ensuring the continuity of Protection of Civilians monitoring functions



Analysis and advocacy with the HCT, local and central authorities

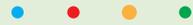
Following the request by the Malian authorities, at the end of June 2023 the UN Security Council approved the complete withdrawal of UN peacekeeping forces (Resolution 2090). The drawdown process of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) began immediately and was expected to be completed within 6 months.

Humanitarian actors expressed concerns over a rapid withdrawal of MINUSMA which may cause a severe deterioration of the security, humanitarian, and human rights situation in the country, leading to significant harm to civilians. A deliberate, phased, and sequenced withdrawal of MINUSMA was recommended to ensure civilians remain protected during the transition period.

As outlined in the [Protection Analysis Update](#), like in other regions of northern and central Mali (Ber and Timbuktu for example), the gradual withdrawal of MINUSMA in Kidal was characterized by armed clashes between the Malian Armed Forces and armed groups. These clashes led to violations of human rights and international humanitarian law – resulting in increased humanitarian needs in this region. The withdrawal of MINUSMA also had pronounced impacts on the movements and operations of humanitarian actors, including protection actors, who were reliant on the presence of the peacekeeping mission for support with access in a number of areas. This limited access of affected populations to life-saving assistance.

To foster a sustainable transition that prioritizes the protection of civilians (PoC) and addresses as many gaps as possible, the Protection Cluster mapped out key PoC activities and capacities with the HCT/UNCT, government actors at the national and local levels, and civil society partners. These stakeholders – many of which are members of the Protection Cluster – collaboratively determined whether and how initiatives could be maintained or transformed to ensure the continuity of some of the PoC functions.

Consequently, the Protection Cluster was asked to take on some monitoring functions of the mission – including MRM on grave violations and CAAC services, MARA on conflict related sexual violence (CRSV) as well as Mine Action coordination. The protection monitoring system was re-adjusted to relocating some of the protection monitors in strategic areas (e.g. high protection risks, borders) to further



assist in some PoC data collection. However, with the absence of human rights mechanisms, Mali is witnessing growing allegations of serious human rights violations with a lack of means of verification and documentation.

Finally, the withdrawal of MINUSMA resulted in concrete funding implications to provide physical protection to civilians, delivery of humanitarian aid including support to local service provision, political engagement, as well as human rights monitoring, reporting and advocacy with duty-bearers. The necessary resources and capacities to address existing and new emerging humanitarian needs and facilitating service provision will be needed. Donors should remain committed to supporting vulnerable communities, including by increasing funding to the Humanitarian Response Plan and to programming that supports essential service delivery. Failure to do so could lead to further instability and insecurity.

SUDAN

WITHDRAWAL AMIDST OUTBREAK OF CONFLICT



Ongoing violence, displacement and humanitarian needs



Evidence-based analysis and robust advocacy on Protection of Civilians issues

The United Nations African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) terminated its mandate on 31 December 2020, leaving the responsibility for the protection of civilians to the Government of Sudan as per UNSC Resolution 2559 (2020). The Government of Sudan adopted a National Plan for the Protection of Civilians to assume full responsibility for the protection of its civilian citizens.

As part of the transition process, UNAMID and the UNCT have worked closely with Government administrators and institutions including Governors' offices, native administration, local authorities, security apparatus, as well as the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), Voluntary return and reintegration commission (VRRRC), rule of law bodies (judiciary, prison services, Sudan Police Force (SPF) to enhance their capacity to embrace their respective protection responsibilities.

A new Mission – the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) – was in 2020 entrusted, in coordination with UNHCR, to support the implementation of the National Plan on Protection of Civilians. UNITAMS was also mandated to build on UNAMID's achievements in Darfur and lead on peace and development initiatives in coordination with the Durable Solutions Working Group co-lead by UNDP and UNHCR.

The Mandate of UNITAMS came abruptly to an end after the outbreak of the conflict between SAF and RSF. The Government of Sudan requested the termination of the mission mandate effective February 2024. This allowed for a short transition period, whereby in essence all mission tasks were handed over to the UNCT in Sudan. Capitalizing on the UN Common Approach and Priorities for 2024, the transition planning process between UNITAMS and the UNCT was anchored on three pillars of the UN Common Approach: 1. Basic Services, Community Stabilization and Resilience; 2. Protection of Civilians, Rule of Law and Human Rights; and 3. Conflict Prevention, Social Cohesion and Peacebuilding. The UN's strength lays in the co-leadership of the different pillars of the UN Common Approach, and the revival of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children mechanism.

The Protection Cluster scaled up and expanded protection monitoring through community-based protection networks, and where access is possible, specialized protection services are also strengthened. The protection monitoring, embedded in community based and localization approaches, have ensured the ability to deliver in hard-to-reach areas. Evidence based protection advocacy is a priority, including through support for dialogue and humanitarian diplomacy as well as through sharing protection analysis and messages via more public channels, such as regular flash updates covering Darfur and now numerous areas in the country. Protection Cluster members are also contributing to the roll out of "Hubs and Spokes" through physical presence in Sudan. Protection and Human Rights partners will build on and advance implementation of the HCT's protection strategy, which remains anchored in the centrality of protection and protection of civilians.

SOUTH SUDAN

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN A CONTEXT OF ELECTIONS



Heightened risks of electoral violence and a possible surge in intercommunal violence in the coming months



Strengthening systems that protect civilians beyond the transition

Through Resolution 2729 (2024), the Security Council has extended the UNMISS mandate until 30 April 2025, highlighting that the mission is designed to protection civilians, create conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, support the implementation of the R-ARCSS, and monitor, investigate, and report on violations of IHL and abuses of human rights. With this extension, UNMISS is also tasked with providing technical assistance and logistical support to create conditions



conducive to free and fair elections in accordance with the Revitalized Agreement. The Security Council emphasized that the protection of civilians must be prioritized in decisions about the use of resources and capacity.

Intercommunal violence remains pervasive across the country, particularly in hotspot areas in Jonglei, Lakes, Unity, and the border between Abyei and Warrap. Significant humanitarian concerns pose multifaceted threats to civilians, and the limited presence of state institutions to provide basic services or security amplifies the magnitude of the challenges confronting South Sudan. The humanitarian situation is further exacerbated by the impact of climate change and the influx of refugees and returnees fleeing the conflict in Sudan.

In such a context, the protection of civilians must remain an overarching priority for the mission. PoC efforts may be tailored and adapted in light of the heightened risks of electoral violence and a potential surge in intercommunal violence in the coming months. The uncertainty surrounding the upcoming elections has become a stressor within communities, exacerbated by the ongoing economic crisis and the imminent floods, thus increasing the risk of violence. Factors affecting the elections include intensified fights over resources, high unemployment, political competition among the ruling elite, and increased intercommunal clashes. If the elections are not managed carefully, there is a potential for violence with disastrous consequences in South Sudan and the wider region.

Similarly, conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence remain high in the country. Strengthening monitoring and reporting mechanisms on sexual and gender-based violence need to be considered in any transition plan, as well as transferring/bolstering early warning and prevention systems and engaging community and local leaders in promoting peace ahead of the election period.

It is also important to report that efforts are being made to establish strong links between development and humanitarian initiatives. In a recent workshop on social protection attended by the Protection Cluster, there was a strong emphasis on strengthening systems that protect civilians beyond the transition. The goal is to achieve more predictable and sustainable protection for civilians.

Other Examples of Protection Cluster Engagement with 'Mission-Like' Set-Ups:

HAITI

In June 2024, a first contingent of Kenyan police arrived in Haiti to lead the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS). Although the MSS is not a UN peacekeeping mission, a dialogue cell was created under the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) to coordinate the engagement of humanitarian actors and the MSS. UNPOL, the Haitian National Police (HNP) and MSS representatives integrate this dialogue cell. The Protection Cluster is also a standing member of the cell. As part of its role in the cell, the Protection Cluster has already delivered three training sessions to the HNP on protection principles since January 2024.

MOZAMBIQUE

The withdrawal of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM) forces – an active regional peacekeeping mission – from Cabo Delgado is one of the reasons of increased insurgency and counter insurgency activities. In northern Mozambique, attacks by Non-State Armed Groups continue to create a “feeling of insecurity and instability” among the population in some districts of Cabo Delgado province, according to Defence Minister Cristóvão Chume. The statements were made at the closing ceremony of the Southern African Military Mission, which has been assisting Mozambican troops since 2021.



ACCESS THAT PROTECTS

The GPC recognizes the foundational role that access plays in enabling protection, and how protection actors can support strengthened access, and has therefore focused on advancing policy and practice change that further enables these linkages between access and protection. As laid out in our report [Access that Protects: An Agenda for Change](#), published in collaboration with OCHA, we have been pursuing a range of actions to drive improved policy and practice that strengthens the intersection between access and protection. As part of this, the GPC has been advancing collaboration with OCHA, Protection Clusters, Access Working Groups, the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation (CCHN) and other stakeholders over the past year.

The GPC together with UNHCR and CCHN is continuing to build on the **tailored series of in-person workshops** for Protection Cluster members that focus on protection in armed conflict and humanitarian negotiations. In the last quarter, a focused session on protection negotiations was delivered for Protection Cluster Coordinators and co-Coordiators as part of the Global Protection Conference, held in June in Nairobi. CCHN led the session, which advanced reflections and exchange with regards to how protection actors are using negotiations in support of protection outcomes. Coordination teams emphasized the diversity of ways protection actors are using negotiations in their work, including with respect to:

- Negotiating with national and local authorities about the importance of women's protection and GBV-related initiatives.
- Engaging and negotiating with community self-defence groups with regards to respect for the protection of civilians.
- Negotiating with local authorities with regards to forced return of IDPs, negotiating to preserve the civilian character of IDP sites.
- Negotiating with different actors to enable access of affected communities to protection supports and services.

Coordination teams also exchanged on some of the challenges they and protection partners face in conducting negotiations, including around the lack of understanding of protection on the part of counterparts; security concerns and fears of reprisal against communities, partners and staff when engaging with armed actors and a lack of articulated negotiations strategies in support of protection. CCHN introduced some of the approaches and supports they have developed based on decades of negotiations experiences by diverse humanitarian actors and also outlined some of the follow up supports available through CCHN tools, workshops and communities of practice.

Field Protection Clusters also continue to advance on **country and global level advocacy** in support of access that protects in collaboration with the GPC. Such themes were a central aspect of advocacy efforts by Protection Clusters with a range of Member State and donor representatives, including during a series of briefings in Brussels, including to the European Council's working party on humanitarian and food aid.

A significant policy success was realized in June 2024 based on the leadership of Belgium during its European Council Presidency. Belgium worked with a range of protection partners, including the GPC, and Member State allies to develop and gain support for [Council conclusions focused on strengthened protection as part of humanitarian aid](#). These Conclusions include specific recommendations for Member States to further strengthen funding, the response to protection risks and humanitarian diplomacy in support of International Humanitarian Law, including in relation to access.

The GPC and partners will continue to engage on this issue, seeking to strengthen data and reporting, community-level and frontline capacities, and advocacy efforts in support of access that protects to advance the recommendations put forward in the Agenda for Change and, ultimately, to move the needle on access that provides critical sustained and quality space for protection.

SITUATIONAL UPDATE

ACCESS OVERVIEW FOR PROTECTION

ABILITY OF PROTECTION ACTORS TO ACCESS AFFECTED POPULATIONS

During the reporting period, Protection Clusters reported that the ability of protection actors to access affected populations has remained similar in 53% of operations. The situation deteriorated in 47% of operations: **Afghanistan, DR Congo, Haiti, Mozambique, Myanmar, Niger, Nigeria, oPt, South Sudan, and Sudan**. The situation did not improve in any operations.



MOST IMPORTANT BARRIER

Regions	Bureaucratic and administrative constraints	Environmental and logistical constraints	Direct attacks or threats against protection actors, facilities and assets	Interference from authorities or non-state actors	On-going insecurity or hostilities	Other, please specify
Americas	0%	33%	0%	33%	33%	0%
Asia & Pacific	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%
East & Southern Africa	0%	0%	17%	0%	67%	17%
MENA	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%
West & Central Africa	20%	0%	0%	0%	80%	0%

SITUATIONAL UPDATE

Percentage of the affected population that can be reached by protection actors

Approx. 25% or less	Between 25% and 50%	Between 50% and 75%	Approx. 75% or more	Do not know
Mozambique, Niger, oPt, Sudan, Venezuela	Afghanistan, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Myanmar, NE Syria	-	DR Congo, El Salvador, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan	Guatemala, Nigeria

Due to increased attacks in **Mozambique**, access of humanitarian organizations has remained limited to three districts of Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces for the past several months. **Mali** is witnessing an expansion of attacks by armed groups towards the Center-West of the country with an increase in contamination of roads, thus hindering access and increasing the need for humanitarian flights to deliver assistance. In **Sudan**, parties to the conflict are imposing administrative barriers on convoy movements that are delaying the provision of humanitarian assistance. Ongoing conflict contributes to a volatile and difficult operating environment for humanitarians in **Somalia**. Attacks on humanitarian workers and infrastructure, and restrictions on movements have exacerbated access and operational challenges. An estimated 580,000 people live in areas which are hard to access by the humanitarian community, the majority being women and children. Out of 74 districts, 23 are either hard or extremely hard to reach. The conflict has escalated in **Myanmar** with more territories under the control of NSAGs, and access being very limited for protection actors and humanitarian actors as a result. 39 areas are reported ‘under blockade’ in **Burkina Faso** – while advocacy efforts continue in view of improving access and the protection of civilians in those areas. In **South Sudan**, 47 humanitarian access incidents were recorded in May 2024, a 42% increase from April. Armed actors continue to perpetrate violence against humanitarian personnel. Bureaucratic access impediments included incidents of illegal taxation, interference in staff recruitment procedures, cumbersome processes, and changing regulations. Access to protection appears to be negatively impacted in **Niger** due to the high number of military operations/non state armed groups existing across the country. Moreover, military escorts are imposed on humanitarian actors to access affected population/ areas. The closure of the only airport in Port-au-Prince, **Haiti**, between March and May 2024 forced humanitarian actors to find alternative routes to operate and deliver the response. Violence and insecurity are limiting humanitarian access at times especially in parts of Oromia, Amhara in **Ethiopia**. Due to political activities carried out in many communities in **Venezuela**, some humanitarian organizations have had to suspend protection activities, to uphold the principle of neutrality, until after the elections. Many localities affected by the conflicts in **DR Congo** are facing growing challenges in terms of humanitarian access, exacerbated by an upsurge in violence and insecurity. Incidents blocking assistance to civilian populations increased significantly, mainly due to targeted attacks by armed groups, growing inter-communal tensions and mistrust of humanitarian actors. In **Gaza**, extreme insecurity and the displacement of the entire humanitarian response from Rafah has had a very detrimental impact on the ability of protection teams to move. Fuel and other access restrictions further compound this situation. Social and political tensions have affected access to affected populations in **NW Syria**, particularly during the closure of the border crossing points related to the escalation of tensions between June 30th and July 2nd. All cross-border missions and transshipments were stopped and at least 13 partner organizations stopped their activities, both in NWS and at the Gaziantep level. Affected protection services included legal and HLP support, provision of cash, PSS and protection monitoring.

ABILITY OF AFFECTED POPULATIONS TO ACCESS PROTECTION SERVICES

During the reporting period, Protection Clusters reported that the access situation for affected populations to reach protection services has remained similar in 42% of operations. The situation deteriorated in 52% of operations: **Afghanistan, Cameroon, DR Congo, Haiti, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nigeria, oPt, South Sudan, and Sudan**. The situation improved only in **Niger**.

MOST IMPORTANT BARRIER

Regions	Insecurity or hostilities	Direct attacks or threats	Environmental and logistical	Other, please specify	Restriction and obstruction	Unavailability of protection services
Americas	33%	0%	17%	0%	33%	17%
Asia & Pacific	50%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%
East & Southern Africa	50%	0%	0%	17%	17%	17%
MENA	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
West & Central Africa	20%	60%	0%	0%	20%	0%

SITUATIONAL UPDATE

Percentage of the affected population that can reach protection services

Approx. 25% or less	Between 25% and 50%	Between 50% and 75%	Approx. 75% or more	Do not know
Mozambique, Niger, oPt, Sudan, Venezuela	Afghanistan, Cameroon, Chad, Colombia, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Mali, Myanmar, Somalia, NE Syria	-	El Salvador, South Sudan	Guatemala, Nigeria

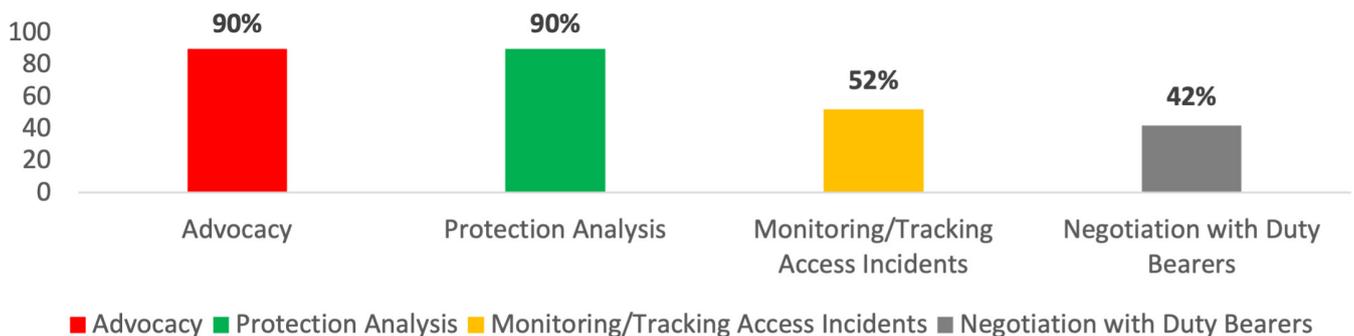
In areas under the control of armed groups, access to services remains extremely difficult for civilian populations in **Mali**. Increasing violence perpetrated by gangs and attacks on key infrastructure and services in **Haiti** severely impacted access to protection services by the population in the first months of 2024. The control of school, police stations, tribunals, and health facilities by armed gangs has deteriorated a situation that was already challenging. The attacks of Non-State Armed Groups in Erati and Memba districts of Nampula and Macomia district of Cabo Delgado in **Mozambique** and counter attacks by government forces have limited people’s access to humanitarian assistance for several months. In **Colombia** the weakening of social networks, the pressures of non-state armed groups on communities and the lack of protection of the state require proactive and sustained presence in the territories, which can’t be achieved due to lack of funding. Efforts to raise awareness about protection services in **NE Syria** have led to greater community understanding and utilization of these services.

AGENDA FOR CHANGE

PROGRESS AND HIGHLIGHTS ON PROTECTION CLUSTER COMMITMENTS

During the reporting period, Protection Clusters advanced a range of efforts in relation to access, including bringing protection considerations through analysis into access discussions and fora (**90%**), and bringing attention to the impact of access constraints on protection through advocacy (**90%**). Protection Clusters also encouraged their members to report access incidents through OCHA reporting systems or other mechanisms in place at country level (**52%**), and supported negotiation efforts undertaken by its members, OCHA and/or HC/HCT (**42%**).

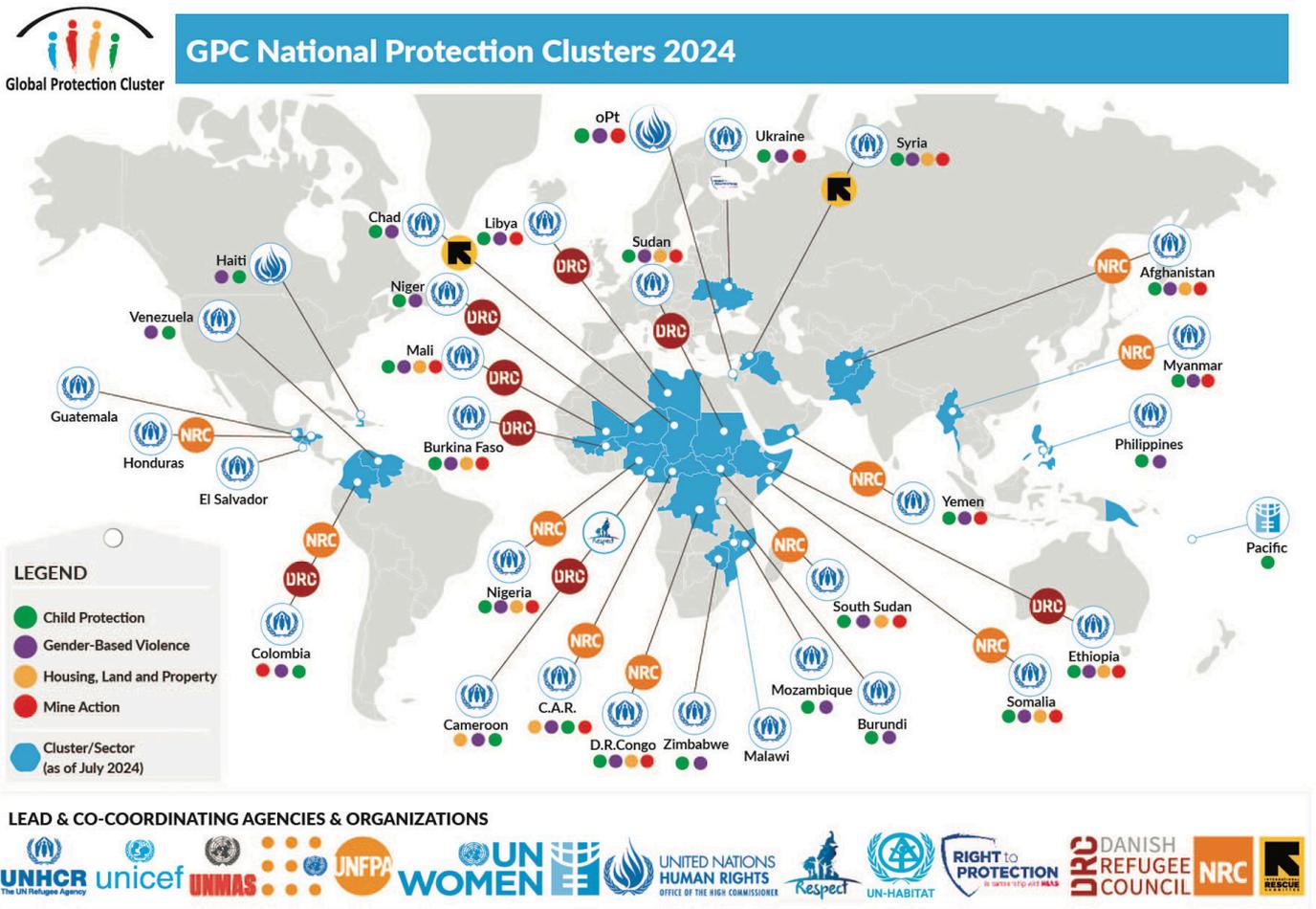
TYPES OF EFFORTS UNDERTAKEN BY PROTECTION CLUSTERS



FIELD COORDINATION AND OPERATIONS

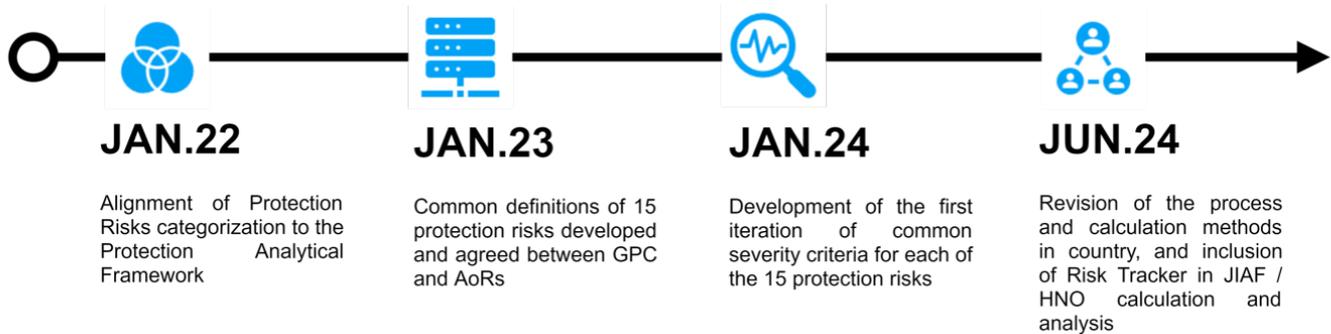
The GPC organized the annual Protection Conference in Nairobi from 9 to 14 June 2024. The event was attended by 200 colleagues, including protection cluster coordinators, coordinators from the four Areas of Responsibility (CP, GBV, MA, HLP), UN agencies, NGOs, and donors. The conference provided a unique opportunity for the GPC and its AoRs to discuss and advance key protection policy issues and the ways to adjust joint work in a changing humanitarian context. Among key topics were the Recommendations on the simplification of the Protection Architecture and the way forward for its implementation in line with the findings from the Independent Review of the IASC Protection Policy; progress on joint protection risk analyses, including the Protection Analyses Updates, and how these analyses inform and guide collective protection responses in operations. Specific discussions also covered progress on localization, advocacy, transition, and ways of working together in a rapidly changing operational environment.

In Q2 of 2024, the GPC Field Support Desk addressed 122 field support requests, with the collaboration of over 15 global protection partners and task teams/working groups. 7 peers to peer sessions were organised to facilitate peer exchanges on arising humanitarian issues. The GPC carried out support missions during this reporting period, to South Sudan and Ukraine. The GPC Field Support Desk received requests for support from 25 (of 32) cluster operations. While requests were primarily received from cluster coordination teams, the Field Support Desk received requests from global partners and other stakeholders.



ANNEX - PROTECTION RISK TRACKER TRANSFORMATION

Following the endorsement of the [Protection Analytical Framework](#), the GPC is transforming the Global Protection Risks tracker. This aims to **establish a more reliable and comparative qualitative measure of protection risk severity across countries with active Protection Clusters**. The process incorporates ongoing feedback from Protection Clusters, AoRs, SAG, key GPC partners, and donors.

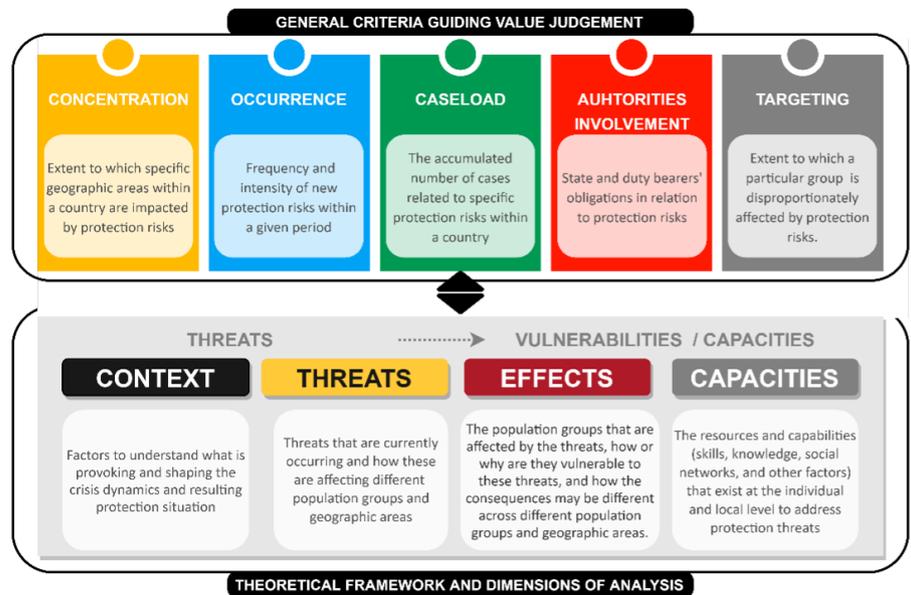


The current Global Protection Risks Tracker does not include a specific Protection Risk Index that is calculated across countries. Instead, it provides a situational analysis of protection risk severity⁴, aggregating subnational measures based on value judgment and evidence convergence.

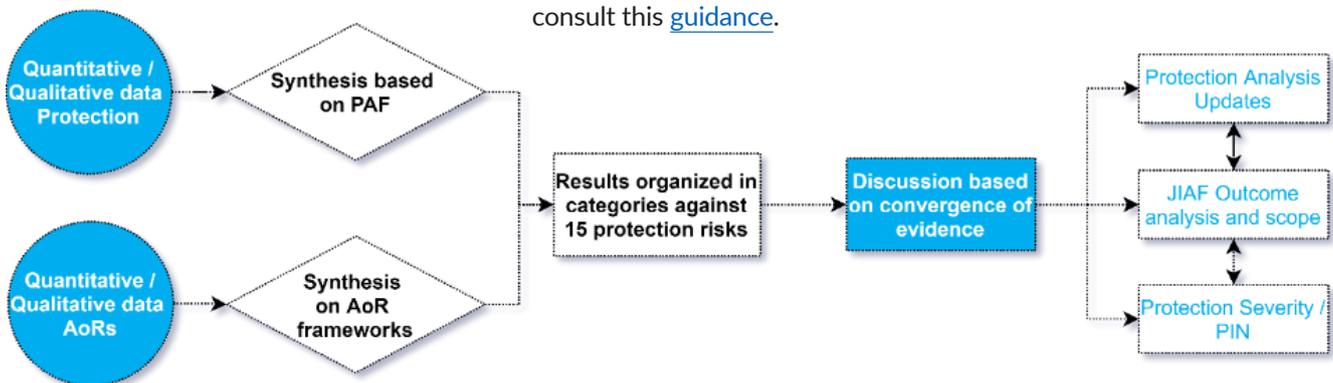
This mechanism is detailed in the renewed GPC and AoRs [guidance](#), with all tools available on this [page](#).

During the 3rd and 4th quarters of 2024, the GPC, together with its AoRs, is managing the revised approach and tool as a use case across all Protection Cluster operations to collect inputs, feedback and lessons learned from direct implementation.

This process, together with a set of consultations, will be used for the finalization of the methodology components as well as to design the overall severity model for 2025.



The protection risks severity is now part of the Protection Cluster contribution to the Joint Intersectoral Analysis Framework (JIAF) and Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO). For more information please consult this [guidance](#).



⁴While the Protection Analytical Framework provides an endorsed global theoretical framework, the general criteria are currently implemented as guiding principles informing the collective consultation and value judgement.