

POLICY ON EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

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Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1.** This Policy establishes the overarching framework for UNHCR’s engagement in emergency preparedness and response, based on its mandate and inter-agency commitments, including as a member of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). It sets out the key principles guiding the relevant actions and establishes the high-level roles and procedures to achieve them. In order to do so, the Policy empowers and requires country operations¹ to be proactive in preparing for and responding to emergencies based on sound situational risk analysis and monitoring.
- 1.2.** The Policy (i) recognizes, supports and facilitates the fundamental role and primary responsibility of governments in emergency preparedness and response; (ii) requires country operations to lead and coordinate humanitarian agencies in line with UNHCR’s mandated role in refugee situations; (iii) calls for UNHCR’s decisive and predictable engagement as cluster and cluster-like lead and/or operational agency in inter-agency responses to internal forced displacement; and (iv) recognizes that consistent delivery of a timely and effective emergency response is a shared corporate priority at country, regional and headquarters (HQ) level.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1.** This Policy covers UNHCR’s engagement and actions in anticipating and responding to emergencies in which advanced preparedness actions and/or an urgent operational response are required. It applies to all UNHCR staff members and affiliate workforce, hereafter referred to as “personnel”, in country operations, regional bureaux, and HQ divisions and entities² who are engaged in leading, managing, delivering, overseeing and/or supporting any aspect of emergency preparedness and response.
- 2.2.** UNHCR defines an “emergency” as any humanitarian crisis or disaster which either (i) has caused or threatens to cause new forced displacement, loss of life and/or other serious harm; or (ii) significantly affects the rights or well-being of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless persons, returnees and other persons of concern, unless immediate and appropriate action is taken; and (iii) which demands exceptional measures because current government and UNHCR capacities at country and/or regional levels are inadequate for a predictable and effective response. The overriding priority in any humanitarian response is to save lives and minimize serious harm through meeting the most urgent humanitarian needs.
- 2.3.** As part of its inter-agency commitments, and in addition to engaging in humanitarian situations arising from armed conflict, violence and human rights violations, UNHCR must also contribute to the delivery of protection, humanitarian assistance and durable solutions for persons of concern affected by humanitarian crises, whether sudden-onset or gradually deteriorating, arising from hazardous climate and other environmental events and conditions³. The level of involvement in natural hazard-induced crises is linked to UNHCR’s presence and added-value operational capacity in the country and/or expertise compared to other humanitarian actors.

Definition of emergency

Involvement in natural hazards

¹ “Country operations” hereafter includes Country Offices, Multi-Country Offices and other types of UNHCR Field Presence in accordance with the [UNHCR Handbook for Designing Field Presences](#).

² Referred to hereafter as “HQ Divisions”.

³ See: [Practical Guidance for UNHCR Staff on IDP Protection in the Context of Disasters and the Adverse Effects of Climate Change](#).

- 2.4.** Compliance with the Policy is mandatory. Technical guidance will continue to be issued, updated and made available in the digital edition of the [UNHCR Emergency Handbook](#)⁴.

3. RATIONALE

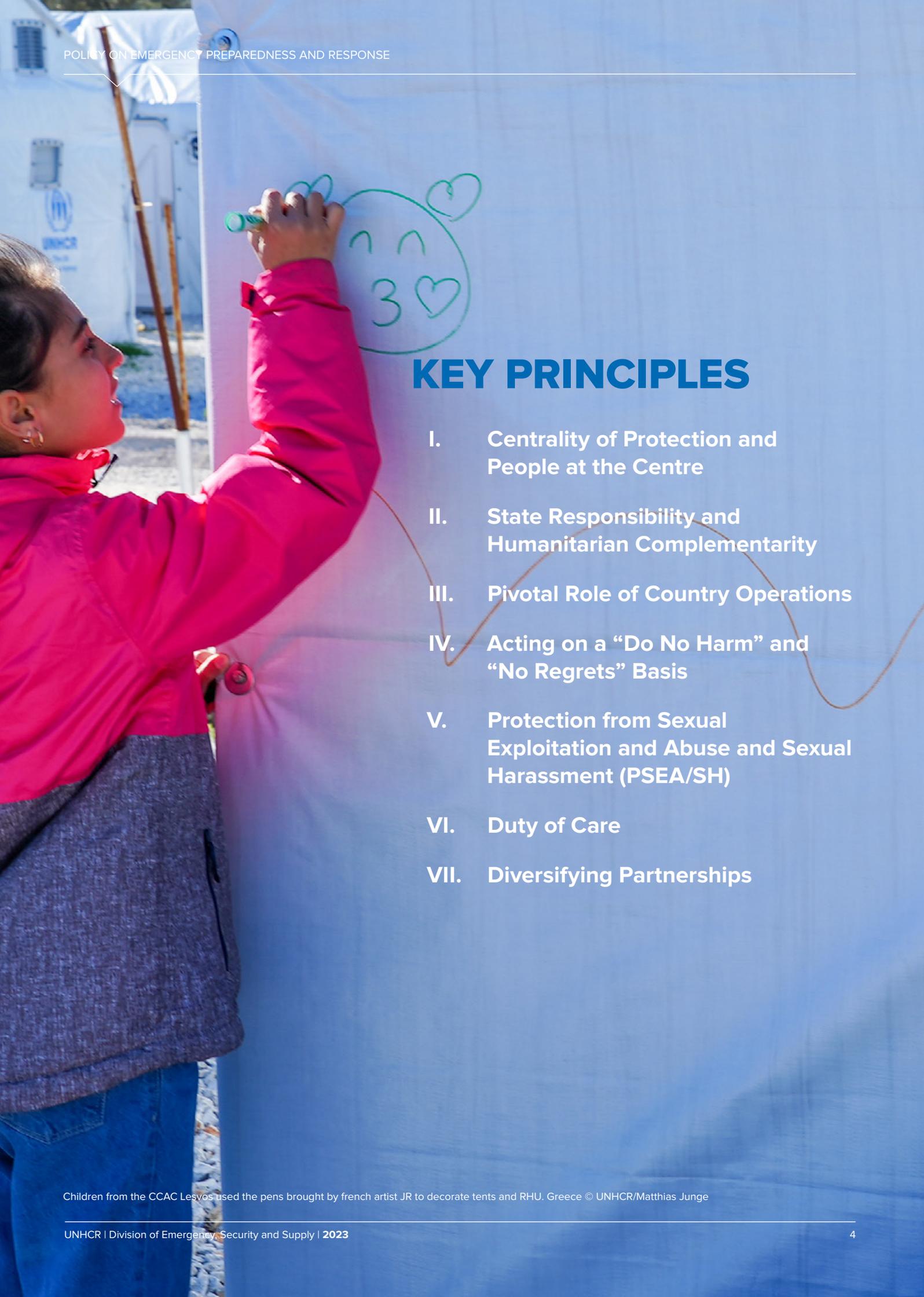
- 3.1.** The Policy enables UNHCR to focus on predictable emergency preparedness and response, at country, regional and HQ levels. It follows the Decentralization and Regionalization process, a comprehensive review of previous emergency responses, and a number of recent policy and strategic decisions, in particular: [UNHCR Strategic Directions 2022-2026](#), the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#), [Policy on UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement](#), the revision of UNHCR's [Results-Based Management](#) approach and UNHCR's [Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#).

- 3.2.** The drivers and impacts of displacement are becoming increasingly intertwined and complex, especially in the context of climate change. UNHCR is committed to strengthening its preparedness to be reliable and decisive in disasters⁵, alongside national, local and other humanitarian actors. This commitment derives from UNHCR's membership in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), its leadership of global clusters, and its operational capacity to prepare for and respond to humanitarian crises under the UN country leadership of the Resident Coordinators and/or Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HC)⁶.

Refugees, internally displaced people and host community join forces on market garden project in Niger.
© UNHCR/Colin Delfosse



- 4 The digital edition of the [Emergency Handbook](#) has been redesigned in the form of a website, offline USB stick version and mobile applications, and allows UNHCR to keep the content constantly up-to-date and immediately distribute updates to users.
- 5 A "disaster" is defined as the seriously disruptive impact of a variety of hazards, including the adverse effects of climate change, acting alone or in combination, on exposed and vulnerable populations and their assets. See: Report of the open-ended intergovernmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction ([A/71/644](#) and [A/71/644/Corr](#)).
- 6 This should be read in conjunction with UNHCR's mandate to lead and coordinate the refugee response through the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM) ([A/RES/69/152](#), [A/RES/70/135](#)).



KEY PRINCIPLES

- I. Centrality of Protection and People at the Centre
- II. State Responsibility and Humanitarian Complementarity
- III. Pivotal Role of Country Operations
- IV. Acting on a “Do No Harm” and “No Regrets” Basis
- V. Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEA/SH)
- VI. Duty of Care
- VII. Diversifying Partnerships

4. KEY PRINCIPLES

4.1. The fundamental humanitarian principles – humanity, impartiality, independence, neutrality – are central to UNHCR’s emergency preparedness and response actions, which are aligned with [Sphere](#) and other applicable standards and supplemented by the following principles:

I. Centrality of Protection and People at the Centre

4.2. Protection of people affected by an ongoing or imminent emergency is at the centre of UNHCR’s emergency preparedness and response and should be mainstreamed across all sectors and activities. UNHCR shall ensure that the fundamental rights and basic needs, capacities and views of persons of concern inform the emergency response and engagement with governments and other stakeholders. Saving lives, through the provision of effective protection interventions, shall drive the design and delivery of UNHCR programmes.

4.3. In line with UNHCR’s [Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity](#) (AGD) and [Operational Guidance on Accountability to Affected People](#) (AAP), persons of concern will be engaged and included in the design and delivery of all stages of UNHCR’s interventions. Measures will be implemented from the outset to ensure that UNHCR and its partners are accountable to persons of concern, including through effective and ongoing communication and community-based protection approaches. Specific efforts will be undertaken to ensure equal and meaningful participation of women and girls.

II. State Responsibility and Humanitarian Complementarity

4.4. States have the primary responsibility to ensure protection of refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons and returnees on their territories. As an internationally mandated protection agency, UNHCR works with and supports governments and affected communities in preparing for and responding to emergencies. UNHCR promotes and complements government efforts to provide protection and assistance, and to pursue solutions for persons of concern in line with international human rights law, humanitarian and refugee law, and national laws.

III. Pivotal Role of Country Operations

4.5. Country operations have a pivotal and fundamental role in preparing for and responding to emergencies. Regional bureaux and HQ divisions facilitate and reinforce field delivery, in line with applicable frameworks and standards, to ensure robust preparedness and a timely and effective response by country operations.

Complementarity
of the principles

IV. Acting on a “Do No Harm” and “No Regrets” Basis

Saving lives

- 4.6.** The humanitarian imperative of protection from harm, saving lives, and avoiding and relieving suffering supersedes all other considerations. In preparing for and responding to an emergency, HQ division and regional bureau Directors, Representatives and Heads of sub-offices are empowered and accountable to take decisions and act on a “No Regrets” basis to ensure that refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, returnees, affected host communities and other persons of concern receive protection and life-saving humanitarian assistance in a timely and effective manner.
- 4.7.** When taking decisions, HQ division and regional bureau Directors, Representatives and Heads of sub-offices should adopt a risk-based approach to consider the risks of potential action as well as the impact of inaction. If acting on a “No Regrets” basis, they should be able to demonstrate that their actions were reasonable based on the information and resources available⁷.

V. Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEA/SH)

Zero tolerance

- 4.8.** Sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment represent grave breaches of the right to safety, security and dignity of persons of concern and UNHCR personnel⁸. UNHCR is committed to taking all necessary action to prevent and respond decisively to sexual misconduct and to put the protection, rights and dignity of victims at the forefront⁹. Protection from SEA and SH must be systematically integrated into emergency preparedness and throughout all stages of the response.

VI. Duty of Care

- 4.9.** Managers shall strive to ensure that all required health, safety and security arrangements are in place for UNHCR personnel carrying out emergency preparedness and response activities. This includes ensuring adequate working and gender-sensitive living conditions and access to mental and physical health care¹⁰, with due attention paid to the needs of locally recruited personnel.
- 4.10.** UNHCR shall aim to ensure a gender-balanced and diverse workforce in all areas, functions of work, and management levels in an emergency operation. Measures should be put in place to promote an open, respectful, and inclusive workplace culture to ensure that personnel feel safe and empowered to voice concerns about their welfare, including reporting of sexual misconduct.
- 4.11.** UNHCR shall, as far as feasible, extend support to and advocate for the security, accommodation and other relevant needs of partners and other non-UNHCR humanitarian personnel engaged side by side with UNHCR in emergency response activities.

⁷ Justification for such actions should be documented. Criminal conduct, sexual exploitation or abuse, wilful, reckless or grossly negligent actions cannot be justified by the “No Regrets” principle.

⁸ See: [2019 United Nations Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#) and [CEB Task Force on addressing sexual harassment in the organizations of the UN system](#).

⁹ In line with [UNHCR/HCP/2020/04 Policy on a Victim Centred Approach in UNHCR’s Response to Sexual Misconduct](#).

¹⁰ As outlined in [UNHCR/HCP/2020/03 Policy on Security Management](#) and [UNHCR/HCP2021/2 Policy on Managing Occupational Health and Safety in UNHCR](#).

VII. Diversifying Partnerships

4.12. UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response shall be designed and delivered as inclusive, collaborative undertakings involving governments, civil society, local and international NGOs, UN agencies, development actors, international and regional financial institutions, the private sector and the media, as well as refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, returnees and other persons of concern. UNHCR will broaden and diversify its partnership arrangements for strengthening preparedness and response, including early warning systems and anticipatory action, to support protection and solutions for displaced people and their host communities.

VIII. Solutions and Link to Development

4.13. The pursuit of durable solutions for refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, returnees and other persons of concern shall be embedded in all emergency preparedness and response activities from the onset¹¹.

4.14. In both design and delivery, emergency responses shall be as comprehensive as possible, taking full account of the approach and spirit of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#), the [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement](#) and collective UN system objectives on climate action and disaster risk reduction, recognizing that climate change is a risk multiplier that exacerbates existing vulnerabilities and protection needs. In particular, UNHCR will proactively seek the involvement of other humanitarian agencies, governmental and non-governmental development actors, financial institutions and the private sector, with a view to fostering the inclusion of persons of concern in relevant development plans, projects and activities, including those related to the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

Solutions
from the onset

IX. Environmental Sustainability

4.15. UNHCR recognizes the impact of climate change¹² and environmental degradation on forcibly displaced people and their hosts, and the importance of strengthening communities' resilience by preserving and rehabilitating the natural environment in displacement settings. UNHCR aims to systematically mainstream environmental sustainability across emergency preparedness and response in order to minimize the environmental footprint of its activities, in line with UNHCR's [Operational Strategy for Climate Resilience and Environmental Sustainability](#)¹³.

¹¹ Also see: [Minimum Economic Recovery Standards](#).

¹² Also see: the [Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#), and the [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030](#).

¹³ Also see: the [Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organizations](#) and the UN system-wide [Strategy on Sustainability Management](#).



Humanitarian workers with UNHCR and IOM make a delivery to the remote Santa Clara Indigenous community in Venezuela's remote southeastern Gran Sabana region.
© UNHCR/Nicolo Filippo Rosso

5. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

- 5.1.** UNHCR will continue to strengthen emergency risk management, agency-specific proactive preparedness and anticipatory action, contingency planning, capacity development, advocacy and communications, and resource mobilization, as well as enhance its participation in UNCT/HCT preparedness efforts¹⁴.
- 5.2.** Preparedness and early engagement are fundamental to UNHCR being a predictable lead and a reliable partner in humanitarian crises. Country operations must strive for the participation and contribution of a wide range of stakeholders, with governments in the lead whenever possible, in order to anticipate comprehensive responses that build on national systems and capacity, in line with the commitments made within the framework of the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) and the humanitarian cluster system.
- 5.3.** Representatives shall lead UNHCR preparedness efforts at the country level. Regional bureau(x), in collaboration with DESS, shall oversee and support the preparedness level of country operations, ensure coordination between the relevant country operations and other regional bureau(x) in situations involving several countries or regions, and review the scenario-based contingency plans as appropriate.

¹⁴ Also see: [Leadership In Humanitarian Action: Handbook for the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator](#).

I. Risk Analysis and Monitoring

- 5.4.** All country operations undertake emergency risk analysis for new or escalated emergencies at least once a year within the Annual Risk Review, in line with the [Policy for Enterprise Risk Management in UNHCR](#)¹⁵. Country operations determine a ranking of high, medium or low for each agreed emergency scenario based on its likelihood and potential impact¹⁶.
- 5.5.** Country operations shall continuously monitor the identified emergency risks¹⁷ and update the Operational Risk Register accordingly¹⁸.

II. High Risk of a New or Escalated Emergency

- 5.6.** Country operations that face high risk(s) of a new or escalated emergency shall develop a scenario-based contingency plan(s) in collaboration with government counterparts and other partners¹⁹.
- 5.7.** Contingency plan(s) articulate the response strategy, including required budget, workforce, and coordination structures. Due consideration shall be paid to security, occupational health and safety, and other key institutional policies and guidance²⁰. As of the second quarter of 2023, country operations must record contingency plan(s) in COMPASS.
- 5.8.** As part of contingency planning, where necessary, country operations identify key preparedness measures to be implemented in order to enable the planned emergency response²¹. These measures include but are not limited to, establishing frame agreements, identifying potential financial service providers, pre-selecting a pool of potential partners through a Call for Expression of Interest²² and assessing potential partners' capacity²³.
- 5.9.** A high risk(s) of a new or escalated emergency is systematically extracted from the Operational Risk Registers and included in the [Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal](#) (EPRP), which is maintained by DESS in close coordination with regional bureau(x).

Contingency plan

¹⁵ Further guidance on emergency risks is available in the [Risk Management Tool for Emergencies](#) and the [Risk Review Guidance](#).

¹⁶ See more guidance on the DESS [Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal](#).

¹⁷ This applies to all high, medium and low risks.

¹⁸ Global risk assessments, monitoring and early warning reports are available on the DESS [Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal](#).

¹⁹ The level of engagement of Governments and partners may vary in different operations and contexts.

²⁰ These include, inter alia, [UNHCR/HCP/2014/9 Policy on Alternatives to Camps](#), [UNHCR Policy on Cash-Based Interventions 2022-2026](#), [UNHCR/HCP/2018 Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity](#), [Operational Guidance on Accountability to Affected People](#) and [Toolkit on Operational Guidance AAP](#).

²¹ The recommended list of preparedness actions will be constantly updated by DESS and available on the DESS [Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal](#).

²² See: [UNHCR/AI/2021/11 Procedure for the Selection and Retention of Partners for Partnership Agreements](#).

²³ See: [UNHCR/AI/2021/06 Administrative Instruction on Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment](#), and [UNHCR/AI/2018/1 Administrative Instruction on Procurement by Partners under Partnership Agreements \(with Implementing Partnership Management Guidance Note No. 4, Rev. 1\)](#).

III. Security Management and Business Continuity

- 5.10.** Country operations shall integrate security-related considerations into planning to ensure that the response is delivered in a manner consistent with UNHCR's [Policy on Security Management](#), including by:
- Identifying operational security risks and their potential impact on UNHCR's response, taking into account Programme Criticality assessments, to avoid unnecessary or unacceptable risks;
 - Implementing prevention and mitigation measures for security risks and monitor compliance with these measures, in line with the Security Risk Management (SRM) Process;
 - Participating in inter-agency security mechanisms, including the Security Management Team (SMT) or Area Security Management Team (ASMT).
- 5.11.** Country operations shall include safety and security risks in the Operational Risk Register and country-level SRM and consider them during Business Continuity Planning (BCP)²⁴.

IV. Inter-Agency Preparedness

- 5.12.** UNHCR agency-specific preparedness is closely aligned with inter-agency mechanisms.
- 5.13.** In refugee situations, country operations lead inter-agency contingency planning, jointly with governments wherever possible, ensuring proactive anticipation, preparedness and response coordination using the [Refugee Coordination Model \(RCM\)](#) and the [Updated Refugee Coordination Guidance](#)²⁵.
- 5.14.** In all other situations of forced displacement, including conflict and natural hazard-induced internal displacement, and mixed situations²⁶, country operations shall:
- In the early stages of preparedness, discuss and confirm leadership for relevant working groups, sectors, clusters or cluster-like arrangements within UNCT/HCT;
 - Actively participate in the RC/HC-led inter-agency processes and lead relevant sector/cluster preparedness, including through the Emergency Response Preparedness approach²⁷ and other relevant modalities;
 - Contribute to the development of evidence-based resource mobilization instruments for anticipatory and early action.

Collaborative approach

²⁴ Business Continuity (or Business Continuity Planning) is a core element of the [Organizational Resilience Management System](#), along with crisis management; safety and security of personnel; premises and assets; crisis communications; emergency medical support; information and communication technology resilience; and support to UN personnel and eligible family members. BCP increases UNHCR's ability to respond swiftly in a crisis situation, including in case of office closure or damage, relocation or evacuation for security reasons, and to maintain or restore critical operations as soon as possible.

²⁵ Including through developing Refugee Response Plan(s) where appropriate.

²⁶ See: [Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations – Coordination in Practice, 24 April 2014](#).

²⁷ [IASC Emergency Response Preparedness Guidelines, July 2015](#).

6. DECLARATION OF AN EMERGENCY

- 6.1.** UNHCR may internally declare one of three emergency levels, taking into account the expected magnitude, complexity and consequences of a humanitarian crisis compared to the existing capacity of country operation(s) and regional bureau(x) concerned²⁸.
- 6.2.** An emergency declaration triggers time-limited exceptional measures to mobilize additional capacities and resources in order to support country operation(s) in preparing for and responding to potential, unfolding or escalating humanitarian needs on the ground.
- 6.3.** A single country may have multiple emergency declarations at any given time, if humanitarian crises are geographically or contextually distinct from one another, e.g. a refugee influx and an internal displacement in different parts of the country. Similarly, a humanitarian crisis may also require an emergency level declaration in several country operations, especially when cross-border displacement is expected.

Afghanistan. Displaced families cope with winter cold and food shortages Kabul. © UNHCR/Andrew McConnell



²⁸ Assessed in conjunction with the wider humanitarian response capacity in the country and/or region.

I. UNHCR Emergency Levels

- 6.4.** *Level 1 Emergency: Proactive Preparedness and Initial Response.* UNHCR declares a Level 1 emergency when a country operation(s) must enhance preparedness and take anticipatory or early action due to a high risk of a humanitarian emergency, and/or to commence an initial response, while the current capacity of the country operation(s) is insufficient.
- 6.5.** *Level 2 Emergency: Stepped-up Regional Bureau Support.* UNHCR declares a Level 2 emergency in a rapidly evolving humanitarian situation when a country operation(s) faces significant gaps in resources, staffing and expertise, and additional support and resources from the relevant regional bureau(x) are vital for the operation(s) to be able to respond and assume an appropriate and effective coordination and operational role.
- 6.6.** *Level 3 Emergency: Whole-of-UNHCR Response.* UNHCR declares a Level 3 emergency in an exceptionally serious situation in which the scale, pace, complexity, and consequences of the crisis significantly exceed the existing response capacities of the country operation(s) and relevant regional bureau(x); and thus call for an institutional, whole-of-UNHCR response to prevent the risk of failure to deliver effectively and at scale.

Scale, pace,
complexity and
consequences

II. Declaration of UNHCR Emergency Levels

- 6.7.** The declaration of an emergency level is based on a country operation's analysis of the situation and of its existing preparedness and response capacity. The regional bureau(x) and DESS recommend declaring an emergency level depending on the scale, complexity and consequences of the humanitarian situation. Based on this recommendation:
- The Assistant High Commissioner for Operations (AHC-O) declares a Level 1 emergency, through a communication to the Senior Management Committee and respective Representative(s) or;
 - The High Commissioner declares a Level 2 or 3 emergency based on the advice of the AHC-O, through a UNHCR broadcast message to all personnel.
- 6.8.** When a Level 3 emergency is declared for a refugee situation, the High Commissioner notifies the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the IASC Principals.
- 6.9.** The High Commissioner can increase the level of an emergency in case of a sudden deterioration in the humanitarian situation. In such exceptional circumstances, the new declaration supersedes the previous declaration.

III. Duration of UNHCR Emergency Declarations

- 6.10.** All emergency declarations remain in force for six months after which they expire automatically. In exceptional circumstances the AHC-O may recommend a three-month extension of the Level 2 or 3 emergency declaration to the High Commissioner. A request for an extension is initiated by the regional bureau(x) in coordination with DESS before the initial six-month declaration expires and should include key new or outstanding scale-up or response deliverable(s)²⁹.

Time-bound
scale up

²⁹ The maximum possible duration of an emergency declaration is six months for a Level 1, and nine months for a Level 2 or 3 emergency.



Internally displaced Somalis wait in distress for water and stay by their makeshift dwellings at the Kabasa camp for internally displaced people in Dollow, Somalia.
© UNHCR/Nabil Narch

- 6.11.** The expiration of an emergency declaration does not necessarily imply that the crisis it relates to has come to an end. Rather, it indicates that preparedness actions are in place or that the operational response has been scaled up and reasonably stabilized, thus exceptional mobilization of capacities and application of emergency procedures and systems are no longer required. A new emergency may be declared again at a later stage should the situation so require.

IV. Country Operation Leadership During an Emergency Declaration

- 6.12.** For a Level 3 emergency, the High Commissioner shall confirm the existing leadership or decide on a new arrangement. Where the Representative's profile and experience are no longer suited to the new situation, the High Commissioner can ask the Representative to step aside. The Representative may also request such a course of action. Where a 'step-aside' mechanism is activated, a staff member with the required seniority, experience and competencies is deployed to assume leadership of the country operation on an interim or long-term basis.
- 6.13.** Leadership of the response at sub-office or field office levels, including confirmation of or change in existing arrangements, shall be addressed as early as possible by the Representative(s) and relevant regional bureau(x).

V. IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activation

- 6.14.** When an IASC Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activation³⁰ for a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation or a sudden-onset crisis is issued by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, UNHCR must fulfil its commitments as an IASC member and upscale its coordination and operational response. This may include declaring or extending an internal UNHCR emergency, if deemed to be appropriate and in line with this Policy.

³⁰ [IASC, Protocol 1. Humanitarian System-Wide Scale-Up Activation: Definition and Procedures, 13 November 2018.](#)

7. COORDINATION AND LEADERSHIP DURING AN EMERGENCY

I. Country-Level Coordination in Refugee Emergencies

7.1. In declared refugee emergencies, the Representative(s) shall ensure that the following actions are carried out:

- Bring together a multi-functional emergency team within the country office, sub-office(s) or across the operation as appropriate, to support the management of the emergency operation, including proactive communications, timely sharing of information on needs and response, production and release of emergency data products³¹;
- Establish the arrangements set out in the [RCM](#) and its [Updated Guidance Note](#) from April 2019 with a clear coordination structure shared with Government, partners and stakeholders, while at the same time fostering a multi-stakeholder approach and inclusive engagement with partners as set out in the [GCR](#);
- Ensure that all key functional and response areas are adequately and effectively coordinated or co-coordinated by UNHCR with the right profile, experience and authority across the entire spectrum of the response³² including by seeking support from regional bureau(x), HQ divisions and other sources as needed; and
- Confirm to the regional bureau(x) and DESS that the arrangements set out above, and respective roles and responsibilities have been established.

RCM and GCR

II. Country-Level Coordination in Internal Displacement Emergencies

7.2. In line with [UNHCR's Policy on Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement](#)³³, the Representative shall ensure that the following actions are carried out:

- In conflict-related internal displacement, assume leadership of the Protection, Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Clusters from the start of the emergency and lead or co-lead inter-agency efforts on AAP and participate in or (co-) lead PSEA;
- In cases of natural hazard-induced internal displacement, assess capacity for operational response and Cluster leadership, based on an adequate UNHCR in-country presence and in consultation with the government and other humanitarian actors as appropriate. If UNHCR is already leading cluster(s) for a conflict-induced emergency when a natural hazard event occurs, that leadership must be maintained;
- Contribute as a member of UNCT/HCT to formulating and delivering collective outcomes together with development and peacebuilding actors;

Contribute to the humanitarian system

³¹ Protocols will become available in 2023 at Emergency Information Management section of intranet.

³² For example: programme, operations, resource mobilization, information management, reporting, coordination, registration and identity management, protection including GBV, AAP and PSEA, and technical support. The specific functional profiles required are determined in line with existing capacities and the context.

³³ Also see: [Guidance Package for UNHCR's Engagement in Situations of Internal Displacement](#).

- Ensure effective leadership and representation of UNHCR-led cluster(s) including through adequate staffing for leadership, coordination, IDP enrolment, information management and for mounting the operational response;
- Promote the centrality of protection, protection mainstreaming and accountability to affected people across all clusters/sectors and the inter-agency response;
- Bring together a multi-functional emergency team within the country office, sub-office(s) or across the country operation as appropriate, to support UNHCR's coordination role on the ground, including proactive communications and timely sharing of information on needs and response;
- Confirm to the regional bureau(x) and DESS that the arrangements set out above, and respective roles and responsibilities have been established.

III. Country-Level Coordination in Mixed Situations

7.3. The 2014 [Joint UNHCR-OCHA Note on Mixed Situations: Coordination in Practice](#) clarifies leadership and coordination arrangements in mixed IDP and refugee situations, and describes the practical interaction of the IASC system and the UNHCR RCM.

7.4. The 2022 [IOM/UNHCR Framework of Engagement](#) and the 2019 [Joint Letter from IOM and UNHCR on the Collaboration Between the Two Organizations](#) reiterate the distinct roles and coordination responsibilities of IOM and UNHCR to enable an effective operational response in cases of mixed movement involving refugees and migrants³⁴.

Democratic Republic of the Congo. UNHCR responds to shelter needs of thousands of IDPs victims of violence and clashes between FARDC and M23. © UNHCR/Blaise Sanyila



³⁴ Also see: [The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (A/RES/73/195).

IV. Coordination at Regional / HQ level

- 7.5.** For Level 1 emergencies, the regional bureau(x) and DESS determine and establish the frequency and modalities of coordination mechanisms with relevant country operation(s)³⁵. Regular meetings between the regional bureau(x), DESS and country operation(s) shall ensure the required support during the proactive preparedness period and initial response. Other HQ divisions are invited as required.
- 7.6.** For Level 2 or 3 emergencies, the regional bureau(x) establishes an Emergency Cell (EC) that is co-chaired by the Director or the Deputy Director of the regional bureau and DESS. The objective of the EC is to coordinate support for the country operation(s), ensuring that relevant issues and requirements are rapidly addressed to enable a timely and effective response³⁶. Participation in the EC is limited to key personnel from the relevant country operation(s), regional bureau(x), DESS and relevant HQ divisions.
- 7.7.** The EC may decide to establish specialist or subject-specific cells (e.g., Protection, Human Resources, Supply, Global Communications, Resource Mobilization, Security, IT, Administration/Finance, etc.) to focus on and track required actions. Specialist Cell(s) address and provide updates to the EC on the issues and challenges faced in the respective subject areas and progress in resolving them.

Syria. UNHCR distributes winter core relief items to families in Alleramon town, northern rural Aleppo. © UNHCR/ Hameed Maarouf



³⁵ May also include missions to the country operation(s) concerned.

³⁶ These issues may include leadership, coordination, management, HR and deployments, external relations, strategic communication, resource mobilization and other pertinent regional and global aspects.

8. MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES AND SPECIAL EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- 8.1.** Upon UNHCR's declaration of an emergency level, regional and central emergency resources – including human, financial and material – shall be made available to the country operation(s) concerned.

I. Human Resources

- 8.2.** Country operation(s) shall immediately identify staffing requirements, including for coordination responsibilities, with the respective regional bureau(x). If these needs cannot be covered by available human resources in the country operation(s) and the regional bureau(x), they shall work with DHR and DESS to ensure that these needs are met.

- 8.3.** At any point during an emergency declaration, country operation(s) may request missions and different types of time-bound deployments to address increased or new humanitarian needs through DESS and in coordination with DHR³⁷.

Immediate support

- 8.4.** In coordination with country operation(s) and regional bureau(x), DESS may deploy Emergency Surge Team staff members to support the country operation(s) in their preparedness actions, organization of an immediate response, leadership and coordination mechanisms during any emergency level. A Principal Emergency Coordinator or another senior member of DESS is automatically deployed for a Level 3 emergency together with a multi-functional support team.

- 8.5.** Country operation(s) must plan from the outset for the transition from emergency deployments to more stable staffing arrangements, including through temporary assignments or appointments and Fast Track positions³⁸ if appropriate.

Actions to increase stability

- 8.6.** Fast Track vacancy announcements are normally issued within the first eight weeks of an emergency declaration to avoid gaps between the emergency deployments and new personnel appointments. Before official submission to the Resource Planning and Management Board by the regional bureau, DESS may circulate a draft Fast Track submission to HQ divisions for comments to ensure that the proposed staffing is in line with assessed institutional accountabilities.

- 8.7.** The Regional Bureau Director and/or Representative have the authority to redeploy a staff member to a vacant Fast Track or regular position, provided that the staff member is serving on a position at the same grade and in the same operation, and consents to the redeployment. In addition, they have the authority to redeploy Fast Track international positions within a country and/or across countries covered by an emergency declaration³⁹.

³⁷ Human resources are made available by DESS and DHR through the Senior Corporate Emergency Roster (SCER), the Emergency Response Team (ERT) Roster, the functional/technical rosters, standby partnership arrangements, affiliate workforce, technical staff from divisions, former ERT members and other forms of shorter- and longer-term deployments.

³⁸ In line with [UNHCR/HCP/2022/07 Recruitment and Assignments Policy](#).

³⁹ With one month notice and only when the positions were advertised with this possibility, and the staff member has given prior consent at the time of application. See: [UNHCR/AI/2019/07/Rev.2 Resource Allocation Framework](#) (RAF). In this scenario, the staff member's SAL will be adjusted in accordance with the needs of the operation and in agreement with the staff member, taking into account the classification of the duty station.

Expedited HR procedures

- 8.8.** To expedite recruitment of temporary personnel, the Representative and Head(s) of sub-office have the authority to waive the desk review of applications with a clear justification of why a certain candidate was selected in each instance. Country operation(s) can select a candidate directly from (i) local or international talent pools, (ii) staff-in-between assignments (SIBA), (iii) staff members in the last months of their Standard Assignment Length (SAL), or (iv) on a current temporary assignment.
- 8.9.** In close coordination with DHR, and on a risk management and mitigation basis, exceptional measures can be utilized to expedite assignments and recruitment to operations with an emergency declaration⁴⁰. These include but are not limited to:
- A reduced minimum relevant working experience requirement;
 - Completion of professional reference checks within six months from the date of appointment;
 - Emergency on-boarding and learning.

II. Financial Resources

Emergency- reserved Budget

- 8.10.** Country operation(s) elaborate resource requirements from the start of an emergency based on planning with partners and with the support of the regional bureau(x), DESS, DSPR and DER. These requirements form the basis for supplementary budgets and resource mobilization strategies and must be properly reflected in pertinent contingency plans, Refugee Response Plans⁴¹ and/or Humanitarian Response Plans.
- 8.11.** Country operation(s) may request additional financial resources from the Emergency-reserved Budget in all emergency levels⁴². The authority to transfer appropriations from the Operational Reserve and/or to allocate OL from the Emergency-reserved Budget is delegated as follows to:
- The relevant regional bureau(x) Director(s) for requests of up to USD 5 million per country;
 - The AHC-O for requests of up to USD 10 million per country.
- 8.12.** Emergency appropriations and OL allocations should be transferred no later than 48 hours from the date of the request. Allocations from the Emergency-Reserved Budget are cumulative throughout the emergency declaration, including any extension and change of level, and are delinked from the financial calendar⁴³. The appropriations and OL allocations should be used to cover emergency preparedness and response needs, including compliance with the relevant Security Risk Management Measures (SRMMs)⁴⁴.

⁴⁰ Conditions for position changes concerning notification of intent, effective date of a decision and minimum service length requirement, are waived or reduced in Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies. See: para 7.14 of [RAF](#).

⁴¹ See: [UNHCR Emergency Handbook](#).

⁴² Additional resource requirements for an emergency can be addressed through the creation of a Supplementary Budget, and/or an increase of Operations Plan budget (OP) and/or Operating Level (OL), by submitting a request to the Resource Planning and Management Board (RPMB). See: para 8.10 of the [RAF](#).

⁴³ The maximum transfer of appropriations and OL increase from the Emergency-reserved Budget per country is USD 10 million per declared emergency.

⁴⁴ In line with [UNHCR/HCP/2020/03 Policy on Security Management](#).



Thousands of people have fled to Chad due to intercommunal clashes over scarce resources in Cameroon. © UNHCR/Aristophane Ngargoune

III. Supply

8.13. Upon request by country operation(s) or regional bureau(x), DESS promptly makes material resources available for emergency response⁴⁵.

8.14. Special supply procedures apply at all emergency levels for the duration of the declaration period, including any extension:

- The Request for Quotations (RFQ) ceiling is USD 750,000, if the most senior Supply Officer in the country operation is graded P4 or above⁴⁶;
- The procurement approval authority of the Representative is USD 250,000;
- The procurement approval authority of the Local Committee on Contracts (LCC) is USD 750,000, if the most senior Supply Officer in the country operation is graded P4 or above⁴⁷;
- The minimum floating periods for formal method of solicitation processes may be shortened to respond to urgent needs⁴⁸.

8.15. Country operation(s) should prioritize local procurement over international procurement where conditions allow.

⁴⁵ The Global Stock Management is maintained to provide Core Relief Items (CRIs), security equipment and other materials as needed. The Global Fleet Management (DFAM) in cooperation with DESS will ensure expeditious delivery of vehicles to the operational areas.

⁴⁶ If the most senior Supply staff is below P4, to increase the RFQ ceiling, the country operation can request approval from the Head of SMS.

⁴⁷ If the country operation's most senior Supply staff is below P4, to increase the LCC threshold, the operation can request approval from the Headquarters Committee on Contracts (HCC), through the Head of Supply Management Service (SMS).

⁴⁸ The minimum floating period can be shortened to no less than two weeks for a Request for Proposal (RFP) and to no less than one week in the case of an Invitation to Bid (ITB). There is no minimum timeline for the solicitation of a Request for Quotation (RFQ).

IV. Cash Based Interventions

8.16. Cash Based Interventions (CBI) are the preferred modality of assistance in emergencies. UNHCR must, in line with the [UNHCR Policy on Cash-Based Interventions](#), pursue a why-not cash approach, including proactively using CBI for service delivery and protection, whenever possible. This includes feasibility assessments, engaging in cash coordination mechanisms and partnerships, and expanding or contracting new financial service providers. Should an operation lack cash transfer mechanisms, global arrangements are in place. To support rapid scale up of cash assistance in declared emergencies, the support of the Global CBI Payments Hub may be utilized.

Why-not cash

V. Partnership Agreements

8.17. Special partner management procedures apply at all emergency levels for the duration of the declaration, including any extension:

- The Representative or the Head of sub-office has the authority to take decisions on partner selection upon the recommendation of the Implementing Partnership Management Committee (IPMC) without the need to launch a new Call for Expression of Interest⁴⁹. The documented decision must outline why a Call for Expression of Interest was not launched;
- The UN Partner Portal registration and applicable assessment processes, including PSEA capacity⁵⁰, for new partners should be completed as soon as possible and no later than three months after signing the partnership agreement.
- Letters of Mutual Intent (LOMI) can be used to allow activities to commence while the standard agreement is being negotiated⁵¹. Once the situation normalizes, standard partnership agreements should be signed with funded partners.
- Partners can undertake procurement above USD 100,000 for six months from the start date of their Agreement, provided they commit to submitting a Pre-Qualification for Procurement application within this timeframe and their procurement capacity is assessed as soon as feasible⁵².

Yemen. Displaced woman received Cash Assistance for her shelter maintenance provided by UNHCR pilot project to support IDPs in south of Yemen
© UNHCR/Ahmed Al-Mayadeen



⁴⁹ The Representative or the Head of sub-office shall consider the viability of a Call for Expression of Interest when reviewing implementation modalities ahead of the next year of implementation. Also see: [UNHCR/AI/2021/11 Procedure for the Selection and Retention of Partners for Partnership Agreements](#).

⁵⁰ See: [UNHCR/AI/2021/06 Administrative Instruction on Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment](#).

⁵¹ The duration of a LOMI cannot be later than 31 December of the Budget Year.

⁵² DESS/SMS should be informed in such cases (HQPMP@unhcr.org).

9. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT INSTRUMENTS FOR LEVEL 2 AND 3 EMERGENCIES

9.1. In addition to other support mechanisms, the below mentioned instruments are designed to facilitate a more robust institutional response to emergencies. These instruments build on, complement and reinforce each other by ensuring an UNHCR-wide perspective and a common focus between the country operation(s), regional bureaux and HQ divisions.

I. Senior Level Working Group

9.2. The Senior Level Working Group (SLWG) ensures that the necessary organizational capacities are in place at all levels to support a timely and effective emergency response. It consists of the Directors of relevant regional bureau(x) and HQ divisions and the AHC-P, and is led by the AHC-O. A SLWG shall be convened within two weeks of the declaration of a Level 2 or Level 3 emergency, and thereafter as and when required in order to ensure sustained focus.

9.3. The SLWG ensures that UNHCR's response is delivered in line with this Policy and other applicable policies, and that appropriate support is provided from across UNHCR to enable the establishment of sound strategy, leadership and coordination, operational delivery arrangements, inter-agency mechanisms, external relations capacities and other key elements. The SLWG is kept abreast of developments through regular updates from the regional bureau(x)/country operation(s). It considers and oversees implementation of the recommendations emerging from Joint Senior Level Missions (JSLM) and Real-Time Reviews (RTR) as well as from inter-agency monitoring procedures, such as IASC Operational Peer Reviews.

II. Joint Senior Level Mission

9.4. Within the first four weeks following the declaration of a Level 2 or 3 emergency, Directors/Deputy Directors of the relevant regional bureau(x) and DESS undertake a Joint Senior Level Mission (JSLM)⁵³ to conduct a high-level review of the immediate response to the emergency, including its protection and operational strategy, to identify challenges and provide operational guidance.

9.5. Upon completion of the mission, the JSLM members provide a briefing and written report with a summary of findings and recommendations to the AHC-O and the AHC-P. The AHC-O reviews the report and takes appropriate action through the SLWG to oversee the implementation of the endorsed recommendations. Where required, matters may be escalated to the High Commissioner for his/her attention or decision.

Support at
HQ level

⁵³ Participation of other HQ divisions in the JSLM depends on the specific profile of the emergency in question, taking into account the cross-cutting nature of Protection, but the number of participants should be kept to a minimum.

III. Real-Time Review

- 9.6.** Regional bureau(x) and DESS undertake a Real-Time Review (RTR) of a UNHCR Level 3 emergency three months after the emergency declaration⁵⁴. Working closely with country teams and engaging all key stakeholders, the RTR provides an evidence-based review of the overall response to date in order to identify key areas where additional support and/or adjustments are required.
- 9.7.** The RTR: (i) takes stock of the timeliness, appropriateness and effectiveness of UNHCR's response and engagement at country, regional and HQ levels; (ii) monitors the application of this Policy; and (iii) recommends adjustments and course corrections, if necessary.
- 9.8.** The regional bureau has the primary responsibility to ensure that the RTR's recommendations are tracked and implemented by the country operation(s), and to follow up with relevant HQ divisions.
- 9.9.** In consultation with regional bureau(x) or upon the request of the AHC-O, a similar exercise may be undertaken in Level 2 emergencies.

Together for
the better

10. POST-EMERGENCY PHASE

- 10.1.** From the beginning of an emergency declaration, country operation(s) shall initiate planning for a post-emergency period. This planning shall underpin the transition from an emergency into a regular operational response⁵⁵.
- 10.2.** At the end of the emergency declaration, in order to ensure continuity of coordination and/or response, country operation(s), regional bureau(x) and DESS, in collaboration with key HQ divisions, review, inter alia: relevant protection and operational strategies, frameworks and leadership arrangements; operational footprint, structure and security. This includes a careful review of offices⁵⁶ and staffing arrangements in line with allocated financial resources and projected funding levels⁵⁷.

Transition to
regular response

11. EVALUATION

- 11.1.** An evaluation of a Level 3 emergency shall be conducted no later than 15 months after the Level 3 emergency declaration. Such evaluations seek to build on the Real-Time Review and shall be commissioned and managed by the UNHCR Evaluation Office.
- 11.2.** Evaluations of Level 1 and 2 emergencies may also be commissioned at the request of the Senior Executive Team (SET) or the regional bureau(x) in line with the provisions of the [Policy for Evaluation in UNHCR](#)⁵⁸.

⁵⁴ Participation of other HQ divisions in the RTR depends on the specific profile of the emergency in question.

⁵⁵ See: para 6.11 of the Policy.

⁵⁶ See: [UNHCR Handbook for Designing Field Presences](#).

⁵⁷ See: para 7.13 of [UNHCR/AI/2019/07/Rev.2 Administrative Instruction on the Resource Allocation Framework](#).

⁵⁸ [UNHCR/HCP/2022/3 Policy for Evaluation in UNHCR](#).

12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

12.1. UNHCR is accountable to persons of concern in all aspects of emergency preparedness and response according to the priorities outlined in its institutional, policy and strategic documents, among them the [Policy on Age, Gender and Diversity](#) and [Operational Guidance on Accountability to Affected People](#).

12.2. The High Commissioner is vested with overall accountability for UNHCR's emergency operations in line with his/her mandated responsibilities. The High Commissioner is supported by the SET members in their respective areas of responsibility, most notably the AHC-O who oversees UNHCR emergency preparedness and response on a day-to-day basis and has the authority to allocate resources from the Emergency-reserved Budget.

12.3. In line with the roles, accountabilities and authorities of country offices, regional bureaux and headquarters divisions, the overall roles for implementing this policy are as follows:

12.4. The country Representative is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring strategic and operational coherence throughout the country, including through active participation in inter-agency fora such as the UNCT/HCT;
- b) Leading risk analysis to identify and manage emergency risks on a continuous basis, and escalating high risks to the regional bureau and DESS as required;
- c) Developing a multi-stakeholder contingency plan for UNHCR's populations of concern in case of high risk(s) of a new or escalated emergency, and a post-emergency transition plan when required;
- d) Leading timely emergency preparedness and response, including ensuring recommendations and humanitarian assistance for refugees, IDPs, stateless persons, returnees and other persons of concern, based on assessed needs;
- e) Coordinating the overall refugee response, including multi-stakeholder plans and appeals;
- f) Ensuring regular monitoring throughout an emergency, which together with political, situational and data analysis provides the basis for corrective programming and feeds further planning and implementation processes;
- g) Mobilizing resources and partnerships to ensure an effective response to humanitarian needs and, if required, escalating the need for additional resources to the regional bureau;
- h) Ensuring the necessary capacity to collect operational data and effectively share information and products with external audiences, thereby establishing UNHCR as a trusted source of information about and for persons of concern;
- i) Ensuring timely and systematic communications, including sharing key information and updates relating to emergency preparedness and response, with the regional bureau, DESS and other relevant HQ divisions;
- j) Establishing a protection coordination mechanism, including child protection and GBV as a dedicated sub-sector/cluster;
- k) Planning, implementing and monitoring security, occupational health and safety standards and risk-based preventive measures;
- l) Managing resources as per the accountabilities and authorities provided for in the [RAF](#);

Country level

- m) Contributing to the inter-agency operational response; and ensuring effective leadership and coordination of the clusters under UNHCR's responsibility, most notably Protection, Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management;
- n) Creating, leading, co-leading or participating in the inter-agency coordination mechanism for PSEA, depending on the context;
- o) Participating in over-arching UNCT/HCT and cluster management to integrate the centrality of protection and the drive for solutions in the response;
- p) Taking appropriate action in line with the recommendations of SLWG, JSLM, RTR and other support instruments.

12.5. The regional bureau Director is responsible for:

- a) Overseeing country operations' emergency risk analysis, monitoring and preparedness level and, in collaboration with DESS and other HQ divisions, providing multi-functional support for the implementation of preparedness in country operations;
- b) Harmonizing emergency risk analysis within the region, and participating in regional preparedness initiatives organized with DESS;
- c) Establishing and supporting regional/HQ coordination modalities for emergencies, including activating and co-chairing Emergency Cells. Ensuring timely and well-coordinated support to and between country operations, with other regional bureaux and HQ divisions;
- d) Participating in SLWG, JSLM, RTR and other support mechanisms, and monitoring implementation of their recommendations by country operations;
- e) In collaboration with HQ divisions, supporting country operations to implement and monitor relevant strategies, programmes and projects by providing guidance, capacity development, technical expertise, strategic advice and any other form of support required, including deployment of technical experts (e.g. on PSEA, GBV, shelter, settlement, child protection and education) to country operations;
- f) Maintaining clear and timely communication and sharing of key information with country operations, DESS and other relevant HQ divisions at all stages of the emergency;
- g) Allocating resources to country operations⁵⁹ and facilitating and supporting the timely mobilization of additional financial, material and human resources to meet the established emergency preparedness and response needs, including for the post-emergency phase.

12.6. Divisions provide institutional coherence at the global level, and functional guidance and operational support to the Bureaux. HQ division Directors are responsible for ensuring that UNHCR is prepared and able to respond quickly and effectively, in collaboration with other actors, to any emergency. More specifically:

- **The Division of Emergency, Supply and Security (DESS)** is responsible for ensuring overall coherence of UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response. DESS provides proactive and timely operational support, guidance and oversight to country operations, regional bureaux and HQ divisions in relation to emergency preparedness and response processes, supply chain management, and the security of UNHCR personnel and persons of concern. DESS coordinates with all HQ divisions to ensure effective support to the regional bureaux and country operations.

⁵⁹ The regional bureau Director has the authority to allocate resources for emergencies within the corresponding region under the [RAF](#).

DESS undertakes global horizon scanning for new and escalated emergencies, supports risk analysis across regions, including on security trends, and provides direct security advice. DESS facilitates training and timely deployment of emergency roster staff; and provides management of all emergency rosters including its external stand-by partners; and co-leads and facilitates Emergency Cells, Joint Senior-Level Missions and Real-Time Reviews. DESS maintains the Global Stock Management to provide CRIs, security equipment and other materials as needed. At global level, DESS maintains regular interactions with its UN HQ counterparts, most notably the IASC Emergency Directors Group (EDG), the Inter-Agency Preparedness, Early Action, and Readiness Group⁶⁰ and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network, especially the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).

- **The Division of International Protection (DIP)** provides the necessary thematic, functional and operational advice and support to the regional bureaux and country operations to enhance protection delivery and ensure all programmatic areas of the protection response (community-based protection, GBV, child protection, AAP etc.) are adequately addressed in an emergency. DIP also provides guidance on protection sector/cluster management and coordination, and oversees support provided to the country operations by the Global Protection Cluster.
- **The Division of Human Resources (DHR)** provides guidance and support on (i) human resources management issues, including staffing, health, wellbeing and accommodation of the workforce; (ii) learning and capacity development; and (iii) the rapid deployment of personnel on a temporary basis and timely deployment on Fast Track assignments. In collaboration with DESS, DHR continuously monitors the adequacy and implementation of HR policies in emergencies and takes action when necessary to enable fast and efficient mobilization of personnel and effective response to HR needs, including through a dedicated HR emergency unit and increased standby capacity for specific profiles.
- **The Division of Financial and Administrative Management (DFAM)** is responsible for authorizing UNHCR bank accounts, providing due diligence in the selection of financial service providers and clearance of CBI-related financial, legal and procurement documents, transferring funds to the field, providing guidance on financial operations, financial transactional processing and approving the DOAP, and fleet management.
- **The Division of External Relations (DER)** supports country operations and regional bureaux with emergency resource mobilization, including through Supplementary Appeals, (Regional) Refugee Response Plans and Humanitarian Response Plans. DER activates the “Network of PSP Offices and National Partners” to mobilize private donors; supports the development and dissemination of external updates and donor/partner briefings; conducts advocacy, outreach and public awareness; supports timely content gathering and production, media and social media analysis and engagement, and strategic and crisis communications. DER provides strategic advice on coordination arrangements and inter-agency processes, and engages in global NGO and UN coordination.

60 See: [Early Warning, Early Action and Readiness \(EWEAR\) Reports and Monthly Horizon-Scanning Briefs](#).

- **The Division of Information Systems & Telecommunications (DIST)** is responsible at the global level for internet connectivity, secure communications, coordination and guidance. In close collaboration with the regional bureaux and country operations, DIST may also draw on its partners to establish the Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector (RETS).
- **The Division of Strategic Planning and Results (DSPR)** advises on and clears Supplementary Budgets, reviews submissions for budget allocations for the emergency and post-emergency phases, advises the RPMB on resource allocations, and processes resource management decisions in ERP system(s). It also provides guidance on project and partnership management, including assessment, monitoring and quality assurance; and on the use of UNHCR's Results-Based Management system (COMPASS) in emergencies.
- **The Division of Resilience and Solutions (DRS)** provides thematic, functional and operational support to the regional bureaux and country operations in preparing for and delivering holistic responses in programmatic areas such as CBI, Public Health, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Settlement Planning, Shelter, Education, WASH, as well as coordinated leadership for the Global Shelter and CCCM Clusters. DRS also supports country operations and the regional bureaux in the search for solutions, including through partnerships with development actors and international financial institutions.

12.7. Other HQ entities also support all phases of emergency preparedness and response, among which:

- **The Evaluation Office** provides evidence and opportunities for course correction through Level 3 emergency evaluations.
- **The Global Data Service (GDS)** provides guidance and technical support to regional bureaux and country operations on the procedures⁶¹, systems and tools related to registration, identity management, information management (including GIS), operational data management, statistics, and data protection. GDS also provides surge support in these fields, manages a global stockpile of registration material, and co-manages functional emergency rosters together with DESS.
- **The Office of the Inspector General (IGO)** contributes to comprehensive oversight functions within UNHCR by assessing the quality of UNHCR's management, including in emergencies, in line with the [Policy on Independent Oversight](#)⁶².
- **The Office of the Senior Coordinator on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (PSEA/SH)** supports regional bureaux and country operations in these efforts, including implementing the [Policy on the Victim-Centred Approach](#).

⁶¹ See also: [UNHCR, DIMA Units: A Framework for Delivery, February 2021, Annex A](#).

⁶² The Policy on Independent Oversight also describes the roles of other oversight bodies, including the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the UN Board of Auditors (BoA).



Ecuador. UNHCR and associations of refugees and migrants from Venezuela support people affected by natural disaster in Quito. © UNHCR/ Jaime Giménez

- **The Office of the Special Advisor on Climate Action (OSACA)** provides strategic guidance, oversight and expertise to drive forward UNHCR’s climate action agenda in line with UNHCR’s [Strategic Framework for Climate Action](#), which includes strengthening preparedness, anticipatory action and response to support protection and solutions for displaced people and their hosts in climate-affected emergencies;
- **The Transformation and Change Service (TCS)** provides strategic advice and facilitates changes in the regulatory framework. This would typically include ad hoc processes, authorities or practices necessary to support emergency preparedness and response efforts of the organization on time-limited basis.

13. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

- 13.1.** Overall compliance with this Policy is monitored by DESS in close collaboration with the regional bureaux and relevant HQ divisions. The regional bureaux actively monitor compliance and support the implementation of the Policy in the country operations under their purview.

14. DATES AND CONTACT

- 14.1.** This Policy is effective on 1 February 2023 and will be applicable to all emergency declarations from this date. The next review of the Policy shall be conducted before 31 December 2027.
- 14.2.** The contact for this Policy is the Deputy Director of the Division of Emergency, Security and Supply (DESS).

15. HISTORY

- 15.1.** This Policy:
- Supersedes and replaces the *Policy on Emergency Preparedness and Response* (UNHCR/HCP/2017/1/Rev.1);
 - Supersedes and replaces UNHCR/OG/2016/3 - *Operational Guidelines on High Alert List for Emergency Preparedness (HALEP)*.

16. ACRONYMS

AAP	Accountability to Affected People
AGD	Age, Gender and Diversity
AHC-O	Assistant High Commissioner (Operations)
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
BoA	United Nations Board of Auditors
CBI	Cash-Based Intervention
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management
CRIs	Core Relief Items
DER	Division of External Relations
DESS	Division of Emergency, Security and Supply
DFAM	Division of Financial and Administrative Management
DHR	Division of Human Resources
DIMA	Data, Identity Management and Analysis Units
DIP	Division of International Protection
DIST	Division of Information Systems and Telecommunications
DOAP	Delegation of Authority Plan
DRS	Division of Resilience and Solutions
DSPR	Division of Strategic Planning and Results
EC	Emergency Cell
EDG	IASC Emergency Directors Group
EPRP	Emergency Preparedness and Response Portal
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator (UN)
ERM	Enterprise Risk Management
ERT	Emergency Response Team
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCR	Global Compact on Refugees
GDS	Global Data Service
HCC	Headquarters Committee on Contracts
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
HQ	Headquarters
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IGO	Office of the Inspector General
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPMC	Implementing Partnership Management Committee

IT	Information Technology
ITB	Invitations to Bid
JSLM	Joint Senior Level Mission
LCC	Local Committee on Contracts
LOMI	Letter of Mutual Intent
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OIOS	United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services
OL	Operating Level
OP	Operations Plan
ORMS	Organizational Resilience Management System
OSACA	Office of the Special Advisor on Climate Action
PAP	Preparedness Action Plan
PSEA/SH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse / Sexual Harassment
PSP	Private Sector Partnership
RAF	Resource Allocation Framework
RC/HC	Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator
RCM	Refugee Coordination Model
RFP	Request for Proposals
RFQ	Request for Quotations
RPMB	Resource Planning and Management Board
RTR	Real-Time Review
SAL	Standard Assignment Length
SCER	Senior Corporate Emergency Roster
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SET	Senior Executive Team
SIBA	Staff-In-Between Assignments
SLWG	Senior Level Working Group
SMS	Supply Management Service
SMT/ASMT	Security Management Team/Area Security Management Team
SRM	Security Risk Management
TCS	Transformation and Change Service
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

Emergency Handbook is our guide to an agile, effective and community-based humanitarian emergency preparedness and response. Please visit <https://emergency.unhcr.org/>



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