

Real-Time Review

26 November 2024

Key points

- Real-Time Review (RTR) is mandatory for Level 3 emergencies
- RTR is conducted 3 months after a Level 3 declaration
- Takes stock of the timeliness, appropriateness and effectiveness of the emergency response to date
- Identifies areas of the response requiring further support, and proposes course corrections where necessary
- Assesses the extent to which recommendations (i.e. from the Joint Senior Level Mission) have been implemented

1. Overview

The Real-Time Review (RTR) is an additional support instrument for Level 3 emergencies. It is an evidence-based review of UNHCR's operational response to date and recommends course corrections and adjustments where necessary.

2. Main guidance

Three months after a Level 3 emergency is declared, the regional bureau, DESS and other relevant HQ divisions conduct a Real-Time Review (RTR), in line with the [Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response](#). The key aims of the RTR are to:

1. Take stock of the timeliness, appropriateness and effectiveness of UNHCR's response and engagement, at country, regional and HQ levels;
2. Monitor the application of the [Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response](#); and
3. Recommend adjustments and course corrections, if necessary.

The RTR usually takes the form of a desk review – including mission and situational reports, funding appeals, strategy papers, personnel structure and other relevant documents – followed by a joint mission and/or workshop. Where multiple Level 3 emergencies have been declared as part of the same situation, the RTR may assess the emergency response in all the countries concerned.

The RTR is a participatory exercise involving a broad cross-section of stakeholders; as well as international and national personnel at field locations involved in the emergency response at country-level, the Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator, selected members of the UN Country Team / Humanitarian Country Team, implementing and operational partners, donors, forcibly displaced and stateless persons may also be consulted.

The RTR focuses on the country-level. More specifically, it examines:

- The urgent protection and assistance needs of affected populations;
- How well the response to date has met these needs;
- The immediate emergency preparedness and response gaps;
- Risk analysis and preparedness efforts made prior to the emergency declaration;
- The operation's strengths and weaknesses;
- Measures to ensure and enhance staff welfare;
- The extent to which recommendations arising from the Joint Senior Level Mission (JSLM) and any other relevant processes have been implemented.

Following the desk review, mission and/or workshops, the participants of the RTR draft a report covering the findings, outcomes and recommendations that may have arisen. The draft report highlights achievements, acknowledges constraints and identifies areas for improvement – both in terms of the country operation's response to the emergency, and the organization's procedures, systems and policies more generally. It also sets out recommendations for the transition from the emergency to a more stable operational response.

Once endorsed, the findings and recommendations are presented to the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations (AHC-O), and the report is disseminated to relevant parties. The country Representative(s) should ensure that personnel in the operation are aware of the recommendations, and are engaged in the post-RTR change process. The regional bureau is responsible for ensuring that the recommendations are tracked and implemented by the country operation(s).

NB. For Level 2 emergencies, a similar exercise may be launched in consultation with the regional bureau or at the request of the AHC-O, but this is not mandatory.

Real-Time Reviews are different from evaluations. Evaluations are mandatory for Level 3 emergencies within 15 months of the declaration, and are conducted by the Evaluation Office in line with the [Policy for Evaluation in UNHCR](#).

Annexes

3. Learning and field practices

Accessible to UNHCR staff only

[Emergency Management in UNHCR course](#)