About the Project

The PRMN (Protection & Return Monitoring Network) is a UNHCR-led project which acts as a platform for identifying and reporting on displacements (including returns) of populations in Somalia as well as protection incidents underlying such movements. This note covers issues relating to the methodology of recording displacements but does not cover all aspects of the PRMN platform.

Network coverage

On behalf of UNHCR, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) works through 39 local partners in the field in Somalia: four (4) local partners in Somaliland, nine (9) in Puntland and twenty-six (26) in South Central Somalia. Each partner organization has been assigned a geographic area within a given region. In South and Central Somalia, the project is implemented in Banadir, Bay, Bakool, Gedo, Lower Jubba, Hiraan, Lower Shabelle, Middle Shabelle, middle Juba and Galgaduud region; in Puntland, project operations focus in the regions of Galmadug, Mudug and Bari; and in Somaliland, geographic coverage includes Woqooyi Galbeed, Marodijeh, Sool and Awdal regions. Partners in these locations work through specifically trained monitors, and who are supported by NRC area focal points spread across its twelve area support offices and/or operational bases in the field. The level of geographic coverage for displacement tracking and protection monitoring within regions will depend on the local security situation and access, and the numbers of partners and of local field staff.

Monitoring methodology

Partners monitor population displacements and movements such as returns by targeting strategic points including transit sites, established IDP settlements, border crossings and other ad hoc locations. The data is captured by partner staff interviewing displaced persons (generating 'household-level' reports) primarily at points of arrival or by interviewing key informants (generating 'group reports') at IDP settlements, transit centers and other strategic locations. The interviews rely on the use of a standardized form that is designed to capture information on displacements and protection incidents and in the case of household-level reports, this includes disaggregated demographic data and family vulnerabilities. During the interview, both the point of departure and reason for departure are recorded; sensitive personal information is not stored. Reports are uploaded onto a web-based platform, through which they are quality-controlled by NRC. Reports are also verified prior to approval by NRC field staff, either in person or through third party verification. Referral services and basic emergency support assistance are available through the network to victims and survivors of serious protection incidents.

Strengths

- The PRMN methodology enables reporting on population movements and displacements together with analysis of trends over time and displacement from or to specific areas. Earlier forms of the PRMN network have existed in Somalia since 2006 - PMT (Population Movement tracking), PMN (Protection Monitoring Network) were combined in 2010 meaning trend analysis and comparisons over time can be performed (within certain limitations).

- Where the network can excel is in real-time identification of displacements especially where catalyzed by natural disasters (flood, drought etc.) or man-made events such as conflict. Procedures are in place for monitors in the field to flag key events to NRC focal points, who verify and together with UNHCR may issue a 'flash report' informing the wider humanitarian community of the displacements, the cause and wherever possible a preliminary indicator of immediate priority needs.

- The breadth of coverage of the network combined with the capture of origins, destinations and causes of movements mean that the network can provide insight into displacements over a significant proportion of Somalia.

Limitations

- PRMN does not, at present, seek to collect data on fixed IDP numbers present at any one location at a given time so is not currently a platform for deriving total or cumulative IDP populations although data derived for the network can inform analysis of the same.

- The network does not capture all population movements in all areas of Somalia at all times – reports of displacement figures can be seen as indicators of potentially larger movements and their underlying causes. Some types of movement such as short-term displacement of individuals or groups and subsequent returns, may not always be easily identified by the network

- Currently one main reason for each movement identified is recorded during PRMN interviews, however, often the real driver for displacement may be combination of closely interrelated factors. Improvements are in progress to the methodology for capturing the reason(s) for displacement in order to better understand the underlying causes and inform the response.

- There are periods of time where certain regions will have a reduced monitoring footprint as a result of external events, changes in field partners or other reasons. Where NRC and UNHCR consider that data is insufficient to provide results for a specific time-frame, data for a given location may be omitted from published reports (but may still be used in aggregated trends analysis)