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## IASC Results Group 3 – Collective Advocacy

2 February 2021

Published on the [IASC website](#)

### Summary Record

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IASC Results Group 3 on Collective Advocacy met on 2 February 2021 to discuss (i) Counterterrorism update, Ansarallah designation in Yemen, and briefing on solutions paper; (ii) Climate change sub-group update, i.e. Climate Adaptation Summit outcomes, and update on charter consultations; (iii) Integration of protection in RG3 workstreams; (iv) local actor inclusion in RG3.

#### Action points

1. **RG3 members to share the trello link with digital teams.**  
<https://trello.com/b/VYV9mYnt/humanitarian-climate-board> and to share the contact details of the digital/coms focal point with Kirsten Mildren – [mildren@un.org](mailto:mildren@un.org). The idea would be to discuss the option of a humanitarian hashtag, among other initiatives. **[ACTIONED]**
2. **COTER co-chair sub-group co-chairs to consider an ‘emergency preparedness mechanism’ to enable rapid information-sharing on emerging issues via a Signal group among the COTER group.**
3. **RG3 members to encourage their organizations to engage on the Climate and Environment Charter** (draft available [here](#)) **[CONTINUOUS]**
4. **RG3 member to complete upcoming survey initiated by UNHCR to refine focus of elevating protection across IASC structures.** **[ACTIONED]**
5. **RG3 co-Chairs to explore inclusion in RG3 of national/local actors** **[ACTIONED]**
6. **RG3 co-Chairs to place the non-state armed actor engagement on the RG3 agenda in March.** **[ACTIONED]**

#### Counterterrorism update, Ansarallah designation in Yemen, and briefing on solutions paper – RG3 COTER sub-group co-chairs

##### *Ansarallah listing*

- OCHA as RG3 COTER co-chair explained that the outgoing US administration in early January decided to list Ansarallah, also known as the Houthis, in Yemen as a foreign terrorist organization in US legislation – a decision which led to a number of restrictions for humanitarian organizations, as well as private companies operating in Yemen. The announcement was followed by a number of coordinated messages, including during the Security Council Briefing by the [ERC](#) and the [WFP Principal](#).
- For the first time, the ERC had called for a **reversal of the listing**, because of the impact on food imports and humanitarian risks, although humanitarian actors do not usually comment on political decisions. While licensing may work in some contexts, it was deemed to be an insufficient means in the Yemen context. The results of high-level advocacy efforts were currently pending, although the new US administration has adopted broad licenses. Overall, humanitarian factors did not currently dominate the discussion.

- The COTER co-chairs (OCHA, InterAction, and Save the Children) noted that in terms of **lessons learned**, the RG3 was not best placed for fast-paced advocacy, because of the composition of the group (the Yemen messaging was mostly prepared by people working on Yemen rather than policy experts); the high-level attention where Principals could not wait for technical experts to propose a consolidated position; and the lack of technical means, e.g. a Signal group to enable rapid information-sharing among the COTER sub-group (also in anticipation of Al Shabaab listing attempts in the near future – a point on which World Vision concurred). Establishing a signal group among the RG3 COTER subgroup could be envisaged for early warning and anticipatory action.
- The **added value of RG3**, however, was to i) have an established channel of communication across different types of organizations and different levels of an organization; ii) having been engaged on the preparatory work in terms of preventative advocacy, which facilitated the formulation of a specific ask – a reversal of the listing; iii) the dual track of public and private advocacy; and iv) shared understanding that counterterrorism (CT) measures adopted by a single state are not solely a US NGO concern but have a cascading impact for EU and other funding, as well as other countries.

#### *Solutions paper*

- Save the Children as COTER co-chair underscored that the ‘solutions’ paper shared with the RG3 ahead of the meeting aimed at identifying advocacy options to mitigate the negative impact of CT sanctions and measures in line with the IASC Principals’ request further to their [December 2019 meeting](#). In a second stage, a workplan could be developed to operationalize these advocacy options.
- In terms of the scope of the document, the advocacy options primarily focused on the NY level while some options were relevant for capital and EU levels as well. The structure of the report followed a [2006 report by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues Sanctions](#) (design, implementation, evaluation). Each advocacy option was followed by a pro and con, and for some options specific formulations are suggested. The catalogue of options encompassed a ‘gold standard’ option of a standard humanitarian exemption issued by a Security Council (SC) Chapter VII resolution.
- In response to IFRC’s query about the consultation process with SC members, the COTER co-chairs noted that there was an informal understanding about the position of SC members regarding each of the proposed advocacy options, although the paper to date had not been shared beyond the RG3 and COTER group. Accordingly, various SC members had expressed preference for considering humanitarian exemptions on a case-by-case basis, in lieu of a standard humanitarian exemption. However, it was still deemed important to state the aspirational option(s).

#### **Climate change sub-group update, i.e. Climate Adaptation Summit outcomes, and update on charter consultations**

- OCHA as climate change co-chair underscored that the biggest win in the climate world was US President Biden’s announcement to rejoin the Paris Agreement in February. The UN SG also highlighted the importance of adaptation towards the end of last year, by noting that the ‘race to resilience’ was as critical as the ‘race to 0’. To this end, the RG3 advocacy will aim to boost the adaptation messaging approaching COP26 in November 2021. Currently, the group’s challenge was to determine which of

the multiple summits (e.g. those announced by the US and UK, Food security and food systems summit in Sep. 21), and events (e.g. Earth Day) to engage in.

- OCHA raised awareness of **RG3's trello link**, which aimed at organizing content, including the climate emergency group's and its individual members' outputs <https://trello.com/b/VYV9mYnt/humanitarian-climate-board>.
- The **climate emergency common narrative** – an output of the RG3 workplan – was about to be submitted to the OPAG for endorsement.
- **The World Humanitarian Day** campaign on 19 August will focus on climate.
- **The Humanitarian Network Partnership Week from 19 April through 7 May** also included one strand on climate crisis and one on anticipatory action.

#### *Climate Adaptation Summit*

- At the **Climate Adaptation Summit** on 25 January 2021 hosted by the Netherlands, the [UN SG in his speech](#) had called for '50 per cent of the total share of climate finance provided by all developed countries and multilateral development banks to be allocated to adaptation and resilience in developing countries'. IFRC as climate emergency co-Chair added that a significant participation of heads of states in the opening session helped to underscore the importance of adaptation.
- [Initiatives launched at the CAS](#) included the [race to resilience](#), led by the climate champions from the UK and Chile leading up to COP26; and the [principles on locally led adaptation](#) led by the World Resources Institute, and which tallied with the Grand Bargain commitment related to localization. An anchoring event around disaster risk management highlighted the linkages between disasters and climate change, and a focus on action down the track, instead of the need for 'action now', including early/ anticipatory action.
- The RG3 climate group produced and submitted a [2-min video as pre-recorded side event](#), to which 12 IASC organizations signed on. The video had performed well on social media among the humanitarian and wider climate humanity, and was also translated into various languages. Looking back, having pre-recorded side events may not be the most impactful events, as summit participants may choose to watch at a later time, and limited interactivity. To this end, short snappy videos that can be shared on social media were considered good practice. As such, an upcoming RG3 climate initiative may include a video with some IASC Principals speaking.

#### *RCRC-initiated Climate and Environment Charter*

- IFRC as climate emergency co-chair that at the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in December 2019, the IFRC and the ICRC adopted a pledge on ["Strengthening the resilience of communities to climate change and environmental degradation through climate-smart humanitarian action."](#) In the pledge, IFRC and ICRC committed to promoting a transformational change across the humanitarian sector by leading a consultative process to develop a new, simple, accessible, and aspirational **Climate and Environment Charter** (draft available [here](#)) that will be made available to the wider humanitarian sector for adoption in the spirit of the 1994 Code of Conduct in Disaster

Relief. An Advisory Committee included representatives from the broader humanitarian community, including local representatives. An open consultation was to be held on 9 February.

- When the RG3 sub-group was set up in early 2020, the group expressed broad support for the Charter initiative, and agreed not to prioritize the Charter as an IASC product initially for reasons of capacity. Currently, the sign-up options were under discussion.

### Integration of protection in RG3 workstream

- The RG3 co-Chairs noted that the objective of elevating protection across all RG structures had been discussed at the Operational Policy and Advocacy Group (OPAG) on 21 January 2021; and that RG3 also provided consolidated feedback to UNHCR.
- Mr. Sam Cheung, Chief of the internal displacement section at UNHCR briefed that consultations on the OPAG background paper resulted in an expressed need for elevating protection across the structures in line with the IASC's centrality of protection objective, without creating new structures, but by building on field expertise and bringing some of field-based lessons learned to the global level.
- Concrete suggestions included i) protection analysis briefings, whether with a situation or thematic focus. A survey to narrow the focus areas will be shared with RGs; ii) IASC global protection priorities (e.g. GBV; addressing protection risks, resilience and coping mechanisms; and engaging with non-state armed groups for protection outcomes); iii) promoting collective protection outcomes, including via the RG workplans, recognizing that protection aspects in some cases merely had to be highlighted. For RG3, a proposal could be how protection could underpin collective advocacy, and through funding.
- In terms of food for thought, efforts may focus on **'external' protection advocacy** targeting duty bearers outside the humanitarian system (e.g. government, non-state armed actors, etc.), and thereby considering the amplification of local voices; ensure that development and political actors better support protection outcomes; RG deep-dive to support protection advocacy in specific operations; and collaboration with GPC on priority crises; and **'internal' protection advocacy** vis-à-vis the HCT, other clusters, etc., thereby ensuring that HCTs employ collective advocacy strategies that advance protection outcomes; the protection of vulnerable groups is prioritized in response plans; that protection is funded through HRPs. Thematic considerations may include protection of civilians; and the issues around protection and infectious disease outbreaks/ nexus/ disaster and climate/ food security/ COVID-19.
- Next steps could involve a meeting between the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) advocacy task team and the RG3 co-chairs, also to address the 'what' and 'how' of collective advocacy.
- In the ensuing discussion, the RG3 co-Chairs noted the need for being specific and targeted in order to bring about results. World Vision expressed strong support for this initiative, as well as groups, as well as working with HCTs on this issue. The thematic focus areas, in turn, may have been addressed in other fora already. To this end, RG3 may be useful in conducting a mapping where such advocacy was already happening. OCHA commented that both counterterrorism and climate change had a protection dimension and noted the importance of insights on what was happening on the ground, and therefore the linkages with the EDG. The RG3 co-chairs added that insights from Lise Grande when she was still the RC/HC in Yemen constituted somewhat of an eye-opener regarding some of the barriers and also

shortcomings of protection advocacy. To this end, RG3 efforts needed to be informed by colleagues on the ground.

#### **Inclusion of local actors – RG3 co-chairs**

- The RG3 co-Chairs noted that this discussion was part of a broader IASC effort via discussions at the OPAG to be more inclusive in terms of local actor participation in the RGs. To this end, a suggestion could be to reach out to NEAR or the Charter4Change for their interest in participating in the RG3. An option could also be to ask ICVA to suggest national organizations.
- In the ensuing discussion, World Vision, WFP, OHCHR, and IFRC supported the ideas of reaching out to NEAR, ICVA, and possibly A4EP. The IASC secretariat suggested that inviting a national coordination forum representative could be an option given their collective advocacy experience. WFP commented that the focus could be narrowed to the countries discussed more frequently in the group, such as Yemen or Syria, who could contribute to the discussion with live examples.
- IFRC referred to its experience of including local representation in the Grand Bargain localization workstream, noting that the role of local organizations needed to be clarified (e.g. expectation for local organization to represent all local organizations, to contribute based on their expertise); and that local actors' expectations and time investments also needed to be clarified to forestall frustrations, as for instance local actors invited to the RG3 climate group had not participated. These issues would have to be clarified in an invitation letter, for instance if ICVA were to send one on behalf of all the IASC structures. World Vision agreed on the point concerning expectation management.