

# Operational Context Factsheet

## Overview – Working environment

### Numidian crisis (summary)

*(For details on Numidia and the crisis, see Numidia Fact Sheet and Numidia Map)*

Numidia has experienced periods of significant instability, marked by violence and civil war, over the last seventeen years. Clashes between the ethnic majority, the Berbers, a highly religious group, and other Numidian ethnic minorities, have resulted in frequent refugee arrivals into Parthia.

Two months ago, a fragile peace broke down as members of the military joined forces with Berber armed groups to enact a coup and overthrow the democratically elected government. The fighting that has ensued throughout Numidia has caused thousands of Numidians to flee to Parthia seeking refuge.

Reasons for flight include persecution against the following groups:

- All Numidian ethnic minority groups
- All religious Numidians not adhering/practicing Berberism
- Women (severe restrictions of freedom/liberties, high incidents of public and private violence, young women abducted and raped as “wives” for Blade soldiers)
- Members of the LGBTIQ+ community (routinely targeted and subjected to enforced disappearances)
- Activists and members of civil society (from all ethnic groups)
- Academics and former government employees (from all ethnic groups)
- Young men in fear of recruitment or execution (from all ethnic groups)

### PoC Locations and Needs

Two months ago, Numidian refugees began to arrive in the South West Province of Parthia. These numbers increased at an alarming rate – with (on average) 3,000 individuals arriving daily. Most refugees initially entered through the two official border entry points (Aria and Darius). However, in recent weeks, many are crossing north of these entry points, and settling in or near Antioch.

In the early days of the emergency, some refugees were settling in host communities and informal settlements along the border; others moved further inland, and some were able to reach urban areas in the South East Province (*see map in Registration Factsheet for current locations*).

Refugees arriving in Parthia have significant needs. Those who have been forced to take circuitous routes into the country to avoid armed groups, and who have travelled great distances without sufficient food or water, are arriving dehydrated and malnourished. Many are suffering from acute exhaustion. Many refugees are arriving in Parthia without personal belongings, including clothing, mattresses, and household items. While all have experienced major challenges, many are showing signs of significant distress. Some are arriving with physical injuries and trauma resulting from the conflict. *(For data on specific needs, see Registration Factsheet.)*

## Reception of Numidian refugees in Parthia

Historically, the government of Parthia have welcomed Numidians seeking refuge in their country, providing assistance and supporting re-settlement, with UNHCR's support. They imposed few restrictions on refugees once registered, allowing Numidian refugees to settle where they wished, and providing access to health and education services.

Likewise, Parthian citizens (for the most part) have welcomed refugees. There are cultural ties with Numidia and over the years, the participation of Numidian refugees in Parthian life has assisted in refugee acceptance amongst Parthian communities. Indeed, in 2018, UNHCR was in discussions with the government over its desire to create formal pathways to citizenship or local integration

However, a rise in population since 2012, and a slower economy, has created some concerns within the community about Parthia's ability to cope with such a large influx. In the last few years, there's been a rise in tensions between refugee and host communities in some rural areas, particularly over unskilled labour, poor wages, and less employment opportunities. This has resulted in an increase in violent incidents involving and against refugees.

Last year, national elections brought in a new administration in Parthia who has been less accommodating of refugees than in previous years. Unhappy with the large numbers of refugees settling all over the two main provinces in Parthia, the new Prime Minister claimed it was putting too much pressure on host communities.

Within a few weeks, he publicly announced that all new refugee arrivals from Numidia would be accommodated in camps, provided for by the Ministry of the Interior, reversing a decade-long policy of not imposing accommodation restrictions on refugees. He argued this was necessary to reduce the economic burden and overcrowding on Parthia's own citizens. Moreover, unhappy with some of the rights afforded to refugees under Parthian law (*see section below*), the new President has openly discussed reversing or revising aspects of the law granting certain rights to refugees, such as the right to work, and freedom of movement. Movement beyond the camps for refugees living there, has been increasingly restricted.

The Parthian government provided two sites (near Byzantium and Hatra) for 60,000 individuals each, with a promise to provide more sites if needed. They ordered refugees settling in Byzantium and Hatra counties to be relocated to the two camps, in addition to those in/near the Transit Centres. It has limited refugees' movements in and out of the camps and restricted refugees from accessing basic social services, education, health institutions outside the camps.

## Regulatory & Policy Framework for refugees in Parthia

*(Further information on the Parthian government is below.)*

Parthia is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention or 1967 Protocol. It has its own national law to address refugee issues, enacted five years ago.

### **IMMIGRATION, ASYLUM, AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION LAW:**

- Regulates treatment of asylum seekers in country – access to education, medical, legal, and other services, and conditional access to the labour market

- The law provides the option for the accommodation of refugees in camps (to be determined by the Prime Minister)
- Established the mandates and duties of the Immigration Ministry (and Immigration Minister) and Ministry of the Interior (on issues related to refugee camps)
- Established the mandate, duties, and responsibilities of the **Immigration & Asylum Bureau of Parthia (IABP)**, responsible for reviewing the individual protection claims of asylum seekers, and for provision of *prima facie* status in cases of a large influx into Parthia

Due to the size of the influx of refugees from Numidia, the Government of Parthia has declared *prima facie* status to be granted for all asylum seekers from Numidia.

#### ADMISSIBILITY CRITERIA FOR REGISTRATION

- Asylum seekers who are unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin due to:
  - Events in place of origin that have seriously disturbed public order, or
  - A well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group

#### Admissibility Criteria for registration on *prima facie* basis in Parthia:

- Numidian nationals from Numidia unable or unwilling to return due to:
  - Events in place of origin that have seriously disturbed public order, or
  - A well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group

#### Persons are not admissible for registration if they are:

- Non-civilian (combatant)
- Members of local Parthian community

## Parthian Refugee Registration Response

### Background: UNHCR in Parthia

(For details on Numidia and the crisis, see *Numidia Fact Sheet* and *Numidia Map*)

UNHCR commenced operations in Parthia in 2012 when refugees arriving from Numidia, fleeing the civil war, quickly and significantly outstripped the Parthian Government's capacity to respond.

UNHCR established its **Representation Office (RO)** in the capital, Parni. In the South West Province, it established a **Field Office (FO)** in Byzantium (the provincial capital and a trade hub), and a **Field Unit** in Hatra, approximately 100km north-west of Byzantium.

After the Numidian peace deal was signed and the civil war ended (2014), many refugees wished, and were supported, to return home over a period of a few years. However, a sizeable number (55,000 individuals) preferred to remain in Parthia, which the Parthian government supported.

Since then, UNHCR has worked with the Parthian government to support these refugees and others who arrived between 2017 and 2020 (13,750 individuals). Of this number, 4,556, found their way to the Parni and 3,078 to Arta in the Southeast. (For numbers and locations of refugees, see *Registration Fact Sheet*.)

## UNHCR REPRESENTATION OFFICE ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO CURRENT REFUGEE

**EMERGENCY:** (See also *UNHCR Registration Operations Map*; See section below for more details on working with government)

- UNHCR and Parthian government jointly conducted individual registration using UNHCR PRIMES tools (proGres v4 and BIMS) that were rolled out to the operation a year ago
- Case management, including protection counselling, resettlement processing, and appropriate assistance (delivered weekly)
- Livelihood support and conditional cash-based transfer programmes for vulnerable refugees
- Continuous registration (recording new births, death, family composition changes, etc), and new arrival registration conducted jointly with the government's registration team (Registration Assistants and Snr. ODM Assistant)
- Basic biodata regularly shared with the Parthian government's civil registration agency for issuance of birth certificates to persons of concern (in South East and South West Provinces)
- Similar data sharing for refugees aged 12 and over in need of ID Cards (in South East and South West Provinces)

## UNHCR FIELD OFFICE ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO CURRENT REFUGEE EMERGENCY:

- Delivered ongoing, regular protection and assistance services, including protection monitoring, counselling, continuous and new arrival registration, and resettlement case processing
- All refugees were settled in or near host communities, therefore needed to travel to UNHCR's offices or partners for assistance; therefore, refugees in remote parts of the country benefitted less from available support
- Mobile registration conducted monthly for continuous registration
- Registration data was used by all partners, including government, to verify identities in assistance distribution and protection service delivery

## UNHCR Operations in Parthia (current emergency)

### TIMELINE OF MAIN EVENTS (PREVIOUS TWO MONTHS):

- Initially, the UNHCR operation in Parthia believed it could manage the situation without the need for an Emergency Response Team (ERT). Five days after the first group of refugees arrived in Parthia, the Protection Officer in Parni deployed a Registration Assistant and an Associate Protection Officer on mission to Byzantium to support the response efforts there
- Overwhelmed by the situation, the Representative requested the Assistant High Commissioner for Operations (AHC-O) to declare an emergency
- Nine days into the emergency, at the advice of the AHC-O, the High Commissioner (HC) declared a Level 3 emergency and requested the Country Representative to step aside for the Principal Emergency Coordinator (PEC) to assume leadership of the operation on an interim basis.
- Five days later (14 days after the first arrivals) the PEC arrived in Parthia along with a Site Planning Officer, and immediately flew to Byzantium
- 14 days after arriving in Parthia, PEC made several changes (agreed to by HC):
  - Adopts the Refugee Coordination Model to develop coordination structure and foster inclusive engagement with partners

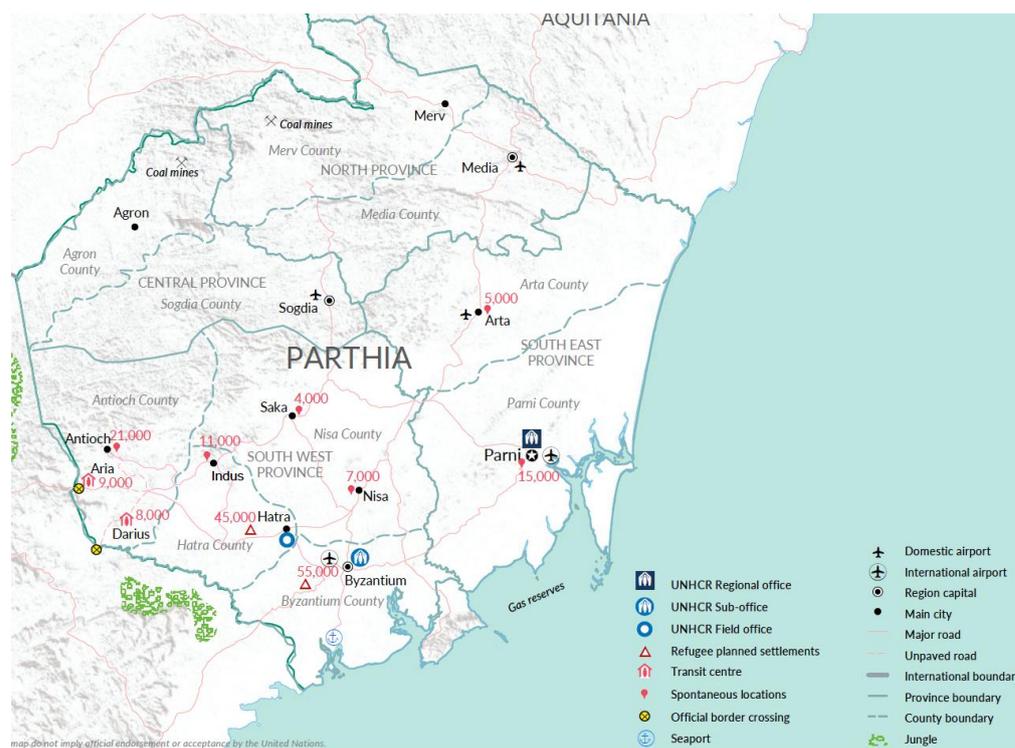
- Made an ERT request (Emergency WASH, Public Health, Supply officers – Registration to be included at a later date)
- Elevates FO Byzantium to a Sub-Office, headed by a P5, and hires additional staff (5 Registration Assistants)
- Elevates FU Hatra to Field Office, headed by P4, and hires additional staff (4 Registration Assistants and 1 Registration Associate)
- Establishes two Transit Centres in Aria (9km inland) and Darius (8km inland), with government approval

**UNHCR OPERATIONS IN PARTHIA (SW STAFFING)**
**SO Reg. Staff:**

- 1 Protection Off. (P2)
- 1 Assoc. RDS Officer (P2)
- 1 Senior ODM Assist. (GL-5)
- 10 Reg. Assistants (GL-4)

**FO Reg. Staff:**

- 1 Reg. Associate (GL-6)
- 1 Community-Based Prot. Assist (GL-6)
- 1 Senior Prot. Assist. (GL-5)
- 10 Reg. Assistants (GL-4)


**CURRENT REGISTRATION STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS – SW PROVINCE:**

Desk	UNHCR staff	Gov. Staff	Total	Description
<b>Transit Centre (each)</b>				
Reg Desk	1	1	2	
Supervision	1	1	2	UNHCR Comm-based Protection Associate - roving
<b>Camps (each) – Reception Centre</b>				
Reception	2	2	4	2 UNHCR Registration Assistants (G4); 2 Gov. Reg
<b>Camps (each) – Registration Centre</b>				
Reg. supervision	1	1	2	1 UNHCR Reg Associate (G6) – Roving; Gov. Reg. Supervisor
Admission	1	1	2	1 UNHCR Reg. Assistants (G4); 1 Gov. Reg
Interview	3	3	6	3 UNHCR Reg. Assistants (G4) + 1 Gov. Reg
Biometrics	2		2	2 UNHCR Registration Assistants (G4)
Documentation	1	1	2	1 UNHCR Reg. Assistant (G4) + 1 Gov. Reg staff
Data Management	1		1	1 UNHCR Snr ODM Asst (G5) - Roving

# Current Emergency Registration Processes & Key Activities in Parthia

## South East Province (Refugees in Parni and Arta Urban Areas)

- One Business Unit created in proGres v4 for the country operation
- UNHCR and Parthian Government conduct joint registration activities in the compound of the Immigration and Asylum Bureau using PRIMES proGres v4 and BIMS
- Refugees are registered individually, no Group pre-registration is conducted
- All four Registration Assistants and Senior ODM Assistant are involved in the process, along with a government-hired registration team of four
- All three RSD Associates, along with two IRC staff are identifying persons with Specific Needs
- Group Proof of Registration documents are issued to Registration Groups, and individual ID cards issued to registered individuals 12 years and above
- Persons affiliated with fighting forces identified during registration are being referred to government for Demobilization, Decommissioning and Rehabilitation (DDR)
- Due to the large numbers of new arrivals now in the SE Province, continuous registration activities have been significantly reduced/mostly halted
- Delays in the registration of new births has created impediments for families needing access to medical and other services

## South West Province

All continuous registration activities have been halted with all human and material resources redirected to registration activities in the two Transit Centres (Aria and Darius) and two Refugee Camps (Byzantium and Hatra).

### TRANSIT CENTRES (TC) – ARIA AND DARIUS (FOR EACH):

- Capacity: TC holds 1,000 individuals at any given time (although there many thousands more refugees settling near the TC – *see map in Registration Factsheet*)
- Staffing:
  - Registration staffing (see above)
  - Hope of Smiles (LNGO): responsible for day-to-day management of TC; two staff and 10 community workers/volunteers
- Total: 200 Registration Groups pre-registered/day (1,000 individuals)
- Group pre-Registration processes:
  - Refugees arriving at the Transit Centres are given a flyer in English/Parthian explaining the TC and camp registration processes. This information is also replicated in posters
  - Using excel data collection – sending copies of excel files to camp Reception Centres
  - No biometric data is collected
  - Documentation:
    - o UNHCR fixing token with names of Group Focal Point and size marked – allows for food and other assistance

- Wristbands (limited stock available) issued to those with highly visible needs (unaccompanied or separated children, people with physical injuries, disabilities, or seriously ill)
- Unaccompanied or separated children are placed with ICRC
- Transportation:
  - UNHCR team generates passenger manifests by printed spreadsheets for relocation to camps; shares with IOM – lists Group Focal Point, Group Size, and Group Unique Numbers
  - IOM: responsible for transportation; 2 staff
  - Vehicles:
    - 20 buses (65-seaters) – two trips/day (2,600 individuals)
    - Two trucks to transport luggage – multiple trips/day
  - Luggage:
    - Refugees leave luggage at collection point before boarding buses to camps
    - No luggage manifests prepared by IOM for travel so refugees tie cloths, etc to bags
- Security:
  - SW Provincial Police (10 officers) and 20 Parthian security personnel
  - Focused on preventing entry of prohibited items/weapons into TC, not crowd control, etc
- Shelter and NFIs: IOM is distributing NFIs and Raise the Roof (LNGO, UNHCR Implementing partner) is supporting with temporary shelter assistance
- Medical:
  - Staffing: Parthian Red Cross (4 nurses) and MSF
  - Medical screening and out-patient services

## Challenges/Constraints

- Government registration supervisors are not capable of managing the complexity of the Transit Centres; the staff they hired are not well trained or reliable
- Delays in pre-Registration rates has led to transportation delays. To address this, IOM has begun to transport refugees without passenger manifests, causing internal insurance concerns. IOM is now threatening to conduct its own group registration with individual names to build their own passenger manifests for transportation purposes
- Reports that some male refugees are registering multiple times to receive additional ration cards
- Desperate to get registered, some families keep a member constantly in the queue or lay stones to mark their spot; some violent incidents have been reported
- Large numbers of refugees who had initially settled in other areas are now travelling to TC to get registered, settling nearby – these numbers have ballooned in recent weeks, posing difficulties for TC management and overwhelming facilities.
- Shelter support is limited, leaving many vulnerable refugees without. Some have been able to purchase UNHCR plastic sheets in local markets
- Sanitation facilities are overwhelmed, raising concerns of cholera outbreak
- Some refugees who had arrived/settled in Parthia in previous years are beginning to approach the TCs seeking assistance to be relocated to the camps. Some are seeking to unite with family who have recently arrived; others are seeking better/easier access to services; others are experiencing increasing tensions with local/host communities.

- People with highly visible specific needs are given a yellow wristband (unaccompanied or separated children, people with physical injuries, disabilities, or seriously ill) but without indicating what the specific need is; nor are they referred to adequate services as there are no protection services currently operating at the Transit Centres besides the ICRC's tracing and reunification activities. Groups with specific needs are not currently prioritised for transportation.
- UNICEF is unhappy about the lack of data available on children with specific needs when they arrive in the camps and has complained about this to UNHCR

## REGISTRATION PROCESSES IN CAMPS – BYZANTIUM AND HATRA (FOR EACH):

### Arrival at camp – Reception Centre:

- Staffing (see above)
- On arrival at camp, refugees are placed in Reception Centre where they're given briefings (and flyers) on the procedures and processes for registration and Group Focal Points are issued appointments for family members to be individually registered
- Due to many refugees now arriving at the camps without being pre-registered, and general confusion about the accuracy of records produced at the TCs, UNHCR/Gov. have decided to conduct Group pre-Reg. at the Reception Centres for new arrivals, using proGres v4 – Reception Module
- Team of (initially two, now four – see challenges below) Registration staff issues appointments to groups that arrive from the TCs, indicating the date when households/groups should appear at Registration Centre for individual registration
- The appointments are recorded on Appointment Slips (given to refugee Group Focal Points) and a notification is made in proGres v4

### Individual registration – Registration Centre:

- Registration staffing (see above); additional 10 refugee volunteers to assist with movement of refugees through registration processes
- Total: Approx. 500/day
- UNHCR/Parthian Government conduct joint individual registration activities using PRIMES proGres v4 and BIMS
- 3G internet connection at Registration Centre is reliable, staff connect directly to proGres v4 and BIMS central
- Refugees wait outside the Registration Centre; once admitted, they go to the main desk where they're interviewed, their biometric data is captured (including photos), and documentation is issued
- Where specific needs are identified, a protection staff member is called over to assist with additional questions/initial referrals
- Group pre-registration records created at Reception Centres are retrieved and converted to Registration Groups before IER was conducted (see challenges below)
- Documentation:
  - Each registered Registration Group is issued Group Proof of Registration document valid for a year and a UNHCR/WFP ration card
  - Each individual 12 years and above issued a Parthian Government Refugee Identity Certificate

- Food: WFP have started to do emergency food distribution at the camps using SCOPE and issuing a SCOPE card. Because passenger manifests aren't available and many refugees haven't been individually registered, they're registering individuals for the SCOPE card separately
- Child protection: UNICEF has registered children in their case management database, Primero

### Challenges/Constraints:

- Conducting Group pre-Registration at the **Reception Centres** has caused substantial delays in assigning camp plots
- People with yellow wristbands (indicating specific needs from the Transit Centres) are being approached by multiple organisations seeking further information to provide assistance/protection
- Refugees are given unclear messages when they arrive at the camps, with registration staff giving varied/confused messages; many refugees are unable to read the pamphlets/flyers
- Many refugees are unable to find their luggage once it arrives and is left at the reception centre in the camps
  
- At the **Registration Centres**, bottlenecks are causing significant delays; many refugees are told to return the next day and are given a new appointment; Reception Centre team are not informed about the rescheduling of refugees by the Registration Centre team
- Many refugees have low literacy levels and are unable to read/speak English or Parthian
- There is constant overcrowding at the Registration Centre: refugees rescheduled from previous day(s) are mixing with refugees holding appointment slips for current day
- With delays at the Reception and Registration Centres, approximately two-thirds of all refugees still waiting to be registered (*for total number registered, see Registration Fact Sheet*)
- As with the Transit Centres, the Government registration supervisors are unable to manage/respond to the many significant issues now arising
- Government registration staff are unreliable – most have received little to no training; there are frequent absences and late arrivals; pay is poor
- There are long wait times and no structured waiting area/process, causing health and protection/security issues

## Registration Partnerships, Stakeholders & Coordination

### Parthian Government

The Immigration, Asylum, and International Protection (IAIP) Law grants the Immigration Minister overall authority (coordination/policy/strategic planning/technical advice) on all matters to do with refugees, largely conducted within the Immigration and Asylum Bureau (IAB). The IAB is run by a director, appointed by, and reporting directly to the Immigration Minister, who has also appointed a Refugee Coordination to oversee all operations in the South West Province. The Refugee Coordinator has appointed a Camp Management Coordinator to be the operational liaison with all other agencies.

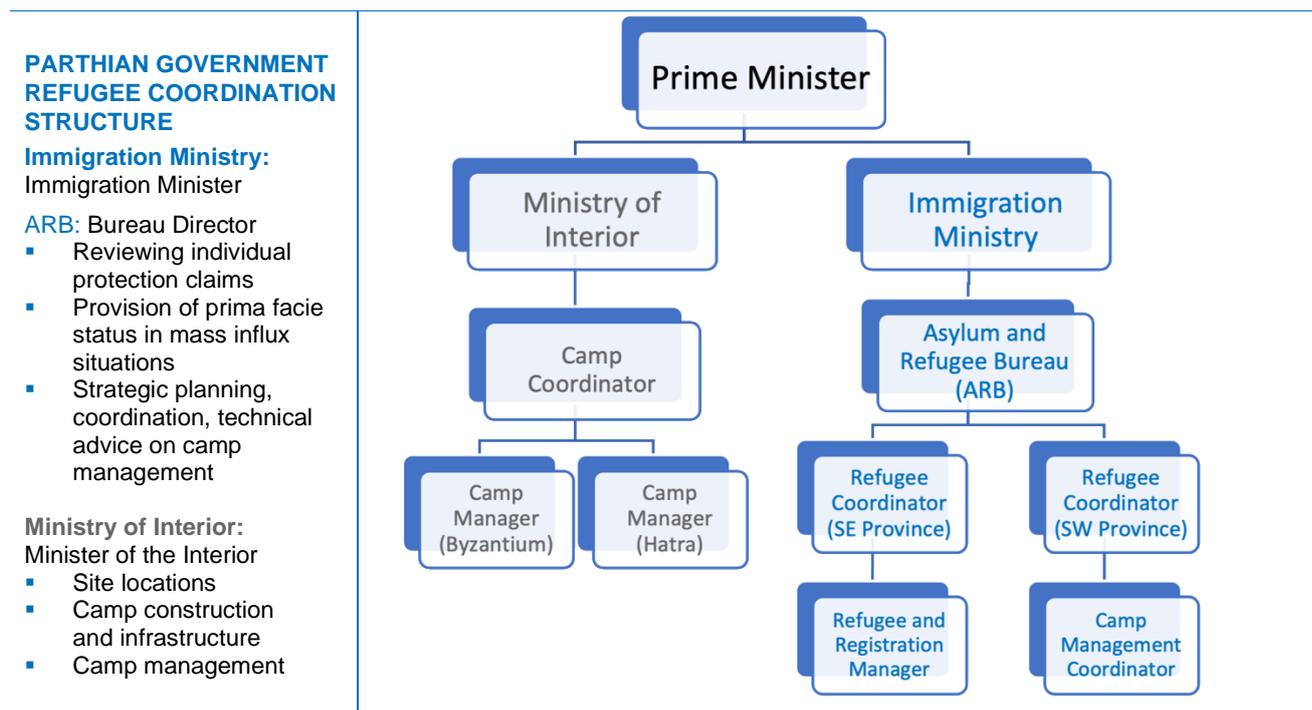
The IAIP Law grants the Minister of the Interior and the Ministry the authority to identify suitable sites, as well as operational planning, establishing and managing camps to the Minister of the Interior. The

Minister of the Interior has appointed an overall Camps Coordinator, who has appointed camp managers for each camp to oversee day-to-day operations.

In addition, the Ministry of the Interior is also responsible for policing, while the Provincial government is also responsible for local security and police operations. These areas of responsibility have created some coordination challenges (*discussed below*).

The Ministry for Social Services works closely with UNHCR on protection-related activities.

Within each province, local ministry representatives support day-to-day operations, with provincial government involved as needed.



## Coordination Arrangements

- UNHCR and the Parthian Government have assumed joint responsibility for the coordination of the refugee response
- The Parthian Government, through the Immigration Minister, has announced that UNHCR will lead the humanitarian response; UNHCR has enacted the Refugee Coordination Model to coordinate with all humanitarian actors involved in the refugee emergency response
- At the national level, interagency coordination occurs through the **Strategic Refugee Coordination Group**, led by the Government Refugee Coordinator (SE Province), the UNHCR Representative, and the UN Resident Coordinator
- UNHCR and the Parthian government have also assumed joint responsibility for conducting registration, with the government (Immigration Ministry) taking the lead in managing and supervising registration activities in both the Transit Centres and the Camps

### INTERAGENCY COORDINATION STRUCTURE (SE)

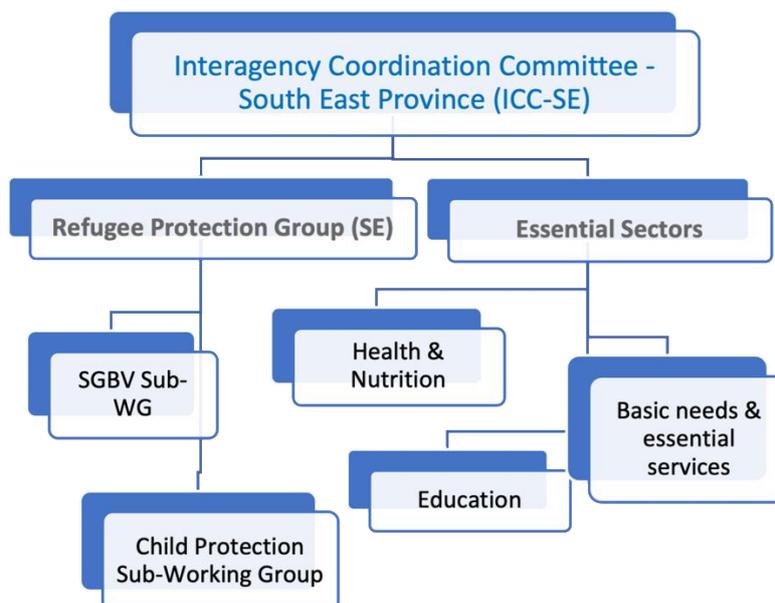
**Leads:** UNHCR Representative; Refugee Coordinator (SE)

Refugee Protection Working Group Leads: MoSW/UNHCR

- CP Sub-Working Group: UNICEF/IRC
- SGBV Sub-WG: UNHCR/UNICEF

Essential Sectors:

- Health & Nutrition: MSF/WFP
- Education: UNHCR/UNICEF
- Basic Needs/Services: UNHCR/Plan International



### INTERAGENCY COORDINATION STRUCTURE (SW)

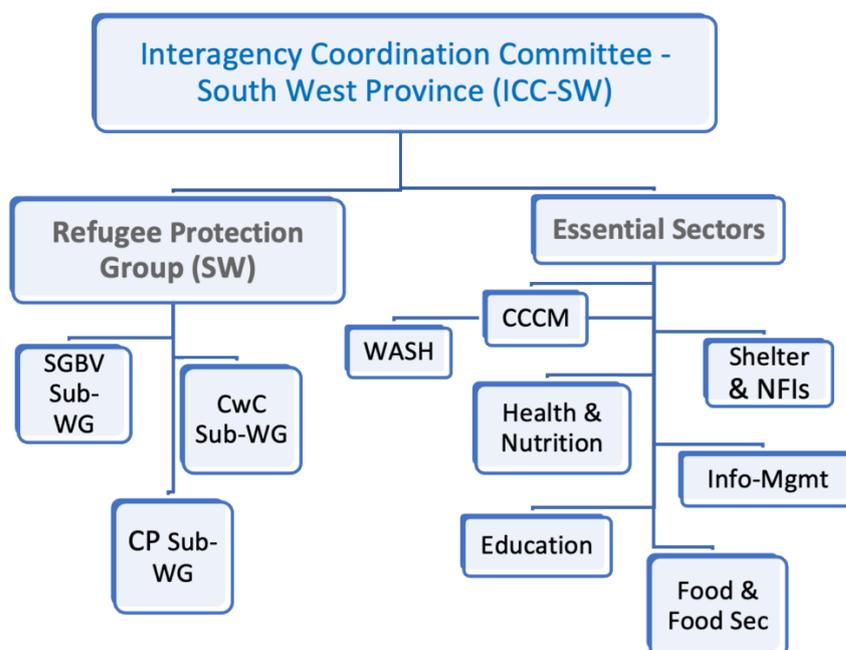
**Leads:** UNHCR Principal Emergency Coordinator; Refugee Coordinator (SW)

Refugee Protection Working Group Leads: MoSW/UNHCR

- CP Sub-Working Group: UNICEF/IRC
- SGBV Sub-WG: UNHCR/UNICEF
- CwC Sub-WG: UNHCR/DRC

Essential Sectors:

- Food/Food Security: WFP/FAO
- CCCM: UNHCR/MoI
- Info-Management: UNHCR/IOM
- Health & Nutrition: MSF/WFP
- Education: UNHCR/UNICEF
- WASH: UNHCR/Plan International



## Data Sharing

A Data Sharing Agreement was finalised and signed in 2018 between UNHCR and the Parthian Government's Immigration Ministry, as statutory authority responsible for refugees, and UNHCR's partner in joint registration.

It allows Parthian government to use UNHCR's PRIMES tools for registration of refugees and grants government access to basic biodata of refugee for protection and assistance purposes

Approximately 18 months later, UNHCR began talks with the (now previous) administration about increasing government access rights as part of a pathway to citizenship or integration policy that was soon to be implemented.

UNHCR was still in talks when the elections took place, bringing in a new administration. The new Prime Minister had run on a platform that did not agree with the previous governments' accommodation of refugees and argued that the economic and social tolls of refugees was harming Parthian citizens and jeopardising its development goals.

Not surprisingly, therefore, the new administration has conveyed an unwillingness to honour this policy, making UNHCR cautious about expanding the DSA. The Parthian government also has no data protection framework.

UNHCR has a Global MoU with WFP on data sharing. There are informal data sharing arrangements (for very specific purposes) with IOM (for transportation purposes) and other organisations, but no DSA at present.

## Registration Partners

### INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

#### International Organisation for Migration (IOM):

- Responsible for transportation of refugees from TC to camps and luggage handling
- Information management WG co-lead; Cash WG co-lead

#### World Food Programme (WFP):

- Working through local NGOs to distribute initial emergency food rations to families at Transit Centres; WFP has rolled out its assistance management tool, SCOPE, in both camps, and is issuing SCOPE cards for food distribution
- Co-lead Food/Food Security Working Groups

#### UNICEF:

- Since the recent refugee emergency, has established a small presence in SW Province which is gradually increasing
- Main focus is child protection (working with ICRC on reunification efforts), child nutrition (working with WFP), education, and WASH
- UNICEF is registering children in its case management system (Primero) at the camps

#### Plan International:

- Supporting UNHCR/Parthian government with camp management
- Shelter and core relief items (CRIS)

#### Danish Refugee Council:

- Shelter and NFI co-lead (SW Province)
- CwC working group co-lead
- UNHCR implementing partner (protection case management)

## NATIONAL/LOCAL NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

### Parthian Red Cross:

- Parthian Red Cross Society is present in the SW region
- An organisation with a strong reputation in Parthia and a long-standing tradition of being first responders in disasters and emergencies
- Has a large network of volunteers it can call on for a variety of tasks
- UNHCR has started to work with them to handle the initial supply chain and to stock the non-food items (NFI) items to be transported by UNHCR trucks from the warehouse in Byzantium
- PRC also support with medical and ambulance services in the TCs and camps

### Zoro Relief Services

- National NGO that carries out humanitarian activities throughout Parthia
- Staff have diverse qualifications and backgrounds; all have a minimum of secondary education as well as 1-2 years of higher education. Many are young, educated, and enthusiastic; their profiles include teachers, IT experts, anthropologists, economists and engineers
- Conducted field data collection with UNDP and UNICEF in the past

### Hope of Smiles

- UNHCR implementing partner supporting Transit Centre management
- Water and Sanitation services at Transit Centres

## Coordination & Partner-Related Challenges (SW Province):

- The camp coordinator (Ministry of Interior) has asked to be appointed co-chair in the ICC – this request has so far gone unanswered. As a result:
  - The camp managers have stopped attending ICC meetings
  - Camp managers have begun imposing additional requirements/ restrictions on humanitarian agencies' access to the camps.
  - For example, humanitarian workers are now asked to present IDs regularly; International staff are required to present work permits or are denied entry into the camps
  - Attempts to intervene by the Refugee Coordinator (SW Province) have been unsuccessful so far
- Some international organisations, believing that UNHCR is ineffective in its coordination role, have begun taking their own measures to improve their response to the refugee situation:
  - At one of the ICC meetings, operational partners (WFP, IOM, and UNICEF) and Implementing Partners (NRC, IRC, MSF) complained about their inability to effectively deliver services because most refugees were not registered
  - The agencies wrote a formal complaint to the Immigration Minister, detailing the impact of the situation, and requesting the Minister to allow agencies to collect their own data on the population, as UNHCR's tool was ineffective
  - UNICEF hired a local consortium to conduct a rapid population housing census to establish the exact number of individuals and households in the two camps. The consortium will also mark shelters during the process, which will be used as the new addresses for the households, as UNICEF believes UNHCR shelter addressing system is outdated.

## DATA SHARING

The Parthian Government's Ministry of the Interior has requested access to all refugee data, including biometrics and case management data (Protection, Child protection, Resettlement, SGBV, etc.), saying it is necessary for camp management, and to support refugee's accessing basic services. The Immigration Ministry supports this request and seeks the same access.

This goes beyond the scope of the original DSA. UNHCR has not conducted a DPIA; however, it has already identified concerns, including the government's intentions to provide durable solutions for newly arrived refugees, and the absence of a data protection framework.