

### News and Highlights from the IASC Community

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We welcome your feedback and input to [iasccorrespondence@un.org](mailto:iasccorrespondence@un.org).



A young man carries a child next to the registration centre for Burundian refugees in Bugesera.

*Credit: Ignatius Ssuuna/IRIN*

## LATEST NEWS

### Myanmar Floods

On 31 July, President Thein Sein declared Rakhine State, Chin State, Sagaing Region and Magway Region as natural disaster zones. According to the Government, over 200,000 people have been affected by flash floods and landslides across [Sagaing, Kachin, Shan, Mandalay, Chin, Rakhine, Kayin, Mon, Bago, Magway, Ayeeyarwady and Yangon](#). Immediate needs include food, shelter, water and sanitation and emergency healthcare. Local authorities, the Union Government, the military, the Myanmar Red Cross Society and local civil society organizations are carrying out rescue operations and providing food, water, blankets, medical and other basic necessities with support from the UN and international organizations. Humanitarian partners are preparing a request to the Central Emergency Response Fund to jump-start life-saving and time-critical activities. For more information please refer to the [OCHA Flash Update for Myanmar](#).

### Burundi Election Crisis

Over [179,000 Burundians](#) have fled the violence and unrest since April 2015. The European Commission is releasing [additional funding of EUR4.5 million](#) in humanitarian assistance to help refugees. African Union human rights observers and military experts have been deployed to prevent an escalation of violence and facilitate a peaceful resolution of the crisis. For more information please refer to updates [here](#).

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- [Yemen's "Descent into Catastrophe"](#)
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- [World Humanitarian Summit](#)
- [Updates from the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster \(ETC\)](#)
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Sana'a - school hosting some 200 displaced people, mostly from Saada governorate.

*Credit: Charlotte Cans/OCHA*

## Yemen's "Descent into Catastrophe"

USG for Humanitarian Affairs and ERC, Stephen O'Brien, briefed the Security Council on efforts by "the UN and with partners to find ways of alleviating the suffering and the descent into catastrophe" and called for a humanitarian pause in his [statement to the Security Council on 28 July](#). "With 80 per cent of the population of about 26 million people in need of some kind of humanitarian assistance and more that 1,895 civilians killed by fighting since March, the impact of this conflict on civilians is indeed catastrophic".

Since the declaration of the IASC system-wide L3 response for a period of six months, humanitarian organizations are making every effort to scale up operational presence despite access and funding challenges. As of 2 August, only 18 per cent of [the Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan](#) was funded, with US\$282 million contributed against the required \$1.6 billion. For more information please refer to updates on Yemen [here](#).

## Food Insecurity in the Syria Regional Crisis

According to the WFP – REACH/ACTED 2015 Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise (CFSME), refugees have experienced a dramatic increase in vulnerability and food insecurity over the past several months, with 85 percent of households assessed as either food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity. With refugees having exhausted coping strategies, 86 per cent are reported to live below the poverty line. Increasingly, households are resorting to sending family members (including children) to work in exploitative or high-risk conditions to increase available resources for buying food.

The [CFSME report](#) findings are complemented by the recently-undertaken joint FAO/WFP Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission in Syria (11-31 May 2015) which collected information on agriculture; food, livelihoods and agricultural needs; local food market conditions; and food security among households. Despite a good seasonal rainfall in 2014/2015, the wheat production is estimated at 2.445 million tonnes, 40 percent lower than pre-conflict levels. Crop production has been adversely affected by the continuing crisis, scarcity and high prices of agricultural inputs and fuel, shortages and high cost of farm labour, among others. The estimated harvested wheat area is the smallest since the 1960s.

## World Humanitarian Summit

The following key themes have been emerging from the consultations: ensuring affected people, particularly women, have a stronger voice and greater role in humanitarian action; addressing violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and finding new ways to protect and assist people in conflict; developing new approaches for managing recurrent and protracted crises; global action to close the funding gap; and localizing preparedness and response.

The synthesis report, to be circulated in late September 2015, will serve as the primary input document to the Global Consultation scheduled in Geneva on 14-16 October. The Global Consultation will conclude the consultative process and provide an opportunity to discuss the key elements presented in the synthesis report with diverse stakeholders. The outcomes of the Global Consultation will help shape the UN Secretary-General's report to be published in December 2015. Significant advocacy and outreach will be done with different stakeholders to build support for change and encourage the highest level of participation at the Summit. A Chair's summary will be produced after the Summit highlighting key points, bold commitments, and a plan for the future humanitarian agenda.

The IASC has been contributing to the WHS by submitting relevant documents for consideration in the process. All documents can be found on the [IASC website](#). Keep an eye on this page for future announcements and briefings on WHS relevant to the IASC.

## Updates from the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)

### ***ETC launches "ETC2020" - a new strategy for humanitarian connections***

The new [ETC2020 strategy](#), adopted by ETC membership in April 2015, aims to create a communications environment for quick, effective and accountable humanitarian action. The ambitious new strategy will see a fundamental shift in the way the ETC works; from traditionally providing emergency communications services to the humanitarian community, to serving a wider range of responders, including governments and affected populations. It seeks to enable a seamless and resilient communications experience, grounded in humanitarian principles, in emergency situations.

### ***New ETC website goes live***

The new ETC website – [www.ETCcluster.org](#) - aims to provide operational support for ICT responders in emergencies; information about the ETC, its services, activities and impact; and a channel for Global ETC Coordination as the network strives towards [ETC2020](#). New functionalities, including the Discussion Forum, allow users to more easily interact with the site and the community. The website is divided into seven key areas: [Emergencies](#), [Countries](#), [Services](#), [Projects](#), [Training](#), [Discussion Forum](#) and [About ETC](#), encouraging information-sharing and collaboration.

## Financing for Development Conference in Addis Ababa (13-16 July 2015)

The [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#) was formally adopted in the closing plenary of the Third International Conference of Financing for Development on 16 July 2015. The Agenda lays the foundations for a strong political commitment to create an enabling environment for financing the sustainable development goals. The main elements of the document include: (1) a new social compact to provide social protection and essential public services for all; (2) scaling up efforts to end hunger and malnutrition by revitalising the agricultural sector, promoting rural development and ensuring food security; (3) a global infrastructure forum to bridge the infrastructure gap by investing in sustainable and resilient infrastructure; (4) an 'LDC package' to support the poorest countries, with developed countries being encouraged to increase their ODA target to the world's poorest nations to 0.2 per cent of their national income; (5) a Technology Facilitation Mechanism to help facilitate the development, transfer and dissemination of technologies relevant for achieving the SDGs on mutually agreed terms; (6) an enhanced international tax cooperation to assist in raising resources domestically; and (7) mainstreaming women's empowerment into development financing.

## Trapped in Conflict: Evaluating Scenarios to Assist At-Risk Civilians

### *An International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and InterAction Roundtable*

A roundtable brought together U.S. policymakers, humanitarian actors, and other stakeholders on 24 April 2015 to discuss options for assisting civilians trapped in the midst of hostilities, cut off from essential aid, or facing imminent or ongoing risk of targeted attacks, with a view to enrich ongoing policy discussions in the U.S. and in international forums. In these circumstances, various forms of "intervention" – including evacuations, ceasefires, safe havens, buffer zones, and no-fly zones – are contemplated. The purpose of the roundtable was not to endorse any one option over another, but to establish some key considerations that should underpin decision-making when policymakers contemplate intervention options. For more details on the round table and the main conclusions, please refer to the [outcome report](#).

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## IASC EVENTS

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

### ***Geneva, 10 July + New York, 21 July 2015: Briefing on the Iraq Operational Peer Review (OPR)***

The Iraq OPR team presented the course correctors suggested in the [OPR report](#). Top amongst these is the immediate scale-up of funding to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HCT), building on the strong leadership, direction, efficiency, effectiveness and prioritization in the new Humanitarian Response Plan.

At the country level it is recommended to move the HCT and the humanitarian centre of gravity back to Baghdad from Erbil; to increase the humanitarian response coverage and presence by better engaging national NGOs and adapting the security management system to perform a more enabling role in accessing affected people; to bring Accountability to Affected Populations and Protection to the centre of the humanitarian response; to implement a clear accountable delivery-focused coordination architecture; and to develop an inter-agency communication and advocacy strategy.

At the global level, the Iraq operation needs to be separated from the Syria context to allow focus on its own uniqueness and a group of "Humanitarian Friends of Iraq" should be convened to support the response and global communication. Developing multi-purpose cash-based programming should be supported in contributing to meet this global challenge. To improve efficiency and effectiveness, staffing continuity needs to be improved. Last but not least, global support is requested to ensure UNAMI is able to better balance support for its humanitarian and political responsibilities.

### ***Geneva, 16 July + New York, 21 July 2015: Briefing on the Syria Operational Peer Review (OPR)***

In its [report](#), the Syria OPR team proposed the following course correctors. To improve protection, the Human Rights Up Front initiative needs to be applied more visibly to speak out on and prevent human rights violations and a Whole-of-Syria Protection Strategy needs to be finalized. To improve accountability to affected populations their needs should be understood collectively. Improve access to deliver assistance to affected people through better security analysis; by addressing bureaucratic impediments; and by expanding partnerships with and building capacities of Syrian

NGOs.

To increase resilience of the affected populations and reduce the risk of dependency on humanitarian aid, by adapting programmes and funding to the different circumstances of people across Syria. Contingency plans for Syria need to be finalized in order to ensure the humanitarian community is well prepared to respond to violent outbreaks in specific areas. The role of Syria focal points needs to be clarified to enhance coordination across all hubs. Data and information-sharing needs to be improved within clusters and between hubs for consolidated analysis and strategic decision-making. In Syria, sub-national hubs (area HCTs) should be established for leading and coordinating humanitarian plans and response. The accountability arrangements in relation to cross-border operations from Jordan should be clarified; the Humanitarian Liaison Group (HLG) in Turkey needs to strengthen its role in providing strategic guidance to cross-border actors based in Turkey. Some of the suggested actions mentioned in the OPR have already been acted upon by the humanitarian leadership.

Course correctors at the global level include strengthening links between the humanitarian response in Syria and the refugee response in the region, and de-politicizing the humanitarian response to the Syria crises by ensuring that humanitarian principles and respect for IHL underpin humanitarian action.

#### **New York, 22 July 2015: Briefing to the IASC on the Developments of the WHS**

The WHS Secretariat provided the IASC with a briefing on the developments of the WHS. Please see "[Recent Developments](#)" for more information.

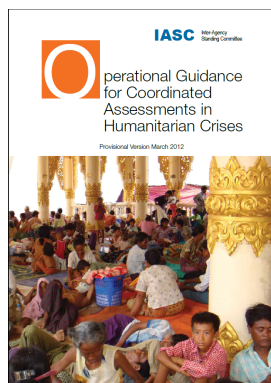
#### **Geneva, 29 July 2015: Findings of the WFP-REACH 2015 Comprehensive Food Security Monitoring Exercise (CFSME)**

Mr. Rasmus Egendal, WFP's Director for Inter-Agency Affairs for the Syria regional crisis, and Mr. Vincent Annoni, Global REACH Coordinator, provided a comprehensive overview of the prevailing food security situation among Syrian refugees in Jordan. See "[Recent Developments](#)" for more details on the food security situation in the Syria regional crisis.

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## **FEATURED PRODUCT**

### **Operational Guidance for Coordinated Assessments in Humanitarian Crises**



Along with emergency preparedness, the timeliness, accuracy and credibility of assessments help determine an effective humanitarian response. The [Operational Guidance](#) was developed by the IASC Needs Assessment Task Force (NATF) to enhance preparedness and provide guidance on how to coordinate assessments in the early phases of large-scale quick-onset natural disasters. The document aims to help humanitarian actors ensure timely, quality assessments and joint needs analysis for a solid evidence base to inform planning and response. Highlighted within the Opera-

## **OTHER DEVELOPMENTS**

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

### **Disaster Ready launch of Open Badge**

[DisasterReady.org](#) has partnered with [Discendum](#), a Finnish company specializing in eLearning environments and Open Badges, to issue badges for learning packs completed on DisasterReady. [Open Badge Passport](#) (OBP) is a free, easy-to-use service that can be used to manage DisasterReady badges as well as badges from other humanitarian learning providers, including UNICEF, MSF and Oxfam. For more information please click [here](#).

### **Study of Partner Capacity Assessments of Humanitarian NGOs**

ICVA and OCHA released a [study on Partner Capacity Assessments of Humanitarian NGOs](#). The study found that partner capacity assessments have become more demanding in recent years, leading to lengthy processes requiring a substantial investment of time and resources.

### **World Humanitarian Day – 19 August**

[World Humanitarian Day](#) falls on 19 August, the day in 2003 when 22 aid workers were killed in a bombing at the UN headquarters in Baghdad. It is a day to commemorate all people who have lost their lives in humanitarian service and to celebrate the spirit that inspires humanitarian work around the world. Events are planned in many locations including New York, Milan, Geneva and Istanbul.

This year's digital campaign – [#ShareHumanity](#) –

tional Guidance is the Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA), revised July 2015, which is the joint assessment approach to be undertaken during the first two weeks of a sudden-onset natural disaster. In protracted crises, or subsequent to a MIRA, in-depth harmonized sectoral assessments will support the development of the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), which presents a severity ranking and the joint needs analysis undertaken by a country team.

aims to disrupt social media feeds for 24-hours in an innovative way. Celebrities and influential figures with large social media followings have agreed to lend their social media feeds to share humanitarian stories that highlight people's resilience and strength. In this manner, stories from Syria, Afghanistan, Nepal, Nigeria, South Sudan and DRC will be shared with over 100 million people globally.

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## IASC PRIORITIES

### Recent Developments

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

#### Humanitarian Financing

The IASC [Humanitarian Financing Task Team](#) is making progress on its research into the top donors' conditions for aid agencies. UN agencies and NGOs have provided inputs, which are currently being analyzed. The top donor conditions include: financial restrictions, earmarking of funds, stringent reporting requirements, risk-management and due diligence measures, counter-terrorism clauses, limited predictability, disclosure and transparency requirements, value for money, and measures against corruption, fraud, and misuse of funds. The Task Team has begun a dialogue with members of the [Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative](#) on these conditions. The Task Team is also exploring the possibilities of a global preparedness fund.

#### Protection

Following the launch of the [Independent Whole-of-System Review of Protection in the Context of Humanitarian Action](#) in June, the [Global Protection Cluster Task Team](#) is discussing the recommendations of the review and will present a way forward to the IASC Working Group in October.

#### Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action

The [Task Team](#) is finalizing a review of the impact of integration policy and practice on humanitarian operations, as requested by IASC Principals in December 2014. It will submit the final review together with a 'response matrix' to the Working Group in September. NRC, InterAction, OCHA, Handicap International, WFP, and the IASC Secretariat agreed to develop the Counter-terrorism Advocacy Strategy as requested by Principals at their meeting in Nairobi. People who are interested in this effort should contact Kate McGrane at NRC: [kate.mcgrane@nrc.no](mailto:kate.mcgrane@nrc.no).

#### Gender in Humanitarian Action

UN Women has launched the results of a study on [the Effect of Gender Equality Programming \(GEP\) on Humanitarian Outcomes](#). The study was commissioned by UN Women on behalf of the [IASC Gender Reference Group](#) and co-funded by the Canadian Government with the aim to provide empirical evidence demonstrating the value of gender equality programming. A unique new "Gender Intensity Measure" was used to analyse the evidence and assess the degree to which gender equality and women's empowerment was perceived to have been integrated into humanitarian programmes – by hearing from women beneficiaries themselves. According to the report, improved gender equality programming in humanitarian settings led not only to improved quality of life for all community members, but also to greater access to services, better identification of the needs of beneficiaries, and heightened empowerment and aspirations among young women.

The Gender Reference Group has produced a [Gender Alert for the unfolding crisis in Yemen](#). The Gender Alert provides a brief gender analysis of the humanitarian situation among the crisis affected population and offers pragmatic recommendations for the integration of gender equality and women's empowerment into the coordination, planning and implementation of the humanitarian response.

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## UPCOMING IASC MEETINGS & EVENTS

*Dates are subject to changes, please consult the [IASC](#)*

### Other Events

[website](#).

**10 August 2015:** TT AAP/PSEA Meeting

**18 August 2015:** HFTT Meeting

**21 August 2015:** Ad Hoc Principal's Meeting: UN DSS  
Priorities in Relation to Humanitarian Operations

**25 August 2015:** TT PHA Meeting

**26 August 2015:** Ad Hoc Principal's Meeting: Review of L3  
system-wide activation in South Sudan, Iraq and Syria

**12-13 October 2015:** 89th Working Group Meeting: "Review  
of the IASC Priorities and Migration"

**11 December 2015:** IASC Principal's Meeting

**Online, 4 August**

**2015:** [USG/ERC Stephen O'Brien  
briefing and Q&A on World  
Humanitarian Summit](#)

**Online, 6 August 2015:** [World  
Humanitarian Summit – Live  
Online Consultation on Gender-  
Based Violence in Humanitarian  
Crises](#)

**Global, 19 August 2015:** [World  
Humanitarian Day](#)



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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](mailto:iasccorrespondence@un.org)

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