

A displaced woman prepares food in a makeshift kitchen in the grounds of the Roman Catholic church in Bossangoa, Central African Republic



# *Engaging* *with* IDPs

**T**he number of people displaced within their own countries as a result of conflict or natural disasters reached an all-time high in 2013. Official estimates from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre put the number of people internally displaced (IDPs) by conflict at the end of 2013 at 33.3 million worldwide. In the Syrian Arab Republic (Syria) alone, there were some 6.5 million IDPs in 2013, and inter-communal violence fuelled significant new displacement in the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan. Natural disasters also uprooted communities. Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, for instance, drove more than 4 million people from their homes in a matter of hours in November 2013.

UNHCR engages with IDPs through the inter-agency cluster approach, a collaborative framework which governs the work of UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations that partner to protect and assist IDPs. The Office continued to lead the three global clusters covering protection, emergency shelter, and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) respectively. This chapter reviews how UNHCR, in cooperation with many others, responded to the main challenges arising from internal displacement in 2013. ●●●

**A**s the world's population of IDPs grew, so did the challenges for humanitarian action. In 2013, humanitarian assistance and protection delivery in many contexts were often hampered by regulations and restrictions imposed by governments and/or armed actors. Other challenges included reaching IDPs trapped in remote or besieged areas. UNHCR and partners also witnessed disregard for international humanitarian law and basic human rights, including attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and the recruitment of children into armed groups.

The 2013 findings of the Secretary-General's Internal Review Panel on United Nations Action in Sri Lanka prompted the United Nations to place greater emphasis on promoting and defending human rights. In May, UNHCR teamed up with OHCHR to present a joint paper, *Protection in Humanitarian Crises*, in support of the Secretary-General's *Rights Up Front* initiative. The Global Protection Cluster, led by UNHCR, drafted a statement on the *Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action* for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals.

The High Commissioner's 2013 Dialogue on Protection Challenges was aimed at generating fresh thinking on how the international community could more effectively address the needs of the growing population of IDPs worldwide. The dialogue provided a unique opportunity for stakeholders to assess UNHCR's role in situations of internal displacement. One key outcome was the Office's commitment to update its IDP policy and develop guidelines to strengthen its operational delivery in situations of internal displacement.

UNHCR continues to support States' efforts to adopt, update or prepare national policies on IDPs. Such assistance proved helpful to

Afghanistan and Yemen, both of which adopted IDP policies in 2013. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), UNHCR participated in a national commission to draft comprehensive IDP legislation. Nigeria and Somalia were other countries that moved ahead in developing their national policies on IDPs, with UNHCR support.

Government officials from 15 African countries were trained on how to incorporate the principles of the African Union's Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) into national policies. The training was organized jointly by UNHCR, the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Internally Displaced Persons, the Brookings Institute, the Norwegian Refugee Council's Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, OCHA and OHCHR. Four more countries (Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi and Zimbabwe) ratified the Kampala Convention in 2013. By the first quarter of 2014, 22 States had ratified the Convention and 39 States had signed it.

UNHCR participated in several joint missions with UNDP in 2013 to assess the implementation of the Secretary-General's Policy Committee Decision on Durable Solutions (see glossary). At the same time, UNHCR's collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union resulted in the publication, at the end of 2013, of the first *Handbook on Internal Displacement for Parliamentarians*.

A new e-learning programme on internal displacement was launched by UNHCR at the end of 2013. A total of 16 senior protection advisors deployed to UNHCR operations under the *ProCap* project provided expertise in law and policy development, durable solutions and child protection. The deployees also worked to strengthen UNHCR's coordination role and its efforts to mainstream protection activities across other clusters.



# Global Protection Cluster

In 2013, the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) provided support and guidance to 29 protection clusters and cluster-like mechanisms, 19 of which were led by UNHCR. It also served as a platform for global advocacy on protection and provided analysis of trends and developments in protection for the internally displaced.

## *Field operational support*

The GPC relied on a rapid-response mechanism, a help desk, periodic newsletters and its website to provide operational advice and support to the field. At the same time, it helped facilitate the exchange of information on protection in humanitarian crises across operations worldwide. In 2013, the GPC worked closely with country-level protection clusters to provide timely inputs into strategic response plans (SRP) and inter-agency appeals. Equally important, the GPC gave strong support to field operations in undertaking comprehensive needs assessments and setting up protection monitoring mechanisms to support UN Country Teams in designing their strategies.

A roving senior protection advisor, assigned through the ProCap surge-capacity project to the GPC, undertook regular support missions in 2013, with a focus on level 3 emergencies. To strengthen the capacity of protection clusters in protection monitoring, needs assessment and gap analysis, the GPC facilitated the deployment of information management officers to the CAR, Mali, Myanmar, the Philippines and South Sudan.

## *Policy, guidance and tools*

At the global level, the GPC provides strategic input to IASC-led initiatives, including the ongoing revision of Transformative Agenda protocols, the development of reference modules on the Humanitarian Programme Cycle and Cluster Coordination, and guidance for response monitoring. Seminars organized by the GPC in 2013 generated debate on cross-cutting themes, such as security for humanitarian workers, humanitarian access, and the transition from crisis to recovery.

A GPC-commissioned study, *Placing Protection at the Centre of Humanitarian Action*, generated ideas for understanding and communicating the life-saving nature of protection, ensuring more outcome-level reporting of protection results, and advocating for protection to inform the analysis and planning of humanitarian country strategies.

GPC briefings on specific country operations, including those in the CAR, Chad, the DRC, Mali, the Philippines and Syria, were held throughout the year.

The GPC made strong contributions to field guidance material in 2013. It developed and piloted a diagnostic tool to help protection clusters work more effectively with the United Nations' integrated missions in various countries. The GPC also gave guidance on how to mainstream protection into the work of the global clusters for food security, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), CCCM and shelter.

*Capacity building*

In 2013, the GPC organized field training on protection and cluster coordination in natural disasters which benefited government officials and other partners in Afghanistan, Pakistan, South Sudan and Yemen. The GPC's Protection Mainstreaming Task Team tested training materials in the CAR, Niger,

the Philippines and Syria in 2013, which will be finalized in 2014.

In 2013, 70 UNHCR and partner staff participated in the Cluster Coordination and Leadership (Co-Lead) learning programme, facilitated by the GPC, the Global Shelter Cluster and the Global CCCM Cluster.

## Global Shelter Cluster

The Global Shelter Cluster co-led by UNHCR and the IFRC supported 23 country-level clusters or cluster-like mechanisms in 2013, including a newly activated cluster in Myanmar, and others supporting the new emergency operations in the CAR, the Philippines, and South Sudan. The Global Shelter Cluster also implemented IASC commitments, particularly those emerging from the Transformative Agenda, and launched a five-year strategy that gives priority to country-level cluster coordination.

*Providing operational support*

IDP operations with shelter clusters or cluster-like mechanisms can now benefit from an enhanced surge-capacity arrangement, established in 2013 under the auspices of the Global Shelter Cluster by ACTED, the Australian Red Cross, IFRC, IOM, the Norwegian Refugee Council, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, UN-Habitat and UNHCR. In 2013, the arrangement allowed

three global focal points based in UNHCR to undertake 11 missions to support shelter clusters in eight countries. Joint assessment missions under the surge-capacity arrangement benefitted operations in Mali, Somalia and South Sudan, while shelter-cluster coordinators were deployed to Afghanistan, the CAR, Mali and Myanmar.

The Global Shelter Cluster improved the accessibility and content of its website, which now includes an updated Coordination Toolkit for country-level shelter clusters.

*Building a response capacity*

At the Global Shelter Cluster annual retreat in November 2013, shelter cluster coordinators working in complex emergencies and natural disasters were able to share best practices. The Global Shelter Cluster, together with the GPC and the Global CCCM Cluster, also facilitated training for two cohorts of the Co-Lead learning programme.

### *Setting and disseminating standards and policies*

To meet its priorities for 2013, the Global Shelter Cluster established four working groups to update the Coordination Toolkit. The goals of this exercise were to improve the coherence of country-level clusters, enhance their accountability, identify and address barriers to the provision of shelter, and define approaches to shelter recovery.

### *Organizational and managerial issues*

A total of 85 staff, including shelter cluster coordinators, from 31

organizations attended the annual Global Shelter Cluster meeting in Geneva in November 2013. Discussions focused on issues of importance for country-level clusters and initiatives led by the Global Shelter Cluster related to the Transformative Agenda. New members of the Global Shelter Cluster's Strategic Advisory Group (SAG) were appointed and the priorities for 2014 defined. This was followed by the SAG's own retreat, where working methods and progress in 2013 were reviewed and areas for improvement in 2014 identified.

## Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster

In 2013, the Global Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster, co-chaired by UNHCR and IOM, continued to support field operations in emergencies and situations of protracted internal displacement by deploying experts, developing tools and guidance, and helping to build the capacity of national authorities and civil society.

### *Providing operational support*

The Global CCCM Cluster offered strategic and operational guidance to field operations. A Rapid Response Team was established and deployed CCCM experts to all new emergencies in 2013. The Global CCCM Cluster's three-year plan, developed in 2012, was refined and aligned with field priorities at the cluster's 2013 retreat.

### *Building a response capacity*

In 2013, the Global CCCM Cluster organized 23 training events in support of critical operations, including those in the Syrian Situation countries as well as the CAR, the DRC and Myanmar, for the benefit of some 600 participants. There was a marked increase in the participation of national authorities. The existing CCCM training package was updated to reflect new developments and challenges.

The Global CCCM Cluster co-facilitated training sessions for two cohorts of the Co-Lead learning programme with the GPC and the Global Shelter Cluster. In addition, a self-paced online CCCM induction training programme for UNHCR and partner staff was launched in 2013.

### Setting and disseminating standards and policies

The Global CCCM Cluster reviewed several of its key tools to strengthen its preparedness and response capacity. The CCCM *Good Practices and Case Studies* booklet was finalized during the year, and will be disseminated in 2014. A study on IDPs living outside camps identified relevant and applicable CCCM approaches; and guidelines on cluster coordination, camp closure and evacuation following natural disasters were developed. A total of 2,000 copies of the updated Camp Management Toolkit were re-printed and disseminated to field operations.

A Global CCCM Cluster website was launched as part of a CCCM information management strategy that will be finalized in 2014.

### Organizational and managerial issues

The Global CCCM Cluster's annual retreat in Geneva in November 2013 brought together more than 100 participants, including government officials and staff of partner organizations, to share experiences and define priorities for 2014. A review of the cluster's multi-year strategy focused on ways to improve CCCM responses and apply them to displaced communities outside camps. ■

UNHCR-led clusters or cluster-like mechanisms in 2013			
Country	Protection	Emergency Shelter	CCCM
Afghanistan			
Central African Republic			
Chad			
Colombia			
Democratic Republic of the Congo <sup>1</sup>			
Ethiopia			
Guinea			
Mali			
Myanmar <sup>2</sup>			
Nepal			
Pacific <sup>3</sup>			
Pakistan			
Philippines			
Somalia			
Sudan <sup>4</sup>			
South Sudan			
Syria <sup>5</sup>			
Yemen			
Zimbabwe			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>

<sup>1</sup> CCCM cluster-like mechanism

<sup>2</sup> Protection cluster-like mechanism

<sup>3</sup> Protection cluster in Pacific is co-led by UNHCR and OHCHR

<sup>4</sup> Shelter cluster-like mechanism

<sup>5</sup> Protection cluster-like mechanism, shelter cluster-like mechanism, CCCM cluster-like mechanism

# Inter-agency mission distributes vital aid to 2,000 ethnic Kachin in northern Myanmar

*This article is an adapted version of a UNHCR news story*

1 MARCH 2013



UNHCR / A. KIRCHHOF

A UNHCR-supported camp for IDPs near Myitkyina, the capital of Kachin state in northern Myanmar

**YANGON, Myanmar, March 2013** | *The UN Refugee Agency said on Friday that an inter-agency visit to northern Myanmar's Kachin state has successfully delivered aid to hundreds of conflict-affected people.*

UNHCR staff took part in the February 17-21 mission to the Hpakant area of Kachin state after access was granted by the Myanmar Government. The area saw intensified fighting in September and December last year.

This was the first time since January 2012 that United Nations humanitarian teams have been able to reach internally displaced people (IDPs) there. Aside from UNHCR, staff from the World Food Programme, the UN Children's Fund, the Danish Refugee Council and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs also took part in the visit.

A 10-vehicle convoy brought relief items for 400 displaced families, equivalent to some

2,000 people. These included tarpaulins for shelter, blankets, mosquito nets, cooking sets, clothes and sanitary items. Over the coming weeks, UNHCR plans to return to Hpakant to distribute supplies for another 1,000 displaced families that have yet to receive any assistance.

In Hpakant, the team assessed living conditions, undertook needs and protection assessments and conducted profiling in 17 camps housing more than 6,000 IDPs.

Under the inter-agency response in Kachin state, UNHCR leads the protection sector and is cluster lead in shelter, non-food items and camp coordination and management. ○