acaps

PROTECTION RISKS MONITOR

DATA COLLECTION GUIDANCE AND DATASET CODEBOOK

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PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This brief provides guidance for the collection and analysis of protection information in humanitarian settings. Through incorporating protection risks into relevant ACAPS analysis products, this brief also further aims to identify events and trends affecting both people in crisis and humanitarian organisations at national and subnational levels. The protection risks monitoring methodology brings together qualitative and quantitative information from various sources and datasets structured across 15 risks to inform analysis. This document serves as both a data collection guide and dataset codebook for the data collection process. The Global Protection Cluster's Protection Analytical Framework has been used extensively to refine and expand this guideline. The Global Protection Cluster's risk descriptions have been used to ensure streamlining and harmonisation, as these descriptors serve as a standardised framework for categorising protection risks across operations. This consistency helps create a solid narrative on protection, enhancing the effectiveness of programming and advocacy efforts.

METHODOLOGY AND KEY DEFINITIONS

ACAPS is tracking 'protection risks', including one-off events, policies, and recurrent and systematic violations. Protection risks are those that impede people's meaningful access to humanitarian assistance, as well as their rights, safety, and dignity. These risks may impose violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation. In Table 1, we present the list of protection risks and their scope. The Protection Risk Monitor Dataset provides information relevant to affected populations' main protection threats, vulnerabilities, coping mechanisms, and existing capacities. The dataset informs decision makers and humanitarian responders of potential protection risks to affected populations and/or service operations.

Table 1. List of protection risks

	PROTECTION RISK	PROTECTION RISK SCOPE
1	Abduction, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention	Involves unlawful detention, abduction, and enforced disappearance, often without legal justification. Enforced disappearance occurs when state agents or their affiliates detain and conceal an individual's fate. Arbitrary arrests lack legitimate purpose and violate legal procedures.
2	Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects	Refers to violence against civilians and civilian infrastructure during armed conflict. This includes direct, indiscriminate, and disproportionate attacks that do not distinguish between combatants and civilians.
3	Child and forced family separation	Involves the separation of children from their families as a result of conflict, natural hazards, or other crises. This separation increases children's risk of experiencing violence and exploitation.
4	Child, early or forced marriage	Any marriage involving a child under 18, often occurring as a coping mechanism in humanitarian emergencies. This is a form of forced marriage, as children are unable to give informed consent.
5	Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access	Involves the unjustified denial of access to resources and services based on discriminatory practices. This includes the systemic discrimination and stigmatisation of specific groups.
6	Disinformation and denial of access to information	Refers to the dissemination of false information or the denial of access to information, hindering the population's ability to make informed decisions and access rights.
7	Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups	Involves coercing children or adult to serve in armed groups, violating their rights and exposing them to violence and exploitation.
8	Gender-based violence	Encompasses harmful, gender-based acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm. Gender-based violence is rooted in systemic gender inequality and disproportionately affects women, girls, and marginalised groups.
9	Impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies and justice	Involves barriers preventing individuals from obtaining legal identity and accessing justice, leading to the further marginalisation and violation of rights.
10	Presence of mine and other explosive ordnance	Refers to the dangers posed by explosive ordnance, which can cause injury or death and hinder access to resources and safe living conditions.
11	Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress	Involves acts intended to cause psychological harm, aggravated by conflict and humanitarian crises, leading to long-term mental health issues.
12	Theft, extortion, forced eviction or destruction of personal property	Covers the unlawful dispossession and destruction of property, often involving coercion or failure by the authorities to protect individuals' rights.
13	Torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment	Refers to acts of torture and inhumane treatment inflicted by state or non-state stakeholders, often to intimidate or extract information.
14	Trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices	Involves coercion into labour or sexual exploitation, including trafficking and forced labour practices that violate human rights.
15	Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement	Involves restrictions on movement, forced displacement, and sieges that prevent individuals from safely accessing resources and services.

The Protection Risk Monitor Dataset tracks the current threats, vulnerabilities, and existing capacities affecting populations, monitoring harmful and discriminatory events, violations, and abuses. Protection risk is defined as the actual or potential exposure of an affected population to violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation.

The dataset provides information on affected populations' main protection threats, vulnerabilities, coping strategies, and existing capacities (Box 1). The dataset informs decision makers and humanitarian responders of potential protection risks to people and service operations. The dataset's aims are set out below.

- **Identify potential risks:** protection risk monitoring identifies potential risks to the safety and wellbeing of individuals or groups. Such monitoring involves assessing threats, vulnerabilities, and capacities.

- **Assess threats:** this includes analysing potential dangers, such as violence, exploitation, and discrimination. Also, natural hazards that can exacerbate or create new protection threats.

- **Analyse vulnerabilities:** 'vulnerabilities' refers to factors that increase an individual or group's susceptibility to harm.

- **Evaluate capacities:** 'capacities' refers to the resources and strengths of individuals or groups to mitigate risks and protect themselves.

- **Identify intersectional vulnerability:** recognising that individuals may face multiple, intersecting risks based on factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and migratory or socioeconomic status.

Box 1. Key protection concepts

- **Threat:** a human activity or product of human activity that results in a form of violence, coercion, or deliberate deprivation. Threats can be enacted by a perpetrator (agent of the threat) or a policy or ethnicity norm (source of the threat) that is causing harm.

- **Vulnerability:** certain characteristics or circumstances of an individual or group, or their surrounding physical environment, which diminish the ability to anticipate, cope with, resist, or recover from the impact of a threat. People differ in their exposure to threats depending on social group, gender, ethnicity, age, and other factors. Vulnerability is not a fixed or static criterion attached to specific categories of people, and no one is born vulnerable.

- **Capacity:** the resources and capabilities available to individuals, households, and communities to cope with threats or resist or mitigate the impact of threats. Resources can be material or found in the way a community is organised. Capabilities can include specific skill sets or the ability to access certain services or move freely to a safer place.

The purpose of this protection risk monitoring is as follows.

- Identify and mitigate risks: protection risk monitoring aims to identify and assess potential threats to individuals or communities.

- Improve protection strategies: by understanding risks, organisations can develop and refine collective protection strategies to ensure individuals' security and wellbeing.

- Enhance accountability: protection risk monitoring promotes transparency and accountability, ensuring that organisations are effectively addressing potential risks.

- Identify emerging trends: continuous monitoring allows organisations to detect emerging risks and trends early, enabling proactive responses rather than reactive measures.

- Support continuous protection analysis and the production of protection analysis updates (PAU): regular updates to the dataset will ensure that the joined-up protection analysis and the Protection Analysis Updates – PAUs – elaborated by Protection Clusters are consistently refreshed with the latest information, enabling organisations to respond proactively to changing circumstances and emerging risks.

The dataset can be used to conduct the below actions.

- Protection risk tracking and monitoring: identifying protection risks to inform strategies and responses, as well as regularly assessing the effectiveness of protection interventions, tracking key risks, and identifying areas for improvement.

- Protection risk analysis and reporting: understanding the risks in humanitarian response posed by threats and vulnerabilities in order to develop mitigation measures, alongside analysing data to identify trends, patterns, and insights informing decision-making and resource allocation.

The dataset has information that falls under the four essential pillars of the Global Protection Cluster's Protection Analytical Framework. This framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the context, threats, effects, and capacities related to protection risks. The pillars ensure a thorough and nuanced analysis, guiding effective protection strategies and responses.

1. Context analysis

Context analysis is critical to understanding the specific factors influencing the dynamics of a crisis and the resultant protection situation. Information could be focused on identifying and examining the contextual and environmental characteristics that provoke and shape a crisis. Key aspects include:

- factors influencing crisis dynamics and protection situations
- specific characteristics of the country context and environment.

2. Current threats

Identifying current threats to a population is essential to recognising the types of dangers people face in crisis settings. Key aspects include:

- types of threats currently occurring
- agents responsible for threats
- origins and driving factors of threats.

3. The effect of threats on a population

Analysing the effect of threats on different population groups is vital to understanding how and why certain groups are vulnerable. Key aspects include:

- identifying affected population groups
- understanding why these groups are vulnerable
- analysing the varied consequences of threats across different demographic groups and geographic areas.

4. Existing capacities to address protection threats

Assessing existing capacities to address protection threats is key to leveraging available resources and capabilities. This pillar examines:

- resources and capabilities at the individual, community, and institutional levels
- local, national, and international capacities to mitigate or address threats
- institutional responses and the strength of social networks and community organisations.

A thorough context analysis helps humanitarian responders comprehend the underlying causes and drivers of protection risks, enabling more targeted and effective interventions. Understanding the nature and geographic distribution of threats enables a more precise and timely response to protect affected populations. Analysing the effects of threats on different population groups is vital to understanding how and why certain groups are vulnerable, helping to tailor protection strategies to the unique needs and circumstances of different groups. Finally, by evaluating existing capacities, humanitarian actors can effectively use available resources to mitigate the consequences and drivers of threats (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Protection risk equation

$$Risk = Threats \times \frac{Vulnerability}{Capacity}$$

RISK DESCRIPTION AND MONITORING FOCUS

Abduction, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary or unlawful arrest and/or detention

This protection risk covers different acts and measures of detention, with 'detention' defined as: the deprivation of liberty through being held in a confined space without the ability to leave. **Abduction and kidnapping** refer to the temporary or permanent removal, seizure, capture, apprehension, taking, or enforced disappearance of a person without state support or acquiescence. In conflicts, when the victims are children, abduction and kidnapping constitute grave violations. With **abduction and kidnapping,** the state is obliged to investigate and prosecute those responsible. **Enforced disappearance** encompasses three cumulative elements: 1) a person is detained or otherwise deprived of liberty; 2) this deprivation is carried out by state agents or people or groups acting with state support or acquiescence; and 3) those responsible refuse to acknowledge the detention or conceal the concerned person's fate or whereabouts, placing the person outside the protection of the law. **Unlawful arrest** describes the initial act of detaining a person without criminal charge or other legal reason established in national law and carried out in accordance with procedures. **Arbitrary arrest** and arbitrary detention refer to situations in which there is no legitimate justification – one that is reasonable, appropriate, and necessary in the individual's particular circumstances – for an arrest or detention.

Monitoring focus:

- detentions that do not comply with national laws and procedures
- cases where detention is inappropriate, unjust, unreasonable, or unnecessary
- detention based on counter-terrorism laws (as punishment for human rights defenders), discriminatory grounds, or without reasonable suspicion
- detentions linked to possible criminal charges without reasonable suspicion
- unlawful arrests in which detention is not based on criminal charges or other legal reasons
- instances of removal, seizure, capture, apprehension, or enforced disappearance of individuals without state support or acquiescence
- cases in which the victims are children, particularly in conflict situations
- cases in which individuals are detained or deprived of liberty by state agents or with state support
- situations in which those responsible refuse to acknowledge the detention or conceal a person's fate or whereabouts
- state investigations and prosecutions related to abductions, kidnappings, and enforced disappearances.

Attacks on civilians and other unlawful killings, and attacks on civilian objects

This protection risk refers to attacks on civilians in the context of armed conflict. **Attack** means any act of violence against a civilian population and civilian objects, whether offensively or defensively, even if such attack does not lead to any civilian deaths or injuries. Unlawful attacks can be **direct attacks** against civilians, **indiscriminate attacks**, or **disproportionate attacks.** International humanitarian law requires the distinction between civilians and combatants, as well as between military objectives and civilian objects. A **civilian** is any individual who does not belong to any category of combatant as defined by the Geneva Convention and its Additional Protocols. Civilians are not members of the armed forces and do not take part in hostilities. The **civilian population** comprises all people who are civilians. While distinguishing between combatants and civilians is easier in situations of international armed conflict, that distinction can be less clear during internal armed conflicts. **Civilian objects** are defined as all objects that are not military objectives. Towns, cities, villages, residential areas, dwellings, buildings, houses, schools, civilian means of transportation, hospitals, places of worship, displacement sites, and cultural property are normally used for civilian purposes and, as such, should not be subject to attack. If in doubt, these sites should be treated as civilian objects.

> » **Note:** Civilian objects and infrastructure is a fluid concept and typically includes aspects of transportation, power, education, healthcare, food security, and communication, excluding anything intended for military use.

Monitoring focus:

- any attack on civilians or civilian areas (whether intentional, unintentional, direct, or indirect), including casualties, damage, and intention regardless of whether casualties or injuries occur
- indiscriminate attacks that do not differentiate between military and civilian targets, leading to collateral damage
- disproportionate attacks where civilian harm outweighs military advantage

- attacks in crowded places (e.g. markets and residential areas)

- use of weapons that inflict damage on large areas or attacks using biological or chemical weapons

- instances in which civilian objects and civilian infrastructure are attacked or damaged.

Child and forced family separation

This protection risk includes all situations in which   including children from their parents and caregivers, as a result of violent conflict, climate-induced hazards, and other crises. Some children, people with disabilities, and older people are separated from their families in the chaos of a humanitarian emergency, while others may be pulled away by parties to the conflict. Poor living conditions, threats of violence, and the disruption to traditional social protection mechanisms may force parents to use coping strategies with potentially negative effects, such as choosing to separate from their children, putting unaccompanied or separated children at high risk of violence, abuse, and exploitation. **Separated children** are separated from both **parents or their primary caregiver,** but not necessarily from other relatives; unaccompanied children are separated from both parents, primary caregivers, and other relatives, meaning they are not under the care of an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for them. Family members may be separated for hours, days, months, or even years. Those who receive early support to trace their relatives are more likely to be reunited faster.

Monitoring focus:

- situations of mass population movement and any incident of family separation resulting from conflict, natural hazard, or crisis

- any incident or story highlighting separated or unaccompanied children and vulnerable individuals, such as older adults or people with disabilities

- any information that discusses efforts and challenges to reuniting families

- any statistical or tracing activities about family tracing, reunification, and missing people

- legal measures for family reunification

- impact on psychosocial wellbeing and increased risk of exploitation/abuse.

Child, early or forced marriage

Child marriage is any formal or informal union between a child under the age of 18 and an adult or other child. Child marriage is considered a form of forced marriage, as it is impossible for a child to give full, free, and informed consent. This harmful practice may be socially accepted, practised, or used as a coping mechanism. While girls are disproportionately affected, boys may also be of concern. In humanitarian emergencies caused by conflict, natural hazards, or the impacts of climate change, the rates of child marriage, as with other forms of GBV, are likely to increase as a result of security concerns, situational factors, and poor living conditions. Child marriage may result from parents' belief that their child will be safer in another household, or from the fact that parents can no longer meet the child's basic needs because of food insecurity. Forced marriage is a marriage in which one or more of the parties is married without their consent or against their will. In conflict-affected areas, girls may be kidnapped and forced to marry members of armed forces or groups.

Monitoring focus:

- number of reported child marriages in different countries and/or regions, and statistics on the age and gender of those involved

- information on the cultural or social norms that support child marriage

- information on economic pressures, such as poverty and food insecurity, and use of marriage as a perceived safety measure during crises

- information on national laws and policies on the legal age of marriage and enforcement actions against those facilitating child marriage

- any increases in child marriage rates during conflict, natural hazards, or economic crises

- information on prevention and mitigation efforts

- reports by human rights organisations on forced marriage, particularly in conflict zones.

Discrimination and stigmatization, denial of resources, opportunities, services and/or humanitarian access

This protection risk includes acts that deprive or pre-empt people's rightful access to economic resources/assets, livelihood opportunities, education, health, or other social services on the basis of unjustifiable and/or unlawful reasons or policies with the consent, under the acquiescence, or as a result of the negligence of public officials or responsible parties. **Discrimination** includes making unjustified distinctions between people based on the categories to which they are perceived to belong (race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, etc.). **Stigma** can include dehumanising, degrading, discrediting, and devaluing people in certain population groups, often based on a feeling of disgust. Stigma and discrimination are closely interrelated and reinforce each other. Stigma often lies at the root of and provides a justification for discrimination as 'natural' and necessary, making systemic discrimination possible. One person can possess different attributes to which stigma is attached. **Denial of equal opportunity, including resources and services,** refers to any action, conduct, or measure resulting or likely to result in the removal (in any manner) of existing livelihood, vocation, occupation, or employment opportunities, or any other livelihood rights and entitlements. This is a core type of GBV. **Denial of humanitarian access** entails blocking the free passage or timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in need, as well as deliberate attacks on humanitarian workers.

Monitoring focus:

- instances in which individuals or groups are unfairly treated based on their identity or status
- policies or practices that institutionalise discriminatory practices, including those by public officials or responsible parties
- efforts/laws to address and rectify discriminatory actions and hold perpetrators accountable
- instances in which groups or individuals are dehumanised, degraded, or discredited
- social attitudes and cultural norms that reinforce stigmatisation and discrimination
- access to essential services such as education, healthcare, and employment, including unjustified barriers or denials
- instances in which individuals or groups are denied access to economic resources or livelihood opportunities
- instances in which humanitarian access is blocked or restricted, including delays to aid delivery
- attacks or threats against humanitarian workers and the impact on the delivery of assistance
- how discrimination, stigmatisation, and the denial of resources affect communities' overall wellbeing and cohesion.

Disinformation and denial of access to information

This protection risk refers to all situations in which information is used or denied, resulting in harm to the population. **Disinformation** takes place when false information and statements are intentionally disseminated to cause serious social harm. Disinformation misleads the population and, as a side effect, interferes in the public's right to know and individuals' right to seek, receive, and impart information. **The denial of access to information** manifests in all situations in which the freedom to 'receive and impart' information is impaired in such a manner and to such a degree that it hinders the population's capacity to enjoy their basic rights and fulfil their basic needs. Harmful acts, measures, and tactics involving the use or denial of information may be driven by an intent to polarise – i.e. an act intended to divide people or opinions – or on the basis of social constructs, concepts, or beliefs based on social views of gender, age, disability, sexuality, race, politics, philosophy, and religion. With the current proliferation of social media, this protection risk can manifest in the digital sphere or spread through a combination of both online and offline mechanisms.

» Note: Disseminating disinformation is the act of knowingly and purposefully spreading misinformation. Examples of disinformation include propaganda, 'counterfeit' news (such as websites and social media accounts impersonating well-known brands or people), conspiracy theories, and pseudoscientific reports developed to deliberately share false or misleading information. While Malinformation is factual information that is misappropriated or used to inflict harm, either through negligence or active harm. It can refer to information that stems from facts but is exaggerated, framed, or altered to be intentionally misleading.

Monitoring focus:

- rumours and unverified information
- targeting of specific groups to incite violence or discrimination
- restrictions on access to information in general and for vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities or the elderly
- government propaganda or agendas affecting information access
- offensive, hate, and dangerous speech intended to provoke conflict or violence
- measures taken to prevent or combat the dissemination of false information.

Forced recruitment and association of children in armed forces and groups

This protection risk refers to all situations in which a person is **compelled to serve in the forces of a hostile power by means of coercion, threats, or other methods.** Forced recruitment is prohibited by the Hague regulations, the third and fourth Geneva Conventions, and the list of war crimes in the Statue of the International Criminal Court. Further, according to Rule 95 of the International Committee of the Red Cross's Customary International Humanitarian Law Study, forced recruitment is considered a specific type of forced labour prohibited in international armed conflicts. **If the victim is a child,** recruitment is always considered forced, as it is impossible for a child to give free and informed consent. A child associated with an armed force or group refers to any person under 18 years of age who is or has been recruited or used by an armed force or group in any capacity, including but not limited to those used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies, or for sexual purposes. The recruitment and use of children is considered one of the worst forms of child labour and is listed among the six gravest violations of children's rights by the monitoring and reporting mechanisms established by UN Security Council Resolution 1612.

Monitoring focus:

- incidents of coercive or forceful acts compelling individuals to join armed forces or groups
- both the forced and seemingly voluntary recruitment of children
- abduction, threats, coercion, or manipulation to compel individuals to join armed groups
- economic pressures driving children to generate income for families by joining armed groups
- physical and emotional harm and developmental consequences from adult and child participation in conflict, including exposure to abuse, witnessing death, killing, sexual violence, and being forced to commit violent acts.

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence (GBV) is an umbrella protection risk for any harmful act perpetrated against a person's will based on socially ascribed (i.e. gender) differences between men and women. GBV includes acts that inflict physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion, and other deprivations of liberty. These acts can occur in public or private. The term 'GBV' is most commonly used to underscore how systemic inequality between men and women acts as a unifying and foundational characteristic of most forms of violence perpetrated **against women and girls**, affecting their equitable access to humanitarian assistance. Women and girls experience multiple forms of GBV as a result of systemic gender inequality and other forms of intersectional discrimination, including ableism, racism, nationalism, and other structures of power. GBV can include intimate partner violence, other forms of domestic violence, forced and/or coerced prostitution, child and/or forced marriage, female genital mutilation/cutting, female infanticide, honour killings, trafficking for sexual exploitation, denial of resources, and/or forced/domestic labour. These must be considered in any monitoring of protection risks. Certain forms of sexual violence can a**lso be directed against men, boys, and LGBTQ+ people,** particularly in armed conflict and detention, aimed at emasculating the individual and/or reinforcing traditional, cultural, or normative conceptions of masculinity and femininity.

Monitoring focus:

- any harmful acts based on gender differences, including physical, sexual, or mental harm, threats, coercion, and the deprivation of liberty
- any conflict-related sexual violence
- any normative and legal regulations increasing GBV risks
- information about the underreporting of GBV incidents
- cultural and gender norms and weakened infrastructure
- disrupted access to health services, including sexual and reproductive health, and legal services.

Impediments and/or restrictions to access to legal identity, remedies and justice

This protection risk includes all measures, acts, and practices that prevent people from accessing documentation, remedies, and justice, with consequent harm at the individual, household, and community levels. **Denial of access to legal identity** refers to all situations in which a person is prevented from possessing a legal identity or any other documentation required to be recognised as a person before the law. **Denial of access to remedies** includes all impediments to obtaining effective procedural and substantive remedies following a legal claim. Procedural remedies include regulations, laws, processes, and entitlements. Substantive remedies include effective remedies at the conclusion of processes – such as restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, or others. **Denial of access to justice** relates to impediments to accessing judicial mechanisms, processes, and remedies, ranging from access to statutory courts or commissions to traditional mechanisms such as customary or faith-based dispute resolution bodies. States have a duty to respect, protect, and fulfil a population's right to access legal identity, civil documents, remedies, and justice, while non-state stakeholders have responsibilities according to different national and international frameworks.

Monitoring focus:

- state and non-state stakeholder responsibilities to provide documentation and justice
- risks of statelessness and exclusion from services
- barriers to obtaining essential documents (e.g. birth certificates or ID cards)
- difficulties accessing basic services, such as education, healthcare, and housing, resulting from a lack of documents
- obstacles to obtaining effective procedural and substantive remedies
- barriers to accessing judicial and non-judicial mechanisms.

Presence of mine and other explosive ordnance

This risk refers to the level of social, economic, and environmental impact on communities and affected populations resulting from the harm or e**xposure to harm caused by explosive ordnance hazards and hazardous areas.** This includes mines, cluster munitions, unexploded ordnance, abandoned ordnance, booby traps, improvised explosive devices, and other devices (as defined by the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons: Amended Protocol II). Such are inevitably found during and after armed conflicts and, when activated, can incapacitate, injure, or kill as well as prevent access to resources, livelihoods, and opportunities.

Monitoring focus:

- accidents and hazardous areas involving explosive ordnance, including injuries and fatalities
- information about suspected or confirmed hazardous areas
- victims and affected communities.

Psychological/emotional abuse or inflicted distress

Psychological and emotional abuse or the infliction of distress can refer to direct acts perpetrated with the intent to cause harm and the indirect results of this harm, such as mental or emotional pains or injuries. These acts can include the presence of conditions that generate prolonged mental health and psychological wellbeing problems not addressed by state authorities, including not ensuring the availability and accessibility of support systems. Conflict situations and humanitarian crises create an environment in which a series of issues at the individual, familial, and communal levels both generate new and aggravate pre-existing mental health and psychosocial wellbeing problems, alongside weakening the support systems available under more typical circumstances. At the core of every conflict and humanitarian crisis, insecurity fractures social ties, breaks up families and communities, and displaces populations. This fracturing is then compounded by traumatic experiences – often involving loss of family members and/or participation in or witnessing acts of violence – and the breakdown of social services such as health and education.

Monitoring focus:

- information on intimidation, humiliation, forced isolation, and stalking
- incidents of verbal harassment and unwanted attention
- incidents of emotional and psychological harm
- the presence and effectiveness of support systems for individuals and communities
- government and organisational responses to psychological and emotional abuse.

Theft, extortion, forced eviction, or destruction of personal property

This risk includes forms of unlawful individual or collective dispossession involving (directly or indirectly) public officials or non-state stakeholders, either through their actions or inactions. **Theft** includes looting, pillage, and any other act of stealing. **Extortion** includes any practice to elicit actions, money, or property through any form of coercion. **Forced evictions** are the permanent or temporary removal of individuals, families, and/or communities from the homes and/or land they occupy against their will, without the provision of or access to appropriate forms of legal and other protection mechanisms. **Destruction of personal property** includes all damage and destruction caused by unlawful acts committed either wilfully or recklessly (and with a conscious disregard for the harm to people or property).

Monitoring focus:

- forced evictions, for a variety of reasons (urban development, mining, conflict)
- IDPs in informal settlements at risk of eviction
- instances of looting and other theft-related activities
- cases of extortion involving threats or coercion
- instances of people being forced into debt or feeling coerced into receiving essential services to avoid harmful consequences
- document and property destruction committed by people, including in armed conflict, and damage from natural hazards.

Torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment

This risk illustrates acts of **torture** by which any intentionally severe pain or suffering is inflicted on a person, whether physical or mental, for purposes such as: a) obtaining personal information or a confession; b) punishing an act the person committed or is suspected of committing; c) intimidation or coercion; and d) any reason linked to a public official or non-state stakeholder's discrimination of any kind, either directly or indirectly. This risk also includes any other act of **cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment.** Such acts may include targeting a person in relation to a third person, beatings or blunt trauma, shaking, suspension in painful positions, stabbing, puncture wounds, amputation, removal of nails, burns, hot fluids, acid, forced ingestion, injections, electric shocks, asphyxiation, death threats, mock executions, witnessing the torture of another person, sleep deprivation, overcrowding, solitary confinement, withholding of food or water, sensory deprivation, exposure to extreme light or sound, use of animals, positional torture, rape, sexual assault, and force nudity.

Monitoring focus:

- forms of torture and degrading treatment, including physical and psychological abuse
- use of methods such as forced ingestion, electric shock, and sensory deprivation
- acts of torture or inhumane treatment reported regardless of the perpetrator
- the legislative, administrative, or judicial measures states take to prevent and address torture and comply with international human rights law
- incidents involving individuals who have been subjected to torture or cruel treatment.

Trafficking in persons, forced labour or slavery-like practices

This protection risk refers to forced labour, slavery, slavery-like practices, and trafficking in people. **Forced labour** refers to situations in which people are coerced to work under threat of penalty – for example, through the use of violence or intimidation – or more subtle coercion, such as manipulated debt, withholding of identity papers, or threats of reporting to immigration authorities. **Trafficking in people** refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of people via threats, the use of force, or other forms of coercion – including abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, and the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve one person's control over another – for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation includes, at a minimum, the exploitation of others' prostitution, other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. Note that in the case of children, trafficking involves only recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of people for the purpose of exploitation and does not have to involve the illicit and abusive means listed above.

Monitoring focus:

- recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of individuals under coercion or deception
- use of threats, force, fraud, or manipulation to achieve control over individuals
- cases involving exploitation for prostitution, sexual services, forced labour, slavery, servitude, or organ removal
- incidents in which coercion, abduction, fraud, or abuse of power is used to control individuals
- work conditions that deprive children of their childhood and dignity
- harmful work that interferes with children's physical and mental development and school attendance
- work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous to children
- efforts to prevent trafficking and forced labour, including legal frameworks, enforcement actions, and public awareness campaigns.

Unlawful impediments or restrictions to freedom of movement, siege and forced displacement

This protection risk refers to all restrictions and barriers to freedom of movement, including situations of isolation, siege, forced displacement, and any situation in which a person does not have free choice over their movements. All r**estrictions to freedom of movement** are unlawful, subject to strict criteria under human rights law, must be provided for by law, be considered necessary and proportionate to achieve a legitimate aim (such as to protect national security or public order, health or morals, or the rights and freedoms of others), and be non-discriminatory and consistent with other human rights. Impediments to freedom of movement in a displacement context can take different forms and relate to harmful safety and dignity conditions for the population, which are not properly prevented, responded to, or redressed by the authorities responsible. **Forced displacement** occurs when individuals and communities have been forced or obliged to flee, leaving their homes or places of habitual residence, as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights abuses, natural or man-made hazards, and/or development projects, among others. Forced displacement includes both situations in which people have fled and situations in which people were forcibly removed from their homes, evicted or relocated to another place not of their choosing, by state or non-state stakeholders. The defining feature of forced displacement is the absence of will or consent. **Siege** can be understood as the military encirclement of an area and imposed restrictions on the entry and exit of essential goods, with the aim of forcing the area's surrender.

Monitoring focus:

- restrictions on freedom of movement, ensuring such are lawful, necessary, proportionate, non-discriminatory, and consistent with human rights law
- situations in which displacement is not adequately protected, safe, or secure from harm
- barriers related to safety and security, such as crime, armed conflict, violence, landmines, and unexploded ordnance
- instances of discrimination affecting movement based on gender, ethnicity, political opinion, religion, or displacement status
- inadequate infrastructure, such as damaged roads and bridges, lack of safe transport, and conditions affecting the ability to travel, including age, health, or disability
- legal and administrative travel restrictions, including curfews, restricted travel hours, and criteria for movement within the country
- specific restrictions affecting displaced people, such as movement in and out of camps, curfews, travel distances, and documentation requirements
- incidents of siege and the impact on humanitarian conditions, including any restrictions that aggravate suffering or violate human rights
- state and non-state stakeholders' response to movement restrictions and displacement situations, ensuring adherence to human rights standards.

DATA COLLECTION PROCESS

A team of ACAPS data collectors – trained in data collection methods, protection principles and mainstreaming, protection risks methodology, inclusion criteria, and the dataset structure – conducts data collection. Information comes from a variety of publicly available sources, including governments (official sites, embassies), media, UN agencies, trade/business publications, and other organisations and institutions.

ACAPS collects data on a daily basis, with data collectors extracting information from a wide range of reports. Data collectors then log relevant information, indicating the geographical coverage and population concerned. If the source includes information relevant to multiple risks, then entries are made for each risk. Each line in the dataset includes information exclusively relevant to one event risk.

The collected data then goes through a review process to check its completeness, validity, and reliability.

1. **Step 1:** data collectors gather data regularly to feed the protection risks dataset.

2. **Step 2:** reviewers check each entry that would feed into the dataset, checking the quality of the information according to:

   • completeness

   • tidiness

   • description consistency.

DATASET LIMITATIONS

ACAPS aims to monitor and track protection risks and protection events on a daily basis at the global and subnational levels. The dataset's coverage is focused on countries where, according to ACAPS methodologies, there is an active humanitarian crisis. This dataset presents broad coverage of reported information to flag events that fall under the scope of protection risks, with the goal of informing operational, strategic, and policy decision makers. Considering the diversity and complexity of different crises, however, certain types of events may appear to fall outside risk categorisation. The high volatility of some crises may lead to incomplete data, and certain events and trends may be recorded with some delay. Secondary data sources are sometimes outdated and lack exact information on event dates. In selecting the most reliable sources, ACAPS relies on open sources and the expert judgment of trained data collectors. ACAPS does not have an operational presence in every country and, as such, some events may be not recorded.

Considering the sensitivity and confidentiality of protection events, not all information is publicly reported. In certain countries and contexts, there are many information gaps. Various factors can lead to incomplete data, such as the sensitivity and privacy of protection reports and datasets, the dynamics of a crisis (active displacement and/or violence), and/or state or armed group obstacles to conducting protection analysis. Protection incidents are underreported, meaning the information and figures consolidated in this dataset should not be interpreted as a representation of prevalence. The number of entries should be carefully considered, as information could be affected by human capacities and the overall availability of information.

Official statistics or research findings might be used, but relevant indicator methodology measurements may have changed over time and/or variables may have been defined or categorised differently than our categorisation. Some information will be published without a clear indication of where events happened, lacking clarity and representativeness. Another major disadvantage to using open sources is that data collectors do not know exactly how the data collection and analysis was done. Secondary data may not be authentic or reliable. Finally, linguistic barriers might also prevent ACAPS from identifying all available information. When ambiguous or conflicting data is found, we hold an analytical discussion to reach a coding consensus. ACAPS cannot be held responsible for the misinterpretation or misuse of information provided in this dataset.

DATASET STRUCTURE

Data is logged in the dataset according to the rules outlined in Table 2 below.

- Data collection is done at administrative level one.
- If the whole country (all of admin one, maybe) is affected, the event is tagged as countrywide.
- One data point refers to one event and one risk.
- If the same source covers one event in multiple administrative level one areas, it is logged in one row.
- If the same source covers multiple types of protection risks, the source is logged in separate rows.

Table 3. Structure and coding system for data uploaded to the dataset

VARIABLE NAME	FORMAT	DESCRIPTION	CODES
ID	Numeric	Unique progressive code for every entry	None
ISO3	Text	Country ISO3 code	None
Country	Text	Country name	None
Countrywide	Checkbox	Checkbox marked if the event affects the whole country	Boolean (checked)
ADM1	Text	The largest subnational administrative region where the event took place	ADM1 code (GADM standards) *
ADM1 Eng name	Text	The English name of the largest subnational administrative region where the event took place	None
Protection risk	Text	The type of protection indicator reported	See the list of protection indicators provided (Table 1).
Targeting specific population groups	Text	Multiple choice if the protection concern is targeting a specific group	Age, gender, migratory status, people with special needs and disabilities, language, religion, ethnic or tribal affiliation, political affiliation, displacement status, sexual orientation, and members of other population groups
Justification	Text	Narrative description of the event	None
Source name	Text	Source name	None
Source date	Date (DD/MM/YYYY)	Publication source date	None
Source link	Text	Source link	None
Additional source	Text	Other publications and alternative sources that support findings	None

*Access through this link: https://gadm.org/data.html.

If you think a protection-related event is currently not represented in the dataset and should be added, or if you have any questions or need further clarification, please reach out to ACAPS via info@acaps.org. Please mention 'Protection Risks Monitor' in the subject of your email to help our support team classify your request. Your feedback and inquiries are always welcome.