
IASC Results Group 3 – Collective Advocacy

5 May 2021

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Summary Record

IASC Results Group 3 on Collective Advocacy met on 5 May 2021 to discuss (i) Update from the Counterterrorism sub-group, inc. debriefing on the meeting with the Good Humanitarian Donorship and presentation of resource library; (ii); Update on famine prevention advocacy efforts; (iii) Presentation by OCHA on its priorities regarding non-state armed group (NSAG) engagement; iv) Update on the Climate and Environment Charter (ICRC)

Action points

- **RG3 invited to provide comments and additional activities on famine prevention communication strategy to mildren@un.org**
- **OCHA to explore context regarding Burkina Faso as one of the countries featured in the famine prevention efforts.**

Welcoming remarks (RG3 co-chairs)

- The RG3 co-chairs welcomed the new RG3 member, Ms. Safa Rawiah, the Executive Director of the Youth Leadership Development Foundation in Yemen, noting that the local actor representation at RG3 now included 3 members with representation from Uganda (Ms. Ritah Nansereko, Executive Director – AWYAD), and Nigeria (Mr. John Ede, President & CEO of Ohaha Family Foundation).

Update from the Counterterrorism sub-group, inc. debriefing on the meeting with the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative and presentation of resource library (COTER co-chairs)

Briefing to the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) Initiative

- OCHA as COTER co-chair briefed RG3 on the COTER co-chairs' briefing to the GHD membership in mid-April. The co-chairs had presented its work, i.e. the IASC solutions paper, the InterAction Resource Library, the IASC Counterterrorism Database, the forthcoming HC COTER guidance, as well as the forthcoming CTED report.
- The co-chairs underscored the engagement of key donors in the discussion, their recognition that COTER was an issue that had an impact on humanitarian action, and the fact that the presented COTER concepts were not called into question. One donor, in particular, had emphasized the importance of the IASC's role on this issue, and a demand for the IASC to keep pushing, and create a more sophisticated conversation beyond the current narrative.
- Some GHD members provided insight into their own initiatives. These included the appointment of a sanctions focal point across the entire government, based on the recognition that several

ministries/departments were usually involved in COTER issues within the government; and the initiation of an internal government review on sanctions policies to assess the impact of these policies.

- As the tools were now in place, generating a consensus on practical solutions will be the area requiring follow-up by the IASC as well as presenting more consolidated evidences of impact

Presentation of the [InterAction Resource Library on Counterterrorism Measures and Impacts on Humanitarian Action](#)

- InterAction as COTER co-chair presented its published report “[Detrimental Impacts: How Counter-Terror Measures Impede Humanitarian Action](#)” summarizing the key findings and recommendations from the resource library, noting that this report corresponds to the IASC Principals’ request in December 2019 of ‘deepening the evidence base’ of the impact of COTER measures on humanitarian action. The analysis is based on a review of some 50 COTER reports and the common definitions used are in alignment with the CTED report and the IASC Counterterrorism Database. The report was rolled out to the GHD and the HNPW in April, and InterAction also disseminated it to donors and its NGO constituency.
- The resource library comprises two tools: the [impact catalogue](#) (categorized into operational, legal, security, financial, and reputational ones) and the [recommendation catalogue](#), which comprises a list of recommendations pooled to six relevant stakeholders over nearly 20 years. The recommendations catalogue has highlighted repeated recommendations to the same stakeholders, implying the lack of COTER policy movement. Almost half of the recommendations have targeted states and donors.
- In terms of key findings, 203 impacts have been recorded between 2011 and 2018, with the majority being operational in nature. Common contexts where impacts occurred were OPT, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, and Nigeria. States and donor governments were cited as originators of COTER policies of more than 50% of the catalogued impacts, and therefore nearly half of the catalogued recommendations were geared towards them (with other recommendations targeting UN entities and multilateral institutions, Banks and financial institutions, and Civil society).
- ICVA commended the work of the COTER group, and referred to the complementary work taken forward by RG1 on more operational Bureaucratic and Administrative Impediments.

Update on famine prevention advocacy efforts

- OCHA presented the **communications strategy for the High-Level Task Force on Preventing Famine** (spanning from April to September 2021), circulated to RG3 the day of the meeting. The key objectives of the strategy are: i) advocating for famine prevention resources made available by donors for 8.4 m people in 4 countries (Burkina Faso, northeast Nigeria, South Sudan, and Yemen), ii) advocating for improved access to the people in need; iii) joining up efforts on data and real-time information. The strategy aims to elevate the work of IASC members, rather than the taskforce itself; and highlights that based on experience of the four famines in 2017 and 2018, adequate resources will avert a famine.
- A [trello board](#) was set up, as well as two hashtags of #fightfamine and #fighthunger for more sensitive contexts. The strategy also contains a set of **HLTF key messages and a table outlining advocacy opportunities**, e.g. a virtual mission of OCHA’s donor support group to Burkina Faso and northeast Nigeria in the latter part of May; famine prevention side events during POC week (starting May 24th) and ECOSOC HAS, a senior official meeting on Yemen on 1 June led by ECHO and Sweden, etc.

- The RG3 co-chairs and WFP drew attention to the report of the Global Network against Food Crises, which had released the [2021 Global Report on Food Crises](#) on 5 May.
- ICVA and WFP highlighted that the [NGO Open letter on Famine Prevention](#) addressing States and launched on 20 April had just over 300 signatures from civil society members when sign-on closed. Thanks to the efforts of media/comms colleagues from a number of NGOs, and acknowledging the support of colleagues from WFP/OCHA/FAO, extensive online and media coverage was received, with over 350 unique articles/mentions in more than 50 countries, including a number of high-profile pieces. Accordingly, such successful inter-agency collaboration demonstrated how the community can come together on critical issues.
- For ICVA, the next steps focus on advocacy with States/Donors, including a working dialogue with donor representatives in early May; a briefing on the G7 famine compact with the UK on 11 May; and ICVA Member States briefing on 10 June. To this end, the HLTF communications strategy presents a useful resource. The issue regarding the monitoring of advocacy efforts was also raised.
- The RG3 co-chairs encouraged involvement of Safa and John, as RG3 local actor representatives from two of the four countries (Yemen and Nigeria) in the implementation of the HLTF communications strategy.

Presentation by OCHA on its priorities regarding non-state armed group (NSAG) engagement (Dominique Gassauer/OCHA)

- The RG3 co-chairs noted the importance of NSAG engagement, also in the context of famine prevention and counterterrorism, recalling that according to the ICRC, some 60-70 m people living in areas beyond government control.
- Ms. Gassauer noted that she is the New York-based focal point for OCHA's Civil-Military Coordination Service, which will be based in Istanbul.
- In terms of trends, many non-state armed groups are part of the same conflict, and the level and tactics of engagement by humanitarian actors to ensure humanitarian access varies based on the nature of the NSAG, their chain of command, communication means, etc.
- Obstacles to obtaining access include **bureaucratic impediments** as a result of longer lasting conflicts and economies of war taking hold, with humanitarian actors becoming to some extent part of these economies. Obstacles include NSAG's demands for humanitarian personnel records; travel permissions that are difficult to obtain; requests to pay taxes or customs duties.
- Another trend observed constitutes the **diversification of aid** with a growing number actors involved in the response, including as a result of localization following the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS). Accordingly, continuous advocacy to ensure and clarify the respect of humanitarian principles, including in localized responses is key.
- Finally, the **politicization of aid** following the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq is compounded by the fact that the top 5 humanitarian donors account for 70 % of funding in 2021. This begs the question to which extent the perception of operational independence can be guaranteed in some contexts where the top donors may have competing political interests.
- OCHA's role in NSAG engagement is to ensure a coordinated approach to such engagement. The extent to which OCHA staff engage with NSAG depends on the context and needs of the HCT. Accordingly,

OCHA's role may imply an **advisory role**, e.g. in Afghanistan where NGOs usually have their own contacts with actors on the ground; or a more direct role, e.g. in Mali in terms of **trainings, capacity-building with different NSAG**. Coordination mechanisms are also adapted to the context and can include access working groups or civil-military coordination mechanisms, at the national or subnational level. Another OCHA priority is to **advise the HC and deputy HCs** on NSAG engagement, during pre-deployment and throughout deployment.

- In terms of main bottlenecks of humanitarian engagement with NSAG, they can arise from the side of NSAG, humanitarian actors, and states.
 - As for NSAG, the more **local the groups, the greater** is usually their sensitivity towards the needs of people under their control, and **their willingness to engage with humanitarians** via a principled approach, with the onus being on the humanitarians to undertake outreach and build outreach.
 - As for humanitarians, the inability to reach out to NSAG and build trust due to the inability to obtain **security clearances**, represents an important obstacle. In this context, the IASC guidelines on the use of armed escorts representing in times of last (as opposed to first) resort is of critical relevance.
 - As for states **counterterrorism measures** may represent a dissuasive factor of engaging with NSAG for frontline responders, and the leadership. In this context, the senior legal advisor at OCHA helps clarify related concerns and reassuring humanitarian leadership existing legal and normative framework.
- The RG3 co-chairs concluded that NSAG engagement will feature at an OPAG session on 27 May.

Update on the Climate and Environment Charter (ICRC)

- Ms. Catherine-Lune Grayson-Courtemanche/ICRC explained that the version of the 2.5 page Climate and Environment Charter circulated to RG3 with the invitation was currently under sign-off by the leadership of ICRC and IFRC. It should be adopted by 20 May and then be opened for other organizations to sign on. The Charter was also socialized as a HNPW event, where the speakers spoke about what the Charter meant to their organization.
- 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** that will be made available to the wider humanitarian sector for adoption in the spirit of the [1994 Code of Conduct](#) in Disaster Relief. IFRC and ICRC established an advisory group with representatives of organizations and networks across the humanitarian sector, including national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies, humanitarian networks, UN agencies, and climate/environmental experts.
- Feedback was received from some 150 humanitarian organizations, a discussions were also held within the RG3 climate change sub-group. The 7 commitments are structured in terms of priority. The first core commitment is about stepping up the humanitarian response to the growing needs and helping people adapt to the climate crisis. The second core commitment is about maximizing environmental

sustainability of our work and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. The four subsequent commitments are about how to achieve this via building knowledge, embracing local leadership, nurturing collective action. The last commitment is a pledge to implement the charters, with the expectation that each organization will develop its own targets and action plans in line with the scale of the organization and its capacity to implement.

- The objective is to convey the humanitarian community's strong commitment to the climate community in approaching COP and beyond. In parallel, IFRC/ICRC are developing guidance and identifying useful tools to facilitate the implementation of the charter.

AOB

- OCHA as co-chair of the climate sub-group highlighted the issuance of the [IASC common narrative on the climate emergency and humanitarian action](#) at the end of April (and a member expressed positive feedback on its utility to inform messaging from various mandate angles); the [ERC's speech on climate change](#) at ODI in April as well; the forthcoming high-level panel on climate change at ECOSOC in June; and the climate change theme at World Humanitarian Day in August. All events are available on the humanitarian [climate trello board](#).