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IASC News Update - November 2014

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News and Highlights from the IASC community

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Welcome to the third issue of IASC News. We welcome your feedback and contributions to iasccorrespondence@un.org.



Chadian returnees and CAR refugees at the transit sites in Gore and Doba, southern Chad. Credit: OCHA/Ivo Brandau

LATEST NEWS

ERC Announces Her Departure

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos, has announced her departure from OCHA and the United Nations at the end of March 2015. As the longest serving ERC, her term in office has seen a period of raising humanitarian needs due to complex emergencies and natural disasters, including major flooding in Pakistan, famine in Somalia, Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and conflict in South Sudan, Syria, Iraq and the Central African Republic. Her period of office has also seen considerable changes to make the humanitarian system more effective, in speeding up response times, improving coordination and reducing duplication.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The ERC chaired an ad hoc IASC Principals Meeting on South Sudan, Iraq and the Central African Republic (CAR) as well as a Principals Steering Group Meeting on the IASC Review. Some of the highlights from these meetings include:



ERC, Valerie Amos in the Philippines

Principals ad hoc Meeting on South Sudan, Iraq, CAR and the Ebola Response

5 November: Significant internal displacement continue in response to the conflict and on-going insecurity in the Central African Republic (CAR), South Sudan and Iraq. Recent events in Bangui and recurrent surges in violence have exacerbated the crisis in the CAR, whilst the humanitarian situation in Iraq continues to deteriorate with a continued lack of access in the Central Region and disputed areas and the onset of winter. The unstable political situation, along with an anticipated increase in food instability in the upcoming dry season, requires more to be done to ramp up the humanitarian response to meet the growing needs in South Sudan. Based on the analysis presented by the HCTs and the Emergency Directors, the IASC Principals extended the L3 Emergency activation in the CAR, Iraq and South Sudan for six months. TL3 in the CAR will be reviewed after 3 months.

The meeting also included a briefing by Senior UN System Coordinator for Ebola, David Nabarro, on the Ebola response. Whilst the response is picking up and the rate of increase of new cases is slowing down (mostly due to change of behaviours), continued focussed attention is needed given high mortality rates, wide geographic distribution and on-going intensive transmission. Continued attention also needs to be placed on ensuring policies and preparedness measures are in place in all countries at risk.

Principals Steering Group Meeting on the IASC Review

18 November: The IASC Review was commissioned by the Principals Steering Group (PSG) to enable the ERC and the Principals to review the purpose of the IASC, current working practices, the impact of its policy work and decisions and the membership of the IASC. Sara Pantuliano, ODI/HPG Team Leader, presented the initial findings and analysis and three suggested options to the PSG. Based on interviews with approximately 50 people, the findings reflect the views of a wide range of interlocutors, including IASC Principals, Working Group and Emergency Directors Group members, Humanitarian Coordinators, NGO representatives, including from the global south, regional organisations and the private sector. The final report will be discussed by the IASC Principals Meeting on 9 December.

IASC EVENTS IN GENEVA IN JULY

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

Training on the Sphere Handbook

26 November, Geneva: A special training session was held on the Sphere Handbook following the

Upcoming Events

3 December: Geneva IASC Event - Update on the Humanitarian Situation in South Sudan, 08:30-09.30, Room MBT-04, UNHCR

4 December: New York

development of new training materials for humanitarian practitioners. The training covered the basic elements of the Humanitarian Charter and how to draw from it when designing and implementing responses in the field.

[Read more on Sphere.](#)

Update on the Humanitarian Situation in the Ukraine

18 November, Geneva: Marcel Vaessen, Head of OCHA Regional Office for Central Asia, gave a briefing on the humanitarian situation in the Ukraine. Humanitarian access and a lack of capacity, both at the international as well as the local level, remains a challenge. It is believed that the number of IDPs is vastly under-reported; winterisation is a priority; and indiscriminate shelling, detentions, mistreatment, and disappearances continue to take place. Emphasis was placed on the effect that the delay in signing the [Law on the Rights and Freedoms of Internally Displaced People](#) is having on the situation on the ground. [Read more about the situation in the Ukraine.](#)

Update on the Humanitarian Situation in Colombia

17 November, Geneva: Gerard Gomez, Head of Office for OCHA in Colombia, discussed the humanitarian situation in Colombia. Whilst peace negotiation are underway between the Government and the FARC, other rebel groups continue to contribute to humanitarian challenges, including displacement and a lack of access. As a result, humanitarian concern is likely to continue even if an agreement is reached. The need for greater collaboration between humanitarian and development actors to create sustainable solutions was emphasized. [Read the latest bulletin on Colombia.](#)

Communicating with Communities (CwC)

14 November, New York: This event, which was also held in Geneva in October, shared the findings in a report on ["Understanding the Information and Communication Needs Among IDPs in Northern Iraq"](#), and highlighted the importance of communication and information sharing in a humanitarian response. The need to mainstream CwC in all humanitarian responses and to make use of appropriate tools of communication, including new technology was stressed during the event.

Briefing on the GA Intergovernmental Process Related to the Omnibus Resolution

IASC Event - Lessons from Somalia famine 2011, 10:30-12:00, Conference Room 8

PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Common Framework for Preparedness



Photo by: Cpl Ariane Montambeault

The Common Framework for Preparedness supports the development of preparedness capacity in a more coherent manner using a systematic country level approach that collectively assesses capacity and need, uses this assessment to jointly develop programmes and plans, and coherently implements these programmes and plans to strengthen preparedness.



Floods in Hanoi, Vietnam, 2008.

Credit: Tung X Ngo/IRIN

12 November, New York: Recognizing the multitude of humanitarian crises that have occurred worldwide in recent years, the General Assembly is considering a number of Resolutions. Yasin Samatar, Deputy Chief, Intergovernmental Policy Section, OCHA, gave a briefing on the fourth reading of the Draft Resolution on the Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance of the United Nations in which matters such as durable solutions for IDPs; timeliness; protection of civilians; language on access; bridging relief and development; resource gap; and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel were discussed.

The Power of Business in Emergencies

5 November, Geneva: The private sector has long been a major contributor to humanitarian action and in recent years the humanitarian community has introduced new forms of private sector engagement. Helena Fraser, OCHA Private Sector Section gave a presentation on the growing role of businesses in aid and the wide-ranging benefits. A study commissioned by OCHA in collaboration with other partners examined the current and potential role of the private sector in responding to crisis situations, and highlights the incentives as well as the barriers to forming sustainable partnerships. Read the [full report](#) or the [summary](#).

IASC SUBSIDIARY BODIES

Read about some of the achievements of the Task Teams in 2014:

- [Accountability to Affected Populations, including Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#) (AAP/PSEA)
- [Humanitarian Financing](#) (HFTT)
- [Preparedness and Resilience](#) (TTPR)
- [Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action](#) (RPHA)
- [Protection Priority: Global Protection Cluster](#) (GPC)

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

Upcoming TT and RG Meetings:

3 December: Gender and Humanitarian Action Reference Group meeting (TBC)

17 December: Humanitarian Financing Task Team meeting (TBC)

30 December: Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action Task Team meeting (TBC)





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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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