RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROTECTION RISKS AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Protection from violence is the foundation of humanitarian action.

While often unacknowledged, **most humanitarian crises are—first and foremost—protection crises.** It is the prevalence of protection risks—violence, coercion, and deliberate deprivation—that drive humanitarian needs. Reducing these risks can have the effect of reducing wider humanitarian needs.

Given this fact, **protection risk analysis should be the foundation of larger humanitarian analysis and prioritization processes.** The collective operational effort to reduce those risks should always be the driving priority for *all sectors* of the humanitarian response.

Given the considerable reduction in available funds, on top of substantially growing needs, **we must ensure that interventions are *targeted* in such a way that scarce assistance has a dual impact**—reducing the risk of violence, coercion, and deliberate deprivation (as it is understood by affected people) while also reducing and addressing humanitarian needs.

Conflict sensitivity and initiatives to **"do-no-harm" are important but insufficient,** just as **protection specialist programs are necessary but insufficient.** Humanitarian actors across all sectors need to work toward the collective reduction of protection risks through a joint effort to identify and mitigate threats, and reduce vulnerability associated with priority threats.

PROTECTION RISKS AND HUMANITARIAN NEEDS:

1. Protection RISKS are very often drivers of humanitarian needs:

Protection risks (including violence, coercion, and deliberate deprivation) perpetrated against the civilian population, are a major source of humanitarian need in conflict and crisis settings, where these threats often—deliberately or inadvertently—result in a lack of access to food, shelter, health care, or other critical necessities.

PROTECTION RISKS that Create Humanitarian Needs	**HUMANITARIAN INPUTS** that Can Reduce Protection Risks *NOTE: These are indicative and not exhaustive*
Persistent sexual assault perpetrated by armed actors against civilians grazing livestock near barracks reduced access to safe pastures, thereby compromising food security, livelihoods, and access to other basic necessities.	**Threat Reduction (Address the perpetrator):** Advocate with Armed Actors to increase awareness of the impact of their actions, modify their behavior (e.g. cease sexual assault, cease or modify movement restrictions), and increase accountability within the chain of command. **Reduction of Vulnerability (Address individual and/or community characteristics that expose people to the given threat):** Targeted food assistance, targeted distribution of cooking fuel or alternative cooking methods, support to alternative livelihoods. **Increase Capacity (Strengthen systems, and structures—including informal local systems—that help people resist or rebound from the threat):** Support to local leaders to engage in risk reduction dialogue; support systems that enhance accountability for perpetrators of violence.
Harsh curfews and arbitrary movement restrictions imposed by armed actors blocked access to farmland, disrupting the growing, harvesting, and movement of crops, resulting in a collapse of local food markets and community-wide lack of access to adequate food.	

2. VULNERABILITY resulting from lack of access to basic necessities (humanitarian needs) exposes people to protection risks:

Lack of access to necessities—such as food, shelter, water, and health care—can make individuals and communities more susceptible to exploitation, compelling them to engage in measures that they would otherwise not in order to survive and ensure the survival of their children. In these cases, **vulnerability to the threats in question can be reduced through the targetted delivery of those necessities,** thereby reducing protection risks AND humanitarian needs in tandem.

VULNERABILITY TO PROTECTION RISK as a Result of Humanitarian Needs	**HUMANITARIAN INPUTS** to Reduce Protection Risks *NOTE: These are indicative and not exhaustive*
The risk of children being recruited into armed groups was persistent throughout the country, but most prevalent amongst children from families experiencing food insecurity (i.e. food insecurity increased vulnerability to the risk of forced recruitment).	Deliver food assistance to food insecure families in areas known to be targeted for forced recruitment; advocate with and/or encourage pressure on armed actors to cease recruitment of children; support access to livelihoods; etc.
An influx of displaced people into a particular geographic area of the country has resulted in dramatically inflated food and shelter costs, increasing food and shelter insecurity and causing affected communities to engage in survival sex and child marriage, thereby exposing people to an increased risk of human trafficking (i.e. lack of food and shelter security increases vulnerability to the risk of child marriage, sexual exploitation, and trafficking).	Prioritize delivery of food and shelter assistance to people in target geographic area to reduce market prices for food and shelter and reduce reliance on negative coping mechanisms (survival sex and child marriage); Increase access to education and livelihood opportunities; etc.

THE IDENTIFICATION OF PROTECTION RISKS AT THE OUTSET OF HUMANITARIAN NEEDS ANALYSIS ALLOWS THE SYSTEM TO:

- Effectively leverage risk analysis as a predictor of humanitarian need.
- Identify where the allocation of targetted humanitarian aid can best contribute to the reduction of vulnerability to protection threats and/or the reduction of the severity or prevalence of those threats. Design a collective operational approach that prioritizes those inputs.
- Identify how humanitarian advocacy with stakeholders and duty bearers could be used to reduce the level of risk (particularly threats) to reduce and mitigate humanitarian needs.

THE KEY COMPONENTS OF PROTECTION RISK:

- What **threats** affected people are facing or may face, and where these threats come from.
  - Who is the perpetrator of these threats and what are their motives or incentives?
  - What are their opportunities and capacities to continue to perpetrate that threat?
- Which people are or will be particularly **vulnerable** to or impacted by these threats and why?
  - What are the personal or community characteristics that expose them to the specific threat? (e.g. ethnicity, socio-economic status, political affiliation, gender, age, etc.)
- What **capacities** exist among affected people to resist and rebound from the given threat?
  - What are people doing themselves to prevent their exposure to violence, coercion, and deliberate deprivation?
  - What are the systems and structures that exist to shield people from the threat or help them to rebound?
  - What is the willingness and what are the capacities of duty bearers to prevent or mitigate the risk(s)?

SIMPLE FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING PROTECTION RISKS:

Risk	*In one bullet point, identify one protection risk (violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation) that is occurring in this crisis. (e.g., recruitment of child soldiers, sexual assault at checkpoints, etc.).*		
Population	*Describe the key characteristics of the population(s) at risk (e.g., a location and/or a community to focus the discussion).*		
Analysis	Threat (perpetrator) *Who is the threat? What are the drivers/motivations/resources of this threat that is creating the risk?*	Vulnerability *What makes the population at risk vulnerable to this threat?*	Capacity *What capacities does the population at risk have that help them overcome this threat?*
Mitigation	Reduce Threat *What can we do to reduce the threat? (3-5 bullets)*	Reduce Vulnerability *What can we do to reduce the vulnerability? (3-5 bullets)*	Increase Capacity *How do we increase the capacity of the population at risk? (3-5 bullets)*