

Quarterly Joint Analysis Workshop (JAW) – South West State *(online)*

Somalia Protection Monitoring System, Quarter 1; January-March 2022

Wednesday, 13 April 2022 from 9:30 am-12:15 pm.

Workshop Report

Objectives and Methodology

1. Agree on the validity and relevance of the findings
2. Identify the causes and triggers of the key protection concerns, connectors/dividers, and coping mechanism
3. Agree on actions to be taken by relevant stakeholders, including:
 - a. Adjustments in the response and protection programming
 - b. Advocacy messages and actions

The following methodology was applied:

- PowerPoint Presentation with an overview of validation of findings
- Group break-out sessions
- Plenary decision-making process
- Q&A's an open-ended discussion

SPMS Background

The purpose of the Somalia Protection Monitoring System (SPMS) is the systematic and regular collection and analysis of information over an extended period to identify trends and patterns of violations of rights and protection risks for populations of concern to inform effective programming and advocacy. Data collection in South West State started in March 2019.

The Joint Analysis Workshops have as aim to reflect on findings and agree on validity. As best practice, the JAW is preceded by a community preparation meeting, with the same aim. The inputs of community members are considered in the JAW, organized with key stakeholders active in the relevant state. The separation of stakeholders and community reflection meetings is to ensure community members feel uninhibited in sharing opinions and recommendations.

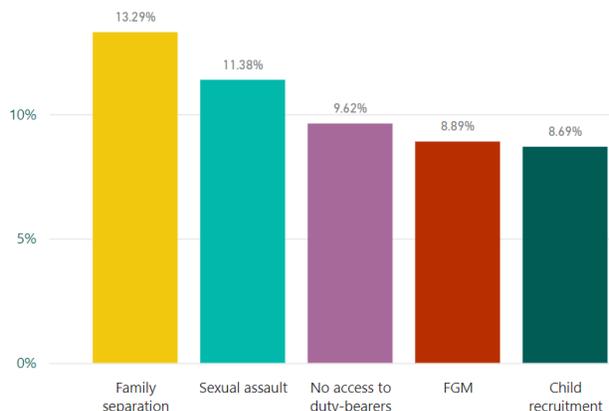
Headline Protection Trends

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC), in partnership with the Protection Cluster and facilitation support from AMARD, conducted a two-hour online workshop to discuss findings from data collected through the SPMS in South West State in the period January to March 2022.

The participants also engaged in group work and were divided into three groups. Each group discussed one protection concern. Below are the key outcomes from the discussions.

The discussions focused on the following guiding questions:

South West State Jan – March 2022 Highlights



- Do you agree with the **validity** and **relevance** of the findings?
- What are the **causes** and **triggers** of the identified violation?
- What are **recommendations** that are needed for program adaptation based on the findings?

Group 1: Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

FGM is a violation of the human rights of girls and women, and comprises all procedures that involve partial or total removal of the external female genitalia, or another injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.¹

The group collectively agreed on the validity and relevance of the findings, agreeing that FGM is a major protection concern in South-West State. The group reflected and acknowledged that despite many efforts to raise awareness on the negative health consequences of the practice, the effect is limited because of how deep rooted the practice is.

Causes and Triggers

- FGM is understood to be a religious belief, and has a cultural history in Somalia.
- There is a community belief that if a girl is not circumcised, this will affect her ability to marry.
- Financial benefits associated with the practice; it is a source of livelihood/income for the practitioners and due to this some women may advocate for it.
- Participants listed ignorance and lack of awareness. This is due to lack of information, especially in pastoral communities.
- Lack of sufficient focus on the subject by duty bearers in advocacy and community engagement needed to tackle such kind of practice.
- Inefficient targeting by NGOs (especially women organizations); focused on urban areas (cities) where they should target adult women, girls, and elders in rural and hard to reach areas.
- A communication barrier exists as a result of Information and Education Communication (IEC) materials being written mostly in English.

Recommendations

- To allocate resources specifically for countering FGM as a practice, as well as to support those who have been subjected to it.
- Awareness-raising to be enhanced and formulated in an accessible manner for the overall community, aiming to inform all community members and inspire widespread behavior change - not only those in reach of religious leaders and women groups.
- Development of national-level policy and regulations against FGM, and ensuring enforcement by government, especially lawmakers.
- National and local organizations to be supported in their advocacy and information sharing within the community. This should include training specifically for women and protection organizations.
- Educational curriculum adjustments for all education levels and madrasahs, to include FGM and its harmful consequences, inspiring behavior and attitude change from a young age.
- Harmonization of National level (Federal Government of Somalia) and State level Gender and Women Affairs Ministries to take their respective responsibilities and systematically tackle FGM.

¹ www.afro.who.int/health-topics/female-genital-mutilation

Group 2: Family separation

Family Separation in the context of SPMS refers to separation of one or more family members from the rest of the family. This would be as a result of circumstances, but not intentional or at their discretion, such as divorce or other planned separation.

The group collectively agreed on the validity and relevance on family separation as a protection concern in South-West State.

Causes and Triggers

- Children whose initial/primary cause of separation is abduction and/or recruitment into armed forces, but managed to escape and are fleeing from armed groups, or have been rescued and released by government/allied forces. This results in:
 - Children associated with armed groups and armed forces (CAAFAG) unable to return, out of fear of retaliation from their community or lack of knowledge of their family's current whereabouts following displacement or migration.
 - Abducted/children whose traffickers failed to complete their intention being left in IDP camps by perpetrators. This is especially prevalent when families seek governmental support to find their children, and perpetrators fear being caught.
- Accidental separation due to conflict-induced displacement. Children, especially those with disabilities, may be unable to keep up during population movements or otherwise get lost during the chaos of flight.
- (Arbitrary) detention of children or one or both caregivers. Most common reason for detention is suspicion of association with non-state armed groups. Children who are released, as well as children of caregivers remaining in detention contribute to the number of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), as they often end up alone in IDP camps or surrounding communities.
 - For families on the move, this is an enhanced risk, as detainment often takes place at checkpoints en route.
- Children running away from home, as a result of domestic violence or child abuse, as well as girls running to avoid practices like early marriage and/or FGM.
- Deliberate/intentional separation may occur when parents, caregivers, or children themselves make a conscious decision to separate, whether during or after an emergency/crisis situation. Underlying reasons may be safety and income/livelihood related, or to avoid forced recruitment of children. Intentional separations do not always have a negative impact on children (for example, children can be placed in a more beneficial situation like foster/kinship care) or the negative impact may be less than if the family unit remained intact. This type of separation may still be included in SPMS reported occurrences.

Recommendations

- Address root causes of voluntary separation by improving access to services to vulnerable families/caregivers and children at risk to be able to effectively prevent separation in future.
- Information dissemination within affected/at risk communities on available comprehensive Case Management services, including referral pathways and focal points, and risks associated with family separation.

- Child headed households in IDP sites/settlements and children living on their own on the street should be prioritized in advocacy and programming, including to address access to basic services, and FTR.
- Enhance coordination and basic training for camp management actors and community-camp management committees to support in identification of all UASC in IDP settlements and communities to ensure documentation and proper case management of those cases.
- Child protection actors to conduct assessments to understand the specific protection needs and consider community consultations in project design/planning to align the intended intervention based on the needs of the community.
- Train Community-Based Child Protection Committees on Humanitarian Principles, Child Protection Minimum Standards, Case Management, FTR, and IDTR and support them to play a vital role to identify, refer, support tracing as well as family reunification.
- Case Management teams to link with local mechanisms for reporting separation by setting up a network of stakeholder (CP advocates) ranging from local NGOs, authorities, clan leaders, and community leaders in line with guidance from Somalia Case Management SOPs.
- Through guidance and leadership from the CP AoR, agencies working on FTR/Identification, Documentation, Tracing, and Reunification (IDTR) case management should design and target identification of vulnerable children (at risk of separation) and respond to their specific needs in line with Somalia Case Management SOPs, especially on IDTR for UASC.
- Case Management should be implemented by trained staff, including specifically trained on Family Tracing and Reunification (FTR).
- Establishing/strengthening a referral system specific to UASC identification, with follow up and interim care, tracing and reunification support.

Group 3: No access to justice

Access to justice is defined in two phrases, the first emphasizes the “access” and focuses on the availability of resources to help individuals resolve disputes. The second term emphasizes “justice” and that the justice we seek consists of more than exposure to dispute resolution services. Access to justice also encompasses lack of said justice, or unequal representation; a form of injustice and discrimination.

The group collectively agreed with the validity and relevance of gaps or lack of access to justice as a protection concern in South West State.

Causes and Triggers

- Weak documentation systems, relying on hand-written and improper filing systems. This results in inefficient maintenance of records and handover to new/different court staff, affecting the ability to follow up on filed complaints or build a precedence system.
- Traditional practices supersede the governmental justice system, which may lead to repercussions from traditional leaders if communities do seek access to formal justice.
- Low or lack of enforcement of legal frameworks and overall rule of law.
- Lack of a clear or known legal framework, seen by participants to be the result of 30 years of conflict and weak governmental systems. This also affects community opinions of a weak government system, especially the judiciary.
- There is a lack of confidence overall in the justice system, linked to a perceived lack of fairness and accountability.
- Low literacy rates.

- Lack of placing importance on justice, where communities' focus on survival prevailed due to the context of long-term conflict, insecurity, recurrent drought, and associated displacement and migration.

Recommendations

- Build the capacity of government institutions with a specific focus on the judicial system, focusing on transparency, equality, and fairness.
- Conduct information dissemination sessions to enhance community understanding of rights, as well as avenues to achieve justice and complaints mechanisms.
- Strengthen legal aid, especially for women and children.
- Advocate for a specific legal doctrine to include rules, procedural steps, and terms of imprisonment for perpetrators of sexual offenses.

Key Messages and Action Planning

The purpose of this session was to dive deeper into reported protection risks, by identifying and mapping influential stakeholders to engage within efforts to reduce the prevalence of reported risks. The development of key messages is a crucial part of this. For the session, family separation was selected as the main emerging protection trend in South-West State.

In preparation, participants were asked to reflect on the three below listed questions and prepare message suggestions for three target audiences;

- Public sector - government, local authorities, universities, UN, etc.
 - Private sector - companies, businesses, etc.
 - Civil society - NGOs, rights groups, religious groups, community groups, etc.
1. Who are the stakeholders (duty bearers) we need to influence to reduce incidents of family separation?
 2. What would be the most powerful message to reduce the risk of family separation to each of these stakeholders? What different messages would we have to send to influence each one?
 3. What advocacy methods will work best to influence the stakeholders you have identified?

Key Messages – Family Separation

- Children suffer indescribable stress when split from their loved ones. Separation can have an adverse impact and undermines children's and caregivers' mental and physical health, and it can impede the development of children. It leaves them more vulnerable to violence, exploitation, and abuse.
- Most children in Somalia who have been separated from their parents/ caregivers live in IDP settlements and predominantly originate from areas most affected by drought and armed conflict/insecurity.
- There are limited government-led programs and interventions for the most vulnerable families and children in Somalia. There is a need for alternative care arrangements in emergencies to respond to family separation incidents, and to engage more with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MoWHRD) at both state and federal levels, to find and reunite missing family members, as there are inadequate legal systems in place to help separated families find justice.
- The Government of Somalia should enforce guidelines that ensure the most suitable care settings for children without adequate parental care.

- There are many underlying challenges separated families face. Among them inadequate shelter and lack of protection. Governmental programs have funding limitations, and service provision is scarce and concentrated in some urban centers. Many rural and pastoralist areas/communities do not have (sufficient) Child Protection responses.

Tactics (Methods):

Public Sector

- Peaceful demonstrations or lobbying: this involves direct communication with relevant authorities who influence to make meaningful decisions, and information sharing between stakeholders – including the international community.

Private Sector

- Participate in private sector forums and functions as advocacy method to increase awareness, engagement, and strengthen partnerships. Encourage the private sector to jump-start private-sector lead growth and innovations to provide pathways for employment and micro-financing. This to address underlying risks/causes of poverty, inequality, and the use of family separation as negative coping mechanism.

Civil Society

- Develop and implement family strengthening programs, through participation in relevant working groups and forming sector-based community committees (such as Community-Based Child Protection Committees), and increasing visibility and information sharing during awareness raising campaigns and capacity building sessions to strengthen referral pathways.

With special thanks to all facilitators and participants of the JAW.

With recognition for SPMS partners in South West State who conducted data collection in Q1:

- ✦ Agency for Minority Rights and Development (AMARD)
- ✦ Community Empowerment and Social Development Organization (CESDO)
- ✦ Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- ✦ Northern Frontier Youth League (NoFYL)
- ✦ Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)
- ✦ Somali Young Doctors Association (SOYDA)

