

IASC News Update - February 2015

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Inter-Agency Standing Committee**News**

News and Highlights from the IASC Community

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Meeting with newly arrived refugees in Gbiti, Cameroon. Credit: OCHA/Ivo Brandau

LATEST NEWS

New ERC announced

On 9 March, [United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon announced the appointment](#) of Stephen O'Brien of the United Kingdom as Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Meanwhile, Valerie Amos has announced she will continue as ERC/USG until Friday, 29 May 2015. This will allow her to oversee the upcoming Kuwait Conference taking place on 31 March, and enable a smooth transition with her

successor..

New HC in Cameroon and new DHC in South Sudan

Following consultations with IASC partners, Najat Rochdi was designated as Humanitarian Coordinator for Cameroon for an initial period of 6 months as of 18 February. Sue Lautze was designated as the Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator for South Sudan commencing on 23 February.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- Changes to the Clusters architecture in Ukraine and for the Cross-Border Humanitarian Response from Turkey into Syria were approved.
- Preparations for the 88th Working Group Meeting in Rome are underway.



A displaced family in rural Damascus. Credit: WFP/Abeer Etefa

Revision of Ukraine's Cluster Architecture

In light of the deterioration of the Ukrainian humanitarian context, revisions to the 2015 Strategic Response Plan are underway. The humanitarian community estimates that 5 million people are in need of humanitarian aid. The revised plan will target 3.2 million people who are considered the most vulnerable and who are mainly living in the five most-affected regions in the eastern Ukraine and Crimea. Total number of IDP's is estimated at one million. In this context, the ERC, in consultation with IASC members, has approved changes to the Cluster's architecture: the Logistics Cluster was activated and the Food Security and Nutrition Cluster was split into the Food Security Cluster and the Nutrition Sub-Cluster, the latter having been absorbed by the Health Cluster.

IASC Cluster Activation for the Cross-border Humanitarian Response from Turkey into Syria

In addition to the already existing Logistics Cluster and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster, on the 9 February the ERC informed that the following clusters were activated to coordinate the cross-border humanitarian response from Turkey into Syria: Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM), Education, Food Security and Livelihoods, Health, Nutrition, Protection (including the Child Protection and Gender Based Violence Sub-Clusters), Shelter/Non-Food Items and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

88th Working Group Meeting

The 88th Working Group meeting is taking place on 10 and 11 March in Rome. Participants from the IASC community will meet with experts in a variety of fields to discuss policy issues pertaining to counter-terrorism measures and their effect on humanitarian operations, humanitarian financing, the data revolution, the World Humanitarian Summit as well as other key policy issues for the humanitarian sector.

IASC EVENTS IN FEBRUARY

IASC Events are organized on an ad hoc basis by the IASC secretariat in Geneva and New York

Host State Counter Terrorism Legislation and Humanitarian Action and Foreign Fighters under International Law

25 February, Geneva: The IASC, together with the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, hosted an event for the launch of two papers developed by the Geneva Academy. The research paper on "[Host State Counterterrorism Legislation and Humanitarian Action](#)", presented by Marina Mattiolo, complemented the OCHA and NRC commissioned study of 2013 on the impact of donor counter-terrorism measures on principled humanitarian action. An in depth analysis is provided on existing legislation and measures adopted by a sample of host states, aimed at determining the potential limitations that such measures impose on interaction for humanitarian activities with groups designed as "terrorist groups". Host states imposing such measures may jeopardize the existence of small NGOs with threats of criminal prosecution and heavy restrictions on their daily work. Finally, the research pointed out some key recommendations to Host States and humanitarian organizations, highlighting the need to ensure that counter terrorism legislation provides for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection to populations.

Sandra Krähenmann presented the research paper on "[Foreign Fighters under International Law](#)" which elaborates on the status and regulation of foreign fighters under international law, particularly focusing on the interrelationship between the legal regimes governing armed conflicts and terrorism. The study looks into main trends of international and national measures applied to this phenomenon as well as potential implications for international organizations and NGOs, particularly concerning freedom of movement.

Review of the 2014 ECOSOC

Upcoming Events

10-11 March, Rome: IASC Working Group Meeting

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Other developments of interest in February in the humanitarian field include the following:

Release of the new tool [Violence Against Women Self-Assessment Tool](#) by the International Center for Research on Women.

Launch of the [Humanitarian Strategic Response Plan for the Sahel](#) on February 12th in New York.

The [Operational Guidelines for Cash-based Interventions in Displacement Settings](#) will support UNHCR and partner staff to determine if and when cash-based interventions are appropriate to meet the needs of refugees.

Launch of the [Humanitarian Connectivity Charter](#) at the Mobile World Congress in Barcelona that aims at ensuring that mobile network operators have a common operation framework to respond to people's needs quickly and efficiently.

Humanitarian Affairs Segment and Update on the Preparations for the 2015 Segment

10 February, New York: Similar to the event hosted in Geneva in January, the IASC hosted a follow up briefing in New York on the preparations for the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS). For the first time, ECOSOC has prepared a [summary document of the 2014 Humanitarian Affairs Segment](#), which captures some of the discussions held during the various side events. OCHA's policy section provided an overview of the plans for the 2015 HAS which will entail approximately 15 side events focussing on a variety of issues such as Disaster Risk Reduction, Post 2015 Development Agenda, CERF/Super CERF discussions, WHS, Habitat III, Violence against humanitarians, omnibus resolution and the inclusion of gender, Counter-terrorism and protection. The next briefing on HAS will occur in March.

Humanitarian Financing Task Team (HFTT): In implementing the "transparency in aid flows" objective of its work plan, the HFTT invited the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) to present its proposal for the UN and other aid agencies to adopt the Integrated Financial Accountability Framework (IFAF). INTOSAI had proposed the adoption of IFAF in a letter to the UN Secretary-General in February 2014. The Under-Secretary-General for Management, Yukio Takasu, then requested OCHA to consult the IASC. After considering the proposal, the HFTT members and other UN, IOM and NGO financial and administration experts agreed to recommend to the SG that IFAF not be adopted. Some of the reasons included:

- IFAF would be challenging and costly to implement;
- Its benefits were difficult to quantify; and
- Alternatives to improve transparency and accountability are available, such as the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) and the International Aid Transparency

Reference Group Meeting Humanitarian Challenges in Urban Areas (RG MHCUA): On 19 February the Reference Group updated on the ["Indicator Development for Surveillance of Urban Emergencies \(IDSUE\)"](#) project which aims to predict and avert urban food security crises. The initiative has the objective to (1) determine indicators, (2) develop systems, and (3) identify thresholds and triggers for action when a situation has gone from chronic poverty to an acute crisis. The findings from the household studies undertaken in slums in Nairobi and Kisumu suggest that the deteriorating situation of those living in the lowest income quintile, particularly female headed households, does not fit into existing humanitarian frameworks or national development and policy instruments. It is recommended that national actors become more involved in identifying the most vulnerable groups and in strengthening urban resilience. It is envisaged to replicate this project in Addis Ababa and Mogadishu.

Task Team on Preparedness and Resilience (TTPR): On 17 February, the Task Team provided an overview of the

Initiative (IATI).

Based on the advice of the IASC HFTT and ERC Valeria Amos, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon decided that the UN and its implementing partners should not adopt IFAF, and the USG for Management subsequently informed INTOSAI of the SG's decision.

Emergency Response Preparedness (ERP) guidance and regional implementation of inter-agency training packages aiming at developing a feedback tool. Regional training will take place in various locations by end of March/beginning of April. Potential countries for field testing are Afghanistan, Burundi, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria.

For more information or to join the groups, please visit the IASC Subsidiary Bodies [webpage](#).

Upcoming Meetings:

9 March: Reference Group on Gender in Humanitarian Action

12 March: Task Team on the Protection Priority

18 March: Task Team on Humanitarian Financing

We welcome your feedback and input to iasccorrespondence@un.org.



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The IASC was established under General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (1991) as the primary inter-agency coordination mechanism for humanitarian action in complex and major emergencies. It is a unique forum which brings together UN operational agencies and other humanitarian organizations and is supported by the IASC secretariat. Email: iasccorrespondence@un.org

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