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A review of DRC's protection and livelihoods programme in Chechnya

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About the Humanitarian Policy Group

The Humanitarian Policy Group at ODI is one of the world's leading teams of independent researchers and information professionals working on humanitarian issues. It is dedicated to improving humanitarian policy and practice through a combination of high-quality analysis, dialogue and debate.

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Acronyms

CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
DDG	Danish De-mining Group
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
HH	households
PP/PM	per person, per month
TACs	temporary accommodation centres
TS	temporary settlements

1. Introduction and methodology

This report reviews the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)'s protection and livelihoods programmes in Chechnya. The objectives of the review were to:

- Examine the linkages between protection and livelihoods in DRC's current and past programmes.
- Contribute to the formulation of a new strategy by indicating whether and how stronger linkages between livelihoods recovery and protection could be made.
- Facilitate staff discussions as advisor rather than evaluator.

The review was also part of DRC's global livelihoods and protection initiative. The objective of the review is to strengthen DRC's learning and understanding of how livelihood and protection approaches can be combined and made to mutually reinforce each other for the benefit of the people assisted.

The methodology included a brief literature review, interviews with conflict-affected communities on their own responses to livelihoods and protection risks as well as the effectiveness of DRC's programmes, and interviews with DRC staff and staff from other local organisations, international organisations and local authorities within Chechnya. Due to security constraints, field visits were limited to two and a half days and difficulties with travel permits resulted in delays in the field work. As a result, consultations with agencies in Moscow were not possible. It was also not possible to visit programmes in other republics.

2. Background and history

Chechnya's history is steeped in violence and turmoil. On the border between Europe and Asia and Christianity and Islam, the region has suffered almost continuous turbulence and subjugation by its more powerful neighbours. Ruled by Russia from the mid-nineteenth century, during Soviet times the ethnography of the region was violently altered: in 1944 an estimated half a million Chechen and Ingush people were deported *en masse* to Kazakhstan. An estimated 144,000 people died as a result of the deportations between 1944 and 1948 alone. The deportees returned home following 13 years in exile, and Chechnya-Ingushetia was re-established as a republic (Dunlop, 1998).

2.1 Chechnya's conflicts

The fall of the Soviet regime in 1991 led to independence movements across Central Asia. The rapid dissolution of the Soviet bloc and the emergence of numerous new states occurred largely peacefully except in Chechnya and Tajikistan, where major conflict broke out (Keep, 1996). Chechnya declared independence from Russia on 2 November 1991, but Moscow disputed the move, resulting in three years of uncertainty and rising tensions, culminating in 1994 with the deployment of Russian forces to Chechnya 'to restore the constitutional order'. Chechen resistance to what was viewed as the suppression of Chechen independence and Muslim identity denied the federal authorities the swift victory that had been expected. During this 'first Chechen conflict', fighting was especially fierce in and around the capital, Grozny, where large areas were reduced to rubble. By December 1995, the number of casualties from the conflict was estimated at between 26,000 and 50,000, including around 20,000 civilians (Youngs, 2000). The DRC estimated that approximately 250,000 individuals were displaced from Chechnya to Ingushetia. Conflict between Georgia and North Ossetia and fighting in North Ossetia displaced another 35,000 people in the region (DRC, 2008). Following mounting Russian public antipathy towards the violence in Chechnya, a ceasefire agreement was signed in August 1996. While the deal gave the republic substantial autonomy, and stipulated the withdrawal of Russian forces, a five-year moratorium was established on discussions of the republic's disputed status.

The uneasy peace that followed gained ground with internationally-observed elections in early 1997, and a further treaty between new Chechen President Aslan Maskhadov and then Russian President Boris Yeltsin. However, Makhadov presided over a declining economy and deteriorating law and order. Warlords racketeering in oil monies, gun-running and hostage-taking created chaos. Former separatist fighters increasingly turned to extremist Islam as an ideological platform for their activities, and by early 1999 the situation was characterised as 'internecine war' (Derluguian, 2003). Turmoil escalated with a string of attacks in September 1999, beginning with an incursion into the Russian republic of Dagestan by Islamic militants.

While the attack in Dagestan gained little attention outside the Northern Caucasus, bomb attacks in central Moscow, which killed 200 people, and another attack in the Russian city of Volgodonsk, which left 17 people dead, shocked the country and set in motion a fresh round of conflict: the so-called second conflict. A brutal air and artillery campaign by government forces in the first three months of the war resulted in widespread civilian casualties, the displacement of between 150,000 and 200,000 people, the large-scale destruction of villages and towns and the decimation of housing and infrastructure across the republic. Although accurate data on the scale of property destruction during the second conflict does not exist, a survey conducted by DRC put the number of destroyed or damaged houses at 111,327, along with a further 50,000 flats in Grozny. Fought under the banner of an 'anti-terrorist operation', no distinction was made between combatants and civilians. The bombardment of Grozny alone lasted between October 1999 and February 2000, during which an ultimatum was issued to the civilian population to leave or be regarded as 'terrorists and bandits … and destroyed'. While Russia withdrew the ultimatum in the face of international criticism, Grozny was reduced to what the UN called the 'most destroyed city on earth'.[1] International organisations, including the Council of Europe and Amnesty International, criticised both sides in the conflict for 'blatant and sustained' violations of international humanitarian law. By early 2000, Russian forces had occupied most of the region and Chechen military groups had been pushed

[1] 'Scars Remain Amid Chechen Revival', BBC News, 3 March 2007.

into southern areas. With a reported substantial decline in numbers due to dwindling popular support, rebel groups depended on mass hostage-takings, assassinations and suicide bombings designed to terrorise civilians across Russia. In the deadliest incidents, an estimated 130 people were killed in an attack on a Moscow theatre in October 2002, and 320 children and others died following an attack on a school in Beslan in North Ossetia in 2004 (Nicol, 2006).

With the end of the active military phase of the conflict, Russian troops embarked on widespread 'sweeps' of villages in search of militants. These resulted in civilian disappearances, detention, rape, torture and summary killings across the republic (USCR, 2000; HRW, 2000). In 2007, Memorial, a Russian human rights NGO, reported that it had specific information about the kidnapping of 2,018 Chechens, and estimated that between 3,000 and 5,000 people had gone missing (interviews with local NGOs put this figure at around 10,000 people). Human Rights Watch characterised the widespread disappearances in Chechnya as a crime against humanity under international law (HRW, 2007).

Politically, Chechnya became a federal subject of the Russian Federation in 2001, and a pro-Russian regime was installed under Ahmad Kadyrov. Meanwhile, the separatists established a government-in-exile under Maskhadov. In a process of 'Chechenisation', federal forces were progressively withdrawn, and Kadyrov's government was tasked with maintaining security in the region. This process was violently opposed by Chechen guerrillas, who staged bombings, shootings and other attacks on the security forces throughout 2003 and 2004. Following Kadyrov's assassination in 2004, he was replaced by his son, Ramzan, who assumed the presidency in early 2007 (Kramer, 2007). Chechenisation was accompanied by the creation of local law enforcement and military forces ('Kadyrovtsy'), consisting of local ethnic Chechens charged with fighting armed elements by means of terrorising and intimidating those considered sympathetic to, or supportive of, the militants. The Kadyrovtsy have been implicated in serious human rights abuses, including unlawful detention and torture (HRW, 2007).

The predominant line in the Russian government has been to claim that, since 2003, the situation in Chechnya has 'normalised'. Maskhadov's assassination in 2005, and the killing of his successor the following year, were seen as undermining the morale of the resistance. The accidental death of Chechen Islamist Shamil Basayev later in 2006 was credited as a turning-point in favour of federal forces. An amnesty was declared in 2006 and many Chechen rebels have since been absorbed into republican forces. Despite continued stabilisation since 2005, as well as reconstruction in Grozny and other major towns, the atmosphere remains tense and civilians remain at risk of violence and persecution, both by rebel groups and by pro-Moscow republican and federal forces (ECRE, 2007). Although the authorities claim that military action has ceased, hostilities continue in the Chechen mountains, including armed clashes, vehicle bombings and other violent incidents between security forces and rebel groups (Swisspeace, 22 June 2007).

3. Current context

3.1 Physical security

Most reports on the security situation in Chechnya suggest that the situation has stabilised to the extent that, for much of the civilian population, security risks are now secondary to economic concerns (Swisspeace, 2007). In contrast to the years of full-scale violence, military and security personnel and Chechen militants are now fighting each other and not civilians; the risks the civilian population faces now relate more to ongoing human rights violations than full-scale violence. Kidnappings and disappearances pose the most serious challenge to human security in Chechnya. In 2006, Memorial stated that 172 people had been abducted, 86 of whom were subsequently released, 17 formally arrested, nine found dead by the year's end and 60 still 'disappeared'. In 2005, the overall number of abductions was 320. Memorial has indicated that there has been a marked decrease in disappearances, which it attributes to the increased use of torture by the security forces, meaning that required information can be extracted more readily, and, since 2007, a specific injunction against abduction by Kadyrov.

In the research areas, people interviewed indicated that they generally felt safe enough to move around and pursue their livelihoods: 'men, women, everyone, we can now all move around safely' (Serzhen Yurt). Family members of a number of interviewees had 'disappeared' during the conflict, but there were no reports of recent disappearances in the communities where interviews were conducted. However, whilst there are no restrictions on movement and people generally considered it safe to move around, unnecessary movement is still limited. Women in Duba Yurt indicated that they tried to stop their children from travelling to Grozny for work – 'so many people have been lost, people don't want them to move' – but stated that, in general, only their daughters stayed. Many people also told us that movement to other states in the North Caucasus or Russian Federation for work was much more limited than before the conflict due to high levels of intolerance and discrimination against Chechens. People said that economic migration had been a major livelihoods activity during Soviet times, but that it was much more restricted now due to concerns about security outside the republic. This finding is consistent with recent research on Chechens living in the Russian Federation, which shows that they are subject to high levels of harassment, intimidation and discrimination (IDMC, 2008).

Insecurity is a far greater problem in other parts of the republic, in particular the mountainous areas of Shatoysky Rayon and Itum-Kalinsky Rayon in southern Chechnya, as well as around Kurchaloy district to the east. Information on these areas is scanty due to limited access, but the southern regions are heavily militarised: Chechen rebel activity continues in mountainous regions, and large numbers of security personnel are deployed along the border with Georgia. Many areas are thought to be depopulated due to continuing insecurity, though displaced Chechens are returning from Georgia following a Georgian decree expelling them from the country. NGOs stressed the need for greater engagement in these areas, both to monitor protection issues and to provide livelihoods support.

Interviewees indicated that continuing military activities in the mountains, landmines and unexploded ordnance all made moving around to collect firewood, garlic and berries difficult. While interviews claimed that they no longer forage for wild foods, local NGOs indicated that, in some areas, people were continuing to put themselves at risk. There are no figures on the number of landmines laid, but according to UNICEF by 2007 over 700 people had been killed in landmine explosions (IMSMA, 2007), one of the highest per capita rates ever documented. Young men between the ages of 17 and 29 are particularly at risk (OCHA, 2007). A limited amount of de-mining is being undertaken, but reports indicate that both Chechen rebels and Russian forces continue to use mines. Apparently Russian mines are laid in accordance with requirements that 'all necessary documentation for minefields is retained', and that minefields 'are fenced and the civilian population informed' (Landmine Monitor, 2006).

Local NGOs also highlighted concerns about the continued conscription of young men into the Chechen resistance. Years of insecurity and displacement have meant that many are ill-educated and unskilled, and in the current economic environment have limited employment prospects. Having grown up amid violence, with many suffering the loss or disappearance of relatives and friends, young people are

susceptible to rebel propaganda and may seek to avenge the loss and suffering that they have endured. In mid-2008, Kadyrov pledged to hold responsible the relatives and neighbours of young men who joined the militants. However, reports indicate that threats and intimidation against family members have not prevented young Chechens from joining the rebels (IDMC, 2008).

3.2 Rule of law and governance

According to Human Rights Watch, one of the main factors contributing to human rights abuses against civilians in Chechnya is the culture of impunity and inadequate rule of law. Humanitarian protection and the rule of law are closely linked. While activities to protect the rights of individuals can span crisis and development contexts, protection is most commonly understood as immediate and medium-term interventions to protect individuals and groups from violations of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. As such, protection is usually applied in situations of conflict or crisis. Rule of law refers to a system of governance where the citizenry and their government, as well as public and private institutions, are accountable to a legal system that is publicly established and independently applied in a just and equal fashion. As such, rule of law is concerned with support for national civilian mechanisms of law enforcement, legal representation and an independent judiciary. Although commonly believed to have most relevance in post-conflict environments, increasing attention is now being paid to the establishment of rule of law activities in protracted crises as part of the early recovery agenda.

Few violations are reported to the authorities or to human rights organisations, reportedly due to intimidation of victims. There is a lack of due process in criminal proceedings, with widespread concern about the independence of the judiciary. Where actions are started there are claims that courts have disregarded evidence of torture during hearings; in other instances the prosecutor's office has refused to open cases (HRW, 13 November, 2006). The lack of accountability for human rights violations in the courts has led to a large number of applications to the European Court of Justice. Many of these cases have found that the Russian government has failed to properly investigate incidents. In many cases, victims have been awarded compensation (HRW, 2007). Although the court system in Chechnya has been restructured and is apparently operating more effectively in civil cases, the lack of due process is evident whenever the state is involved. For instance, local organisations pointed to cases in 2006 where property in the Staropromyslovsky district of Grozny had been taken over by the local authorities. All the claimants withdrew their cases due to intimidation. In other cases there is no adjudication on the dispute. On average, private property cases take approximately two months, but for cases involving the authorities, organisations highlighted delays of eight months, without decisions being taken.

The Ombudsman's[2] office in Grozny highlighted numerous examples of inadequacies in existing laws, both in terms of discriminatory or inadequate application (for example in relation to compensation for destroyed property) and in terms of Chechens' rights within the Russian Federation (for example Chechens unable to transport cargo from Dagestan). Local NGOs indicated that, apart from concerns regarding reprisals in relation to criminal cases, people generally avoided legal proceedings, believing them to be futile, lengthy and expensive. They indicated that the poor and vulnerable were especially affected by lack of access to justice due to an inability to pay legal fees or the bribes that were frequently required to facilitate the legal process.

The lack of human rights guarantees and due process and a culture of impunity are all symptoms of a wider lack of democratic governance in Chechnya, as demonstrated by a governance system limited in accountability, representation and decentralisation; low levels of civic participation; high levels of corruption; and the suppression of the independent media. These issues are not only central to Chechnya's recovery but, critically, impede ordinary Chechens' ability to enjoy basic services, freedoms and livelihoods. The corruption which has infiltrated the judicial system affects people's ability to defend their rights at every level, including property, employment and social rights. Conflict created opportunities for profiteering, extortion and illegitimate gain during the crisis, and while corruption is by all accounts widespread across the Russian Federation, it was consistently presented in discussions as a barrier to recovery in Chechnya. The corrupt practices of public officials compound the lack of trust in government authorities at both central and local levels.

[2] An ombudsman is an official, usually appointed by the government or by parliament, charged with representing the interests of the public by investigating and addressing complaints reported by citizens.

Numerous cases of falsification of documents by public officials, for instance in relation to the ownership of former state apartments in Grozny, were cited during interviews, and bribery is widespread. Interviewees indicated that employment and educational opportunities were usually only obtainable through nepotism or corruption. Schoolchildren in Duba Yurt spoke openly of lack of money to pay bribes as a barrier to reaching university, while their teacher told us that only one of her students had got to university on merit alone.

Corruption has severe consequences for people in extreme poverty. Corruption acts as a barrier to people's entitlement to basic services, whether medical care, public services or state subsidies. While gas and other utilities are subsidised for people with monthly salaries below 3,000 roubles,
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interviewees in Urus Marten told the study team that people were too poor to pay the bribes required to obtain the documents needed to receive the subsidy. The complicated bureaucracy associated with receipt of social welfare assistance is rendered more challenging still as a result of inconsistency, corruption, inefficiency and lack of transparency. Difficulties reported in accessing services included lack of due process in the system, lack of knowledge regarding entitlements, inability to manage the process due to physical, intellectual or psychological impairment and inability to pay bribes in order to obtain the documents required. Table 1 sets out the documents required to access services, benefits and entitlements in Chechnya. Box 1 highlights some of the difficulties encountered in obtaining the required documents.

Table 1: Documents required to access services, benefits and entitlements in Chechnya

Service or entitlement	Documents required
Employment in the official labour market	Internal passport, residence registration
Unemployment benefit	Internal passport, residence registration, work record card (booklet) and one copy, insurance pension certificate and one copy; for children from 16 to 18 years – reference from school, confirming that children study at school, or high school diploma; reference from a local housing authority or administration that one has not worked and does not work at present
Medical policy	Internal passport, residence registration
Medical care	Internal passport, residence registration
School enrolment	Internal passport of parent, birth certificate of child
Enrolment in higher education	Internal passport, high school diploma
Housing in a temporary accommodation centre	Forced migrant status, passport, residence registration or reference from a place of residence, reference of family members, statement(application), reference confirming the family's vulnerability from administration.
Access to list of those in need of improved housing	Internal passport, permanent resident registration, passport copies for all family members, birth certificates for all children, marriage certificate, copy of insurance pension certificate, copy of disability reference; document outlining number and profile of family members, Social Welfare Centre document outlining social conditions, copy of a document confirming property (housing) ownership; reference from Housing Technical Board.
Pension	Internal passport, residence registration, salary certificate, work booklet
Vote in elections	Internal passport, residence registration
Property compensation	Identification documents of applicant and family members, document confirming relationship between applicant and family members, documents confirming previous ownership or use of housing, statement of rejection of property ownership by applicant and family members, notarised original signatures of applicant and family members, report indicating housing defects, report from the housing register, reference from a place of residence.
Bank account	Internal passport, residence registration
Court application	Internal passport, petition (application) from barrister or lawyer from NGO; reference from place of residence, reference of family members, state duty payment receipt, copies of passports of witnesses. This list of the documents needed is approximate as each petition has its peculiarities in accordance with articles of different codes
Travel within Russia	Internal passport

**This list is adapted from IDMC (2008:8) with details of additional documentation required in Chechnya drawn from local sources.*

Box 1: A cycle of vulnerability: difficulties with official documents in Urus Marten

A woman resident of Urus Marten of about 40 years of age lost her husband during the war. She has two children and no permanent income. She needed a passport to set up a bank account in order to get cash assistance from the DRC. However, she had mislaid her documentation and, when she found it, it had expired. She therefore needed a new one. When she went to the authorities, she was asked to pay 5,000 roubles (approximately €140), which she could not afford. The woman was referred to DRC's legal office. DRC's lawyer was told that the woman could obtain a letter stating her identity, but this would only be provided if she paid outstanding utility bills. Although the woman was entitled to a subsidy, she could not apply for it because she needed her passport to do so. The matter was eventually referred to the Ombudsman's office, and within a week the woman had received a new passport. She now receives DRC assistance and subsidised utilities.

Constraints on civil society in Chechnya are another factor in poor governance. Since 2006, civil society groups, traditionally tightly controlled by the government, have been subject to new legislation[3] giving the authorities even stronger powers, with provisions allowing for governmental participation in any NGO events, imposing stringent reporting requirements and restricting foreign funding. This has reportedly caused considerable difficulties for local civil society; the new funding requirements in particular have led to closures. However, in 2007 the independent coordinating body for local NGOs became a government-endorsed and -sponsored 'Social Chamber', easing the level of control and scrutiny of NGO activities, although its governmental nature obviously restricts the independence of the membership. According to the Ombudsman's office, of the 400 organisations under the auspices of the Social Chamber, only ten 'were working effectively'.

During the Soviet period civil society largely comprised state organisations and social institutions. As a result, local organisations in Chechnya have a short history and limited capacity. Many of the organisations interviewed for this research were facing severe funding shortages and had limited coverage beyond Grozny. Partnership with international organisations is reportedly strictly controlled. Local human rights organisations tend to be better established, as many were initiated in response to the widespread protection issues experienced in the early 1990s. Some receive international funding. Following the end of major hostilities, many have moved into the social sector, focusing on helping people to rebuild their lives.

Return of displaced populations, land and property issues

Violence in the region has led to widespread displacement. UNDP estimates that 800,000 of Chechnya's 1.1 million people have been displaced either within or outside Chechnya (UNDP, 2005). The toll of the conflict is still evident in terms of people's right of return and enjoyment of land and property rights. Lack of property rights not only affects return, but is also connected with livelihoods in multiple ways: displacement results in loss of people's former livelihoods (or being cut off from their normal livelihood sources); inadequate housing affects health and income. Loss of property (for example housing or land) has a major impact on livelihoods as these are key livelihood assets. Rental or reconstruction is an ongoing economic burden, and uncertain land rights in rural areas influence the degree to which displaced and returnee populations invest in the land.

Most of the estimated 250,000 people who fled Chechnya during the first wave of violence between 1994 and 1996 returned before the second war. Many were displaced once more during the second conflict. Improved security in Chechnya has prompted the return of over 200,000 people from Ingushetia. According to DRC, in 2000 there were approximately 250,000 IDPs in Ingushetia, but by 2007 this had fallen to an estimated 15,000. A further 5,000 people fled to Dagestan during the first conflict, and an estimated 6,000 during the later one. Approximately 1,000 of these 11,000 people are thought to have returned, with the remainder likely to stay in Dagestan. Some 15,000 of the estimated 17,000 people displaced in the war between Georgia and North Ossetia in 1991 are thought to have returned, whilst 1,000 of the 18,000 mainly ethnic Ingush forced to flee the Prigordny conflict in North Ossetia in 1992 have been allowed to return home. The rest are still displaced in Ingushetia and North Ossetia.

[3] Federal Law of the Russian Federation # 18-FZ On Introducing Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation. The law was signed by the Russian President on 10 January 2006, and came into effect 90 days after its official publication on 17 January 2006.

Table 2: Numbers of displaced and returnees in Northern Caucasus (2007)

Populations in protracted displacement	**Numbers and ethnicity**	**Returnees**
People displaced from Prigorodny, North Ossetia, to Ingushetia and North Ossetia in 1992	Approx. 18,000,[4] mainly ethnic Ingush	Approx. 1,000
Displaced populations with prospects of return	**Numbers and ethnicity**	**Returnees**
People displaced from Chechnya to Ingushetia during first Chechen conflict (1994–96)	10,000–15,000, mainly ethnic Ingush	Approx. 100,000
People displaced from Chechnya to Dagestan during first Chechen conflict	Around 5,000 Chechens and other ethnicities	Approx. 500
People displaced from Chechnya to other Russian regions, primarily during first Chechen conflict	265,000,[5] Russians, ethnic Chechens, Armenians, Jews	Currently unavailable
Refugees from Georgia (including South Ossetia) displaced during 1990 ethnic conflict	Approx. 17,000,[6] mainly ethnic Ossetians	15,000
Displaced populations with prospects of return or of protracted displacement	**Numbers and ethnicity**	**Returnees**
People displaced internally within Chechnya	From 29,000[7] to 100,000, majority ethnic Chechens	Approx 600,000
Persons displaced from Chechnya to Ingushetia during second Chechen conflict (1999–2002)	14,877, majority ethnic Chechens, also ethnic Ingush and other ethnicities	Approx 185,000
Persons displaced from Chechnya to Dagestan during second Chechen conflict (1999–2002)	Approximately 4,927 Chechens, Dagestanis and other ethnicities	Approx 1,500
Chechen refugees displaced outside Russian Federation	**Numbers and ethnicity**	**Returnees**
Refugees from Chechnya outside of the Russian Federation	25,500 Chechen refugees in South Caucasus;[8] 150,000 in Europe and elsewhere[9]	Approx. 2,000

Source: Adapted from DRC, 2008. Unless otherwise stated, figures are from DRC 2007 database statistics or estimates.

[4] OCHA (February 2006).

[5] Memorial News Service (January, 2006).

[6] North Ossetian Migration Service (September 2006).

[7] Committee for Displaced Person, Government of Chechnya, only TACs and compact settlements (August, 2007).

[8] Norwegian Refugee Council (May, 2005).

[9] Memorial (January, 2006).

People displaced from the conflicts in the Northern Caucasus found housing in box tents or accommodation (such as hostels and dormitories), either in temporary settlements (TSs) or in temporary accommodation centres (TACs). While TACs are directly managed by the Russian Federation Migration Service (MS), temporary settlements are privately owned structures (empty buildings, former factories, factory compounds), which are rented by the MS. The MS subsidises utilities expenses for people residing in the TACs and TSs. In addition to the poor or inadequate housing offered in these settlements, residents were frequently subjected to 'mopping up' exercises by security forces searching for rebel forces or sympathisers. Others opted for private accommodation, either renting directly or moving in with relatives (UNHCR, 2007). During both military campaigns, civilian housing was directly targeted in contravention of international humanitarian law, resulting in widespread destruction of private houses and apartments (Tango, 2006: 11). Property destruction during the first Chechen conflict primarily focused on Grozny and surrounding areas, whereas the second conflict was characterised by extensive damage of housing and infrastructure across the republic. This included Grozny and its surrounds, as well as the pre-mountainous and mountainous regions further south. Much of the property destroyed in rural areas during the first war was not fully rehabilitated, as people viewed a return to violence as inevitable (interviews, Serzhen Yurt). As such, some property has remained without rehabilitation for up to 14 years. Although accurate estimates of property destruction during the second Chechen conflict do not exist, a survey conducted by DRC placed the figure of fully or partially destroyed houses in Chechnya at 111,327, plus a further estimated 50,000 flats in Grozny.

Displaced populations were accorded 'forced migrant' status by the FMS. While concerns have been raised about the narrowness of the definition of 'forced migrant' as compared to 'IDP' under the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, this status allows for one-off financial assistance, temporary accommodation, compensation for travel expenses to the area of temporary residence, housing loans and free medical assistance (IDMC, 2008: 8). Beginning in 2001, however, newly displaced Chechens were refused forced migrant status by the Russian authorities. In 2002, the Chechen authorities began to press actively for return by closing camps and providing transport, and people were told that they would be given compensation if they went home (one woman in Grozny told the team that, although she was promised compensation, she had received none). Pressure from the Chechen and Ingush authorities increased in 2004, when several temporary settlements were closed and gas and water supplies cut off to a number of TACs (interviews: Grozny, Serzhen Yurt). As part of its continuing efforts to portray the situation as 'normalised', the government is attempting to control the use of the terms IDP and TAC, instead claiming that people are in 'inadequate housing' (Memorial, 2008).

Despite efforts to close displacement centres, in 2007 UNHCR reported that 30% of Chechens remaining in Ingushetia were living in TACs or temporary settlements. Of these, just over one-third were supported by the FMS. In Chechnya, a UNHCR survey found that an estimated 4,838 people were still living in TACs or TSs concentrated in Grozny and other urban areas (UNHCR, 2007). According to the survey, 60.7% of families identified the provision of housing by the government as the only barrier to their leaving a TS/TAC. Almost all of the 593 IDP families in TSs in Ingushetia were willing to return to Chechnya if suitable accommodation was provided (UNHCR, 2007).

Box 2: Continuing shelter difficulties in Staropromyslovkski-Rayon, Grozny

Mariat, a woman in her 40s, left Grozny in 2000. Her husband was injured during the conflict, and two of her three children are handicapped. The third suffered trauma due to the conflict. Two of Mariat's brothers are still missing.

Mariat and her family lived in a box tent in Ingushetia until 2008, when pressure from the authorities led them to return to Grozny. Mariat tried to apply for compensation, but to no avail. Mariat is currently living in a box tent in the yard of her former house. She shares the yard with her sister, who also lives in a box tent with her family. Mariat's family survive on the pensions received for the handicapped father and daughter and children's allowance . She sometimes works as a hired trader in Grozny market, earning about 500 roubles (€15) per day. Mariat has been accepted on to DRC's list for a house. This is currently under construction, and all her relatives are helping. Lack of money is causing delays, as the family cannot afford to provide its share of materials.

In line with international rights governing recovery or compensation for lost property,[10] in 2004 the

[10] IDPs have the right to recover or be compensated for property or possessions left behind or dispossessed upon displacement. Article 17 of the UDHR and Guiding Principle 21 set out the right to protection of property. Guiding Principle

Chechen government established a compensation scheme for people whose houses were fully destroyed during the second war. In the two years that the scheme was functional, an estimated 39,000 packages worth approximately $13,000 were disbursed. Problems remain, however. First, the scheme relates only to houses completely destroyed during the conflict, excluding those whose homes were damaged but not fully destroyed. Many spoke of living under damaged roofs for years, with the attendant health risks (one man in Grozny told us he used 24 pots to collect rainwater every time it rained). Second, the scheme fell foul of Chechnya's rampant corruption, and only people with ties to officials were able to get access. Once on the scheme, many people received only half of the sum required to rebuild a house, with the rest being lost to bribes. As a result, a large number of people refused to apply for compensation. Others who got it reportedly used the money to pay debts and fund medical care, as it was insufficient to enable them to rebuild. Although the scheme reportedly resumed in 2008, the amount payable has not increased in line with inflation. According to interviewees, the price of cement rose five-fold between 2003 and 2008 (from 60 to 300 roubles in urban areas, and from 40 to 250 roubles in rural areas). Finally, compensation by its very nature is only open to those whose property has been damaged by the war. Many displaced populations rented property prior to the conflict. Others were children during the conflict, but have since matured and started families. Both groups lack property entitlements, and are forced to share overcrowded housing with relatives (people spoke of two families sharing a one-bedroom flat) or live in a variety of inadequate housing arrangements (examples included box tents, farm sheds, the foundations of houses and damaged properties).

Other property-related issues affecting return include multiple competing claims to property, none of which has a basis in law. Corrupt officials seek to sell off property for personal gain, and local organisations highlight many examples of unlawful commandeering of private property by the state, without due notification or compensation. In Oktyabrsky Rayon in south-eastern Grozny, a block of flats has been taken over as a site for a court, and people cannot get compensation. The central market in Grozny, a site of historic importance, was razed to the ground, affecting the trade and employment opportunities of thousands of people. In rural areas, land privatisation has been slow, which means that many fields lie fallow. According to one USAID report, people are reluctant to make longer-term investments such as orchards if land tenure is not clear. Lack of availability of land plots for new housing has disproportionately affected young people. Traditionally, the youngest son remains in the family house with his new family and other sons build new houses elsewhere, but this is not possible in the context of limited land availability.

3.3 Food security and livelihood strategies

Grozny in 2000

Grozny in 2008

Local accounts indicate that the economic situation in Chechnya during Soviet times was good, although ethnic Chechens were predominantly engaged in agriculture and low-paying jobs due to the preference accorded Russian Slavs in professional and public service employment. Chechens were employed in large collective vegetable and olive farms. Many also supplemented their income through small-scale cultivation, maintaining a limited number of livestock, or collecting berries and wild fruit. In general, men were the main breadwinners,

29.2 states that IDPs are entitled to recovery or compensation for lost property or possessions.

although some women also worked, including in construction jobs in southern Russia. Chechnya's large-scale manufacturing industries – which included the largest oil refinery in the Northern Caucasus as well as textile and food processing plants – were concentrated in Grozny, where the Russian population resided.

Reports suggest that many state-controlled industries and farms were purposefully run down at the fall of the Soviet Union in order to allow their subsequent sale on the open market. The country's economic problems were compounded by the devastation caused by the conflicts between 1994 and 2004. During this time, men were largely confined indoors due to insecurity and women became more active in the labour market – a situation that continues today. Many people were dependent on humanitarian assistance. Others migrated abroad in search of work.

The conflict devastated Chechnya's infrastructure, industry and agriculture, resulting in widespread unemployment and poverty. Apart from the oil industry and three small agro-industry plants processing dairy products, flour and honey, no other industrial activities exist (Robinson, 2008). Figures from the Russian Federal Government Statistical Committee put the official unemployment rate at 34.73%. A food security report in 2006 indicated that, while poverty in urban areas had decreased due to the effects of reconstruction, rural areas showed no signs of recovery. Ninety per cent of the population live on income below the subsistence level (UNDP, 2007, quoted in IDMC, 2007). Approximately 30% of the population in Chechnya and Ingushetia were thought to be food insecure in 2006, with severe wasting particularly prevalent in the mountainous regions of Chechnya (Tango, 2007).

Ongoing insecurity is curtailing productive activities, disrupting agricultural production and local and regional markets. Reports indicate that 150,000 hectares of land were destroyed in the war, along with irrigation systems for 135 hectares. Livestock was decimated. Production remains far below the levels required, and most food is imported. Inflation has significantly increased food insecurity (Robinson, 2008). Finally, large swathes of the population remain separated from the social support provided by family and clan structures.

Three sources of income were consistently highlighted during interviews: temporary jobs in construction, for both men and women; social welfare payments and humanitarian assistance (cash and food). People reported earning approximately 500 roubles per day (€15) as construction workers, particularly in urban centres. This has increased employment, but apparently has not created a more sustainable jobs market. Many people said that public construction work was controlled by public officials, who had to be bribed before awarding jobs. Others complained of not being paid or being underpaid. In urban areas, women spoke of trading in clothes and food, earning 500 roubles a day when work was available. Other jobs included the civil service and the professions, although corruption is a major factor here as well. Interviewees said that it was almost impossible to get a job without contacts, and even then jobs were only secured with payment of half the salary for six months to the person who had secured the work. There is little job security, and people can be usurped from their position by a competitor prepared to pay more for it. The Russian federal authorities have stopped recruiting Chechens into the army. Although some are employed in local republican forces, these jobs are considered high risk. Others mentioned remittances as an important source of supplementary income, particularly for urban populations.

In rural areas people also highlighted construction. Farming (growing potatoes, fruit and vegetables) was mainly at subsistence level, and people complained of a lack of water, equipment and tools. There were concerns about access to pastureland due to insecurity and landmines. Access problems also prevented people from gathering wild foods, including *cheremsha* (wild garlic), nettles and berries, in the past an important source of food and income.

Box 3: Livelihoods in Serzen-Yurt, pre-mountainous (hilly) area in central Chechnya

Before the wars Serzen Yurt was beautiful: families holidayed in summer camps and foreigners visited. Many people were employed in the tourist industry as well as the large state farms in the area. Today the state farm is nominally functional, but only one person is employed there. While the area has sufficient water, the destruction of the mains means that many areas cannot access it. The land is good, but people lack the resources and equipment to farm. Many families do not have sufficient food. Others are dependent on pensions or on what their sons can make from migrant work.

Given the high levels of unemployment, pensions and social welfare payments are especially important. There are subsidies for children, the

elderly, veterans, the disabled and the unemployed (see Table 4 below). According to a 2006 Tango report, almost 90% receive some form of assistance, and welfare accounts for more than half of household income. Reportedly, these payments have increased five times over the past two years (Robinson, 2008: 48). A fifth of the population are on pensions.

Table 4: Social support in Chechnya

Pensions	Allowances	Payments
Disability: regular monthly payments to disabled (approx. 135,000 roubles). Amount varies according to nature of the disability, from approx. $130 to $217 per month (four levels) *Old age:* regular payment of approx. 125,000 to over 52 years. *Retired civil servants:* discretionary payments to state workers: approx. $130 per month.	*Unemployment:* three-month payment for loss of job, 40% of final wage. Not for school leavers, never-employed or under 18s. *Children's allowance:* monthly allowance for all children up to 14 years. Approx. $3 per month.	*Maternity:* one-off payment for every child. Approx. $200 per child. *Education:* one-off allocation for multi-child households. *Housing trust fund:* payment for second and third children to enlarge house or provide children's facilities. Approx $1,000 per child.

Source: Robinson (2008)

Social capital too is an important livelihood strategy. People spoke of the strength of social capital in Chechnya: 'if you have a family member in poverty, it is a shame for the entire family'. Support was provided in a number of ways, including sharing houses, assisting with employment and borrowing for food, medical expenses and housing. Money is borrowed for up to three years with no interest charged. Loans were seldom sought from formal institutions, as this was thought to be too difficult and costly. Food aid was also mentioned, as well as the pawning of assets such as cars and jewellery in times of difficulty. Shopkeeper debt, especially at the end of the month and during the winter period, was highlighted by those most in need, as well as reducing food levels and substitution of meat.

While the most vulnerable continue to feel the effects of conflict, for the population at large there have been important improvements, and the economic revival in urban areas, fuelled by federal money, is undeniable. In 2007, 11 billion roubles were transferred (Memorial, 2007), rising to 30 billion in 2008, with 110 billion planned between 2008 and 2011. The vast majority, 83.4%, of Chechnya's budget is supplied federally, and only 16.6 % sourced locally (Robinson, 2008). In Grozny, 96 municipal houses and more than 100km of road were rebuilt in 2007 (Swisspeace, 2008). This rapid reconstruction is apparently linked to Chechnya's role in Russia's oil industry: Grozny is an important oil-producing hub and a strategic point along the oil pipeline from the Caspian Sea to Russia. In April 2008, production levels were 1.2 million tonnes per year (15.33 million barrels), worth an estimated $1.92 billion. With oil revenues of $12.8 million in 2007, oil is an important source of income for the republic (Robinson, 2008).

3.4 Linkages between livelihoods and protection in Chechnya

As with all conflicts involving the direct targeting and displacement of civilians, the livelihood threats Chechens face are inextricably linked to their protection. At the most fundamental level, the combined effect of warfare and ongoing human rights abuses has had major implications for the demography of Chechnya. The killing of men meant that their productive capacities were more or less wiped out during the war years, and women took over these roles. A reported third of the Chechen population is under 15 years of age, and just 5% over 65. The ratio of women to men during the prime productive years (20 to 50) is 54 to 42. Nearly 20% of all women over 20 years of age are widowed (Tango, 2006). The reduction in household labour capacity clearly has had an effect on livelihoods.

The physical and emotional toll of the conflict is still palpable. People spoke about the violence they had witnessed and gave accounts of deaths and disappearances of family members during military operations. Surveys have shown that 70% of Chechens have experienced emotional or physical trauma related to conflict (de Jong et al., 2004). In a USAID survey in 2006, over half of respondents had lost at least one close family member in the conflict, and more than a quarter had personally witnessed a relative's death (USAID, 2006). Local NGOs believe that the psychological impact of the conflict has affected people's ability to work. Every family interviewed was supporting handicapped

relatives, many incurring debts to pay for healthcare.

People with greater economic, social and political assets had more options at every stage of the displacement process. Interviewees in some villages spoke of not being able to flee to Ingushetia because of lack of money. During displacement, those with more money often chose to stay in private accommodation, rather than in TSs/TACs. This not only affected their health and wellbeing, but also meant that they were at less risk of violence. People with money were able to exercise their right of return and many have now found sustainable housing solutions and are beginning to recover their livelihoods. Many had to rebuild their houses themselves, while others used their economic and social capital to ensure government compensation. Although protection and livelihoods remain linked today, the primary threat people face now stems, not from military action, but from Chechnya's inequitable and authoritarian governance, a system that to some extent reflects wider governance patterns within the Russian Federation. This will have implications for Chechnya's ability to recover from the violence it has suffered; it will also affect how ordinary Chechens access basic services, rights and livelihoods. Rule of law and good governance not only ensure life and personal security, but also provide a framework of rights and responsibilities governing property, contractual obligations and investment. Experiences elsewhere suggest that the poor are most at risk from the abuse of political power, and are least able to protect themselves from the suffering and economic loss that may result.

4. DRC's programme

4.1 The humanitarian context

There is consensus among international humanitarian agencies that the humanitarian crisis of the late 1990s and early 2000s is over, and that the situation in Chechnya is moving into the recovery and development phase. At the request of the Russian government, the last UN Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) was in 2005. A Transitional Work Plan was developed in 2006, which supplemented humanitarian assistance and protection with recovery activities. A similar planning process was undertaken in 2007, but at the request of the Russian government this was not implemented.

Funding for emergency relief has been significantly reduced, with a corresponding reduction in humanitarian response. DRC's relief beneficiaries in Chechnya and Dagestan fell from a peak of 500,000 to 100,000 in 2006 and 20,000 in 2007. This is being progressively reduced to zero in early 2009. These figures mirror the approach of other agencies: ICRC stopped its relief programming in 2007, and water and sanitation assistance will finish this year. WFP ended food relief in 2008. ECHO's assistance will end in 2010. Although UNHCR has no specific plans to withdraw, it too recognises that a transition is under way, and believes that, in the future, the vulnerability of IDPs will reflect that of the wider community. Whilst USAID, the World Bank and UNDP are all active in the region, their development plans for Chechnya are not clear.

Despite the downscaling of the humanitarian response, the severity of the suffering and destruction brought about by the two waves of conflict in Chechnya still overwhelm the response by the federal and republican authorities and the international community. This poses a dilemma for aid actors. On the one hand the Russian Federation is a rich, aid-donating country, with membership of both the G-8 and the UN Security Council. On the other, clear needs remain in Chechnya. A large proportion of the population have restricted livelihoods options and face threats to their political freedoms, while the worst-affected continue to require assistance to meet their basic needs.

Despite the progression away from humanitarian relief, humanitarian access to Chechnya remains difficult. The 'remote-control' delivery which characterised much of the response in Chechnya from 2000 onwards has slowly been overtaken by more direct implementation since 2006. Whilst security limited access in the past, today it is regulated by the authorities: DRC and ICRC are the only aid organisations with permission to retain full-time international staff in Chechnya. The UN has not been allowed to maintain a permanent presence in the republic. Permission to remain, along with authorisation for any travel by internationals outside Grozny, must be confirmed each month. The most insecure regions of Chechnya remain largely out of bounds.

Due to the threat of kidnapping, all UN and international NGOs, with the exception of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), use armed guards in Chechnya and neighbouring republics. Once an organisation has started using armed guards it is very difficult to stop, irrespective of whether doing so would influence programme security. The use of armed guards has created its own dynamics: the sector employs a significant number of Ministry of Interior security personnel and is therefore a useful income provider and, presumably, information source for the authorities.

4.2 DRC's programme

DRC has been present in the North Caucasus since 1997, implementing emergency, rehabilitation, integration and reintegration programmes for war-affected populations. The programme spans four republics: Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia-Alania, although the main focus of activity in the region is Chechnya. When the second conflict began in 1999, DRC mounted a major relief operation, assisting up to 300,000 displaced people a month in Ingushetia with a combination of food relief and other emergency items, emergency shelter, housing and infrastructural rehabilitation and social development programming, including psycho-social assistance, education and civil society support. The relief effort then expanded into Chechnya, to help people who had remained in the republic and to support returnees. Starting in 1999 with the registration of displaced populations in Ingushetia, DRC has also developed a comprehensive database of vulnerable populations in the region. Registration

focused initially only on DRC's caseload, but this was later expanded to include all past and current beneficiaries in DRC's areas of operation. Centres were established in Chechnya, Ingushetia and Dagestan to provide information on the services offered by humanitarian organisations, register people for assistance and process complaints. By 2004, DRC's programme had a turnover of approximately $14 million, making it the largest humanitarian operation in the North Caucasus at the time. Today, however, the agency faces a reduction in funding of up to 75%, the closure of its relief programmes and the severe curtailment of other activities.

DRC's programme strategy has had to change substantially over the years due to changes in context and the funding environment. In 2004, in response to a gradual improvement in the security and socio-economic context, as well as increasing levels of return to Chechnya, DRC began to move away from relief activities to 'durable solutions'. A strategic review process was initiated aimed at exploring how to support self-reliance and sustainable livelihoods, enhance collaboration with local institutions and integrate protection more systematically into core programme activities (Cosgrave, 2005). This strategy review was critical in terms of the emphasis placed on protection in DRC's longer-term programme. Whilst specific protection and good governance activities were initially considered by the DRC team, a review by internal and external consultants recommended folding this work into the overall programme approach as a 'cross-cutting' issue (Cosgrave, 2005). Dropping the proposed support to local NGOs to carry out protection work was justified on three counts: DRC in the Northern Caucasus did not have sufficient competency; there was a lack of credible partners; and the potential risks outweighed the possible benefits of what was perceived a 'narrow protection programme'. At the same time, including good governance as a specific output was opposed due to difficulties in measuring results, as well as possible negative ramifications from Russian authorities. Instead it was recommended that good governance be supported through promoting the engagement of local authorities, local community groups and NGOs. By 2005, a new strategy was agreed, which helped to articulate the goal and objectives which still underpin DRC's activities today.

In 2006, DRC established a community-based 'integrated area-based return and livelihood recovery' approach (IARLR), parallel to its relief activities, to support voluntary return through multi-sectoral interventions in specific areas (a village or cluster of villages). DRC also conducted a cash transfer pilot, which indicated that a cash transfer system would be more efficient and effective than food distribution. As a result, a large proportion of food beneficiaries were progressively assisted through the provision of cash, rather than food, from 2007 onwards. In 2008, a new programme providing legal aid was initiated for vulnerable people excluded from welfare assistance.

Until 2007, different programmatic sectors within DRC used different vulnerability criteria to identify beneficiaries. In 2007, DRC initiated a community-based targeting (CBT) approach, establishing community committees to agree vulnerability criteria and identify the most vulnerable within their community. Other DRC projects in shelter and livelihood support are increasingly shifting the responsibility for selecting beneficiaries to communities and local administrations.

Programme Goal (2005–2008): protection and the promotion of durable solutions to refugee and displacement problems in the North Caucasus on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights.

Programme Objectives and Activities (2005-2008)[11]

i. Assist conflict-affected persons to meet their relief needs:

- School feeding: schools in three mountainous regions in Chechnya are supplied with food and cooking facilities/utensils where required, so that 3,000 school children receive daily hot meals.
- Food, cash transfers and non-food items: approximately 24,000 people in Chechnya receive food, non-food or alternative forms of assistance (cash transfers, cash for work).

ii. Promote sustainable livelihoods amongst returning or integrating people based on their own capacities and resources:

- Rehabilitation of housing: provision of construction materials sufficient to build 400 houses in Chechnya, 40 houses in Ingushetia and 70 houses in North Ossetia-Alania of up to 48m^2, with labour assistance provided to the most vulnerable households, benefiting approximately 2,550 individuals.

[11] Activities are based on 2008 objectives as outlined in SIDA proposal (2008).

- (Re)construction of infrastructure and schools: rehabilitation or construction of basic communal infrastructure, such as schools, roads, water, gas and heating, helping approximately 9,550 people to access basic services. Projects are undertaken in cooperation with local authorities, with some labour provided and/or costs met by local communities.
- Income-generating activities: material assistance is provided to assist approximately 466 households to establish small production and retail businesses, benefiting approximately 3,037 individuals.
- Farming support: distribution of livestock, poultry, fodder and farming implements for 499 households, benefiting approximately 2,495 individuals.
- Recreational and vocational support: support to 58 women and 25 youth and children's groups through the provision of equipment, facilitation of activities and training to community/cultural centres, libraries, kindergartens and schools in Chechnya, Dagestan, Ingushetia and North Ossetia-Alania.
- Mine risk education, including distribution of mine risk materials. Creation of 15 safe playgrounds for children in mine-affected areas.

iii. Assist displaced people who are unable or unwilling to return to achieve a basic level of dignity.

iv. Support government and civil society in responding to the needs of displaced and marginalised groups on the basis of accountability and good governance.

- Database maintenance: registration and maintenance of a comprehensive database of conflict-affected populations in Chechnya, including registration of IDPs/returnees and vulnerable populations and identification of the most vulnerable.
- Support for and capacity-building of local NGOs: grants to 16–18 NGOs.
- Provision of legal assistance through DRC's information centres in Chechnya.

4.3 DRC and protection in review

While DRC uses a rights-based framework to underpin its work, it has not had a strong stand-alone protection component in its activities in the Northern Caucasus. Staff understand what protection is in broad terms, but do not see its immediate relevance to their work. One interviewee summed up the general approach as follows: 'Immediate needs come first. Rights come after livelihoods. We're always concerned not to get involved in legal advocacy issues due to the risk involved. There is enough work not to focus on this'.

Much of DRC's work in the Northern Caucasus has in fact had an impact on people's protection, even if it was approached as 'relief' rather than 'protection'. At the height of its relief work, DRC was providing food assistance to 326,000 people in Chechnya. Interviewees repeatedly ascribed their survival to this assistance ('we were starving, we would have died without DRC'). Over the years, DRC has also helped almost 11,000 families rebuild their houses, assisting thousands of people to return home and enjoy their property rights. The sustainability of return was increased by food and cash assistance, and more recently by livelihoods support.

Working on protection activities during the height of the emergency presented genuine security risks for DRC. Humanitarian agencies were repeatedly told that working on 'political' issues would put their relief operations at risk. Indeed, many DRC staff believe that DRC's operation, the largest in the area, was *only* possible because it kept a safe distance between itself and sensitive human rights issues and retained a focus on traditional assistance. Others emphasised that a strategic decision would have been required: 'the need to move and distribute huge volumes of food to hundreds of thousands of displaced in a post-war environment permitted staff to focus on little else'.

However, the lack of emphasis on protection within DRC's programmes had a number of implications for its work. The lessons that can be drawn from past work are outlined below, and recommendations for future programming are provided in the following section. There are four potential ways in which DRC could have incorporated protection into its work:

i. Mainstreaming protection: ensuring that the overall programme approach is aimed at facilitating rights outcomes (e.g. voluntary return or property rights) rather than purely relief objectives (provision of shelter). Ensuring that specific projects are inclusive, equitable (people are not excluded due to discrimination or lack of

access) and safe (ensuring that programming does not cause additional harm).

ii. *Targeting people, communities and areas suffering from or at risk of protection violations: indirectly reducing protection threats or minimising the impact of protection violations by incorporating a protection risk criterion into targeting, so that individuals, communities or areas that have suffered protection violations (e.g. families with members who have 'disappeared') or are currently at most risk of protection violations (e.g. mined areas) are included or prioritised.*

iii. *Joint livelihoods/protection, programming /action: designing programmes which have both protection and livelihoods objectives (e.g. establishing joint livelihoods/psycho-social support to youth) or undertaking policy work that has a protection /livelihoods component.*

iv. *Stand-alone protection activities: Establishing programmes with protection objectives, whether aimed at reducing protection threats (through advocacy or capacity-building with authorities or communities) or minimising the effects of violations (helping communities to recover).*

Mainstreaming protection

DRC's overall goal is rights-based: the programme aims to protect and promote durable solutions to refugee and displacement problems, on the basis of humanitarian principles and human rights.

This rights-based approach to assistance is demonstrated in the manner in which DRC moved from supporting the provision of box tents to displaced populations in Ingushetia, as a temporary solution to immediate and emergency shelter needs, to supporting durable solutions for populations returning to Chechnya. DRC staff report that discussions were held in 2005 and 2006 on the best approach for returning populations: whether to support three returnee families with box tents, or to supply materials for the reconstruction of one house, thereby assisting fewer people, but providing a permanent and durable solution.

However, in other respects this rights-based orientation in the programme has been fragmented, focusing on sector-specific activities and outcomes rather than rights outcomes. The 'silo approach' to assistance which predominated during the 'acute crisis stage', and which, according to many staff, continues to characterise the response to some degree today,[12] has meant an emphasis on food security, livelihoods and shelter, and an insufficient focus on ensuring sustainable return or local integration. In the early days of the response, acceptance into one stream of assistance from DRC resulted in exclusion from another. For instance, a shelter beneficiary was excluded from livelihoods assistance, which reduced the incentive for return and undermined its sustainability when it occurred. Staff indicate that this was a pragmatic choice: there were simply insufficient funds to support everyone in need, and therefore the decision was taken to support a larger group of people with less, rather than a smaller number with more. Although this has since changed as part of the IARLR approach, it highlights the importance of an integrated approach to underpin rights-based assistance. DRC's engagement in infrastructural work (gas, water, roads) is a good example of linking shelter with other forms of assistance in order to facilitate return. As outlined below, it also has implications for targeting.

Targeting people, communities and areas suffering from or at risk of protection violations

DRC has targeted people on the basis of vulnerability and need, based on a household economy assessment, as well as their capacity to benefit. The nature of the vulnerability of households or population groups to particular disasters has two aspects: the form of the external shock, and people's capacity to cope. Vulnerability may be related to particular livelihood systems, wealth status or social or political position (Chambers, 1989).

Vulnerability is largely compatible with targeting for protection purposes, as the incidence of violence or other forms of abuse can be described as a shock and protection is also concerned with targeting the most disadvantaged in society.

[12] DRC's assistance framework envisages three phases: 'acute crisis scenario during and immediately after the outbreak of conflict'; 'displacement scenario' involving protracted displacement situations; and 'durable solutions scenario' when a conflict has come to an end or when a durable solution is actually open to displaced individuals and communities (DRC Handbook, 2008).

However, rather than starting with an analysis of how people are coping with a particular event or crisis, protection starts by identifying a threat or violation, and then targeting those most at risk or most affected by that threat. In some cases, this has led protection actors to predetermine who is vulnerable within communities: female- or single-headed households, orphans, the disabled and the elderly are common choices (O'Callaghan and Pantuliano, 2007). Protection actors then identify those responsible in order to encourage them to end the violations or protect those affected.

Taking a broad view of protection, in which all rights are incorporated (as opposed to a strict legal interpretation), means that 'protection threats or violations' can include denial of the right to food or shelter, for example. From a protection point of view, the approach would be to identify the communities and individuals most affected or most at risk from the denial of the specific right in question. Box 4 outlines ICRC's approach to integrating protection into its operational framework in Darfur.

Box 4: ICRC's approach to integrating protection into an operational framework

1. Identify the protection concerns (for ICRC this involves an analysis of violations of
2. International Humanitarian Law).
3. Analyse which communities are affected and prioritise those most affected.
4. Identify the humanitarian consequences of the violations.
5. Identify who is responsible for the violations.
6. Identify a potential protection vector – i.e. a humanitarian response which could mitigate the humanitarian consequences of the violations.
7. Identify which perpetrators/actors can be approached in order to create a dialogue on protection issues.

Relief activities

Thanks to its role in managing the registration of beneficiaries and providing other humanitarian agencies with lists of potential beneficiaries, DRC has invested heavily in defining and applying criteria for selection and response. These criteria underpinned the delivery of relief items, which up until 2007 represented approximately 80% of DRC's programme. Food aid targeting in Chechnya between 2000 and 2004 progressed from social welfare to economic criteria. Threshold values were used, including wealth group, reported household income, age and food stocks. Geographical impacts on livelihoods were also taken into account, for example the fact that conditions were more severe in mountainous regions (LeJeune, 2004: 7), which meant that a lower age threshold and higher income threshold were applied.

By 2003/2004 it had become apparent that poverty rather than lack of food was the overriding cause of need, and that food assistance was serving primarily as a form of income substitution. From July 2004, DRC changed its targeting criteria to focus more on poverty, including wealth status, reported income and the household's active labour capacity. A 2004 review of the changed criteria indicated that they were the 'best option in the circumstances', and clearer and more transparent (LeJeune, 2004). The table below outlines the changes in targeting criteria.

Table 4: Changes in DRC's targeting criteria from 2000 to 2004

Year	Targeting criteria
2000	All households, with focus on people displaced within Chechnya and 'vulnerable' people (i.e. pregnant and lactating women, physically/mentally disabled, single-headed HH, eldery (65+), destitute, orphans).
2001	ECHO-funded programmes: 'vulnerable people' as above, and households displaced within Chechnya. Distinction between lowlands (elderly at 65+) and mountains (elderly at 55+). WFP-funded programmes: HH defined as very poor, poor and average.
2002	As 2001 until December 2002, when ECHO changed criteria to reported income (≤350 R pp/pm or ‹450 R pp/pm if food stocks low) and food stocks (‹5 days or ‹45 days if income low), with an allowance of 200 R per person per month for increased fuel costs in mountainous regions.
2003	WFP: poor and very poor households. ECHO: as above.
2004	From July 2004: WFP: target on the basis of household classification (poor, very poor), household size, reported income (distinguish between rural versus urban) type of housing, ownership of a usable vehicle. ECHO: target on basis of household classification (poor, very poor), household size, reported income (distinguish between rural and urban).

Source: LeJeune, 2004.

By 2007, when the humanitarian community was retreating from direct humanitarian assistance in favour of early recovery activities, DRC began introducing community-based targeting. This had two main objectives: to assist in the smooth phasing out of relief activities, and to allow for

greater ownership of the process and to stimulate discussion on alternative projects (DRC internal paper, 2007). There were initial protests and disturbances at distribution points as DRC scaled back relief, but DRC staff indicated that, despite widespread concern and disappointment amongst former relief beneficiaries about the cut in assistance, community-based targeting led to greater acceptance.

While it is beyond the scope of this study to evaluate the effectiveness of the different targeting criteria used by DRC in its relief programmes, the attention, effort and resources deployed to ensure that the most affected were supported with food assistance and relief is highly relevant from a protection perspective. This work clearly paid dividends, as confirmed by the independent review in 2004. DRC's emphasis on re-evaluating the criteria based on updated analysis of the context and its impact on people's vulnerability is also significant, and provides important lessons for other contexts.

Shelter and income-generating activities

Criteria for targeting housing and income-generation activities had (and continue to have) a slightly different emphasis, representing broader perspectives within DRC about the targeting of these interventions. While beneficiaries were all vulnerable insofar as they were crisis-affected, poor and in need of the specific intervention, there was an additional component, which required input from beneficiaries themselves. In the case of housing, those included had the following characteristics:

- Loss of housing as a result of conflict, ranging from level 1 (roof damage) to level 5 (full destruction).
- No compensation from government.
- No housing assistance from DRC or other NGOs.
- No family resources to rebuild independently.
- Able to provide labour and some materials to complete construction.
- Prepared to abide by size (48m^2) and other restrictions on the type of house.
- A commitment to return to the home village if living elsewhere.
- Request made for housing assistance.

Assisting a larger number of beneficiaries in need of housing support without excluding those in greatest need is a challenge. DRC's approach has meant that some of the most vulnerable were excluded if they could not demonstrate sufficient capacity to carry out the required labour, or match the materials provided by DRC. While this was an absolute rule until 2005, according to DRC only a small number of cases were excluded because, in the absence of family or friends, local authorities often stepped in. Since 2006, DRC staff estimate that about 5% of the overall shelter target group has been assisted with labour, although this proportion has been gradually increasing (a 2008 proposal to ECHO estimated that 20–25% would receive labour assistance). Experience from other contexts reinforces the importance of active beneficiary participation in housing programmes in order to ensure that people return (and that houses are not simply used as assets, as was frequently the case in the Balkans). DRC's surveys indicate that the majority of beneficiaries were in a position to match DRC's inputs.

DRC staff raised concerns that a large number of very vulnerable people have had to remain in Ingushetia, and have hence not been included in the shelter programme in Chechnya. It was also suggested that reasons other than or additional to vulnerability may be at work in people's decision to stay in the TACs, including links to the TAC location as a result of educational or employment opportunities, or simple reluctance to embark on the time-consuming and difficult return process. As we have seen, lack of housing support is a major obstacle to return, but there are also others, including delays in processing compensation or the type of housing arrangements people had prior to the war; renters, for instance, face particular difficulties in returning. Likewise, individuals still residing in temporary settlements and TACs rather than in or close to the village of origin tend to take longer to reconstruct their homes due to the time spent travelling between the two (as well as the desire to continue receiving assistance in Ingushetia). These people were excluded in the past and DRC intends to exclude these groups again in the future. DRC also estimates that approximately 5% of its houses remain unfinished due to insufficient means on the part of beneficiaries. Those unable to demonstrate title to land were also excluded.

The main rationale for exclusion was efficiency: providing additional materials and assistance means that fewer houses will be supported, and the process may take longer. As such, this approach represents the most cost-effective way of assisting a larger number of people. However, if a stronger protection perspective was incorporated into targeting the result may be a greater emphasis on those most in need, such as the old, the infirm and those without family

support. This of course would have resulted in fewer families being assisted. Community participation in pinpointing those within the community unable to provide inputs may have been a useful way of pre-identifying those in need of construction assistance. Construction brigades could have been involved in the work through food or cash for work schemes, which DRC has been undertaking since 2006.

The vulnerable are not specifically targeted for livelihoods support activities, for reasons of feasibility: those with experience, education, training and entrepreneurial qualities tend to be selected. The following criteria are applied in DRC's programmes, which provide between €1,000 and €3,000 to businesses ranging from brick-making, cement block-making, shops, bakeries and sewing to hairdressers, nurseries, welding and car mechanics:

- Must apply for a business grant, but DRC staff will assist with grant preparation if the idea is a good one.
- No other resources for business.
- Not a previous recipient of business assistance.
- Applicant's experience, skills and knowledge imply a likelihood of success.
- Prospects of creating employment.
- For grants above €1,000 prospects of creating employment for approximately five people.

A number of reasons were presented for focusing on those most capable of success, rather than those most in need. First, as with shelter, targeting based on what was most feasible was more cost-efficient as fewer inputs were required and the success rate was higher. Second, business failure risks further demoralising conflict-affected people. Third, providing support to those more capable of success could provide income that could trickle down to those most in need in the community.

The question of targeting within DRC's livelihoods programme is the subject of much debate. The vulnerable are targeted within agricultural activities, although prior experience is also emphasised here, and the grants available are much smaller than with business support. From a protection point of view, DRC should continue to emphasise vulnerability in its targeting, and should make every effort not to compound inequity within communities. However, given DRC's progression towards longer-term programming and the genuine importance of supporting viable businesses, the issue appears to be one of emphasis, rather than absolutes. Whilst DRC should continue to support business opportunities that offer the potential to stimulate local economies, there should be a greater balance of effort in terms of time and money to support the most vulnerable and help them in meeting their basic needs. This requires greater training provision and technical support to increase the viability of smaller-scale businesses and agriculture, as well as more technical assistance to increase the productivity and marketability of larger investments. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

ICRC has sought to include targeting criteria based on risks. The agency has, for instance, supported people with livelihoods assistance in order to reduce their need to venture into mined areas to collect wild fruits and garlic. ICRC is also helping the families of detainees with travel assistance and livelihoods support, as well as livelihoods and psycho-social support for families with relatives who have disappeared. Recommendations are given below as to how this could be incorporated into DRC's programming in the future.

Joint livelihoods/protection programming/action

Due to the lack of a specific focus on stand-alone protection activities, DRC has not made overt efforts to link protection and livelihoods. Despite this, some of its programmes have linkages between the two areas.

Legal assistance. Since March 2008, DRC has provided free legal advice to help people access social welfare entitlements. This programme was developed as part of DRC's exit from food and cash assistance, to ensure that vulnerable beneficiaries excluded from DRC's list were able to obtain their entitlements. Findings from DRC's household assessments indicated that approximately 60% of those entitled to assistance were either not receiving their allowance, or were receiving it only in part. This finding was corroborated by discussions with local NGOs.

The service provided by DRC's in-house lawyer is threefold: first, standard legal advice regarding people's rights and entitlements is provided to DRC's information centres, which pass it on to beneficiaries. Many people simply do not know what their entitlements are, or the process they need to follow to obtain them. Second, dedicated legal help is provided to individuals whose claim for social welfare assistance has been unfairly

rejected, and to people facing problems in accessing assistance due to vulnerability or disability. This component of the programme is unique amongst international organisations, although local groups have been providing similar legal assistance. Finally, there is a referral component, whereby the DRC lawyer refers people to local free legal aid centres in cases where individuals without the requisite means wish to mount a legal case. People are referred to the lawyer through DRC's information centres, the local authorities or the Ombudsman, with legal assistance provided through each of the five information centres on a revolving basis. Where the individual is not in a position to attend the information centre in person, the lawyer can provide home consultations. Since the project started, DRC has provided general legal advice to over 300 people, and has provided dedicated legal counsel to 68 individuals. In a further 13 cases, the DRC lawyer assisted with the submission process, and in a further six he undertook the process himself. In general, it is the extremely vulnerable who lack the capacity or the means to obtain their rights, and as such this service is an excellent protective tool, informing people of their entitlements, assisting those unable to obtain them and reinforcing accountability and justice within the system. DRC's work on legal assistance was developed in order to provide a 'safety net' for beneficiaries whose food and cash assistance was due to be cut. Through this work, DRC is also coordinating with local human rights organisations, so that they can provide legal assistance to those interested in pursuing legal cases on issues related to documentation and social welfare.

Given the persistent difficulties with documentation, this programme could have been introduced earlier, as was the case in Sri Lanka. Alternatively, DRC could have initiated a referral process where cases were actively sought in the course of DRC's activities and referred to local NGOs. DRC could potentially have assisted local human rights organisations working on these and other livelihoods issues, for instance by providing advice and support on employment and land and property issues. This would constitute an opportunity to support the work of these organisations whilst avoiding engaging in more acute protection activity. DRC staff indicated, however, that the agency had repeatedly approached donors for funding to support this work, but given the presence of local NGOs supported by UNHCR there was concern about potential duplication. Land, property, employment and medical issues were all highlighted as persistent concerns during the field work, with local human rights organisations indicating a lack of funding to work on these issues. As described later, limited engagement with organisations working on protection has meant that it is more difficult to begin this work at the displacement/durable solutions phase of the crisis.

IDP database. DRC runs and manages the 'IDP database', the most comprehensive record of people in Chechnya, second only to the Russian census. Information on people's location, movements and family data, as well as income, assets, food stocks and consumption and expenditure are logged by a team of registers and monitors. DRC produces profiles of displaced populations, providing details on numbers and origin, recognition and support from the authorities, assistance from organisations such as UNHCR, key issues faced and the prospects for a durable solution. As the most comprehensive dataset in the region, this information has been used by other humanitarian agencies to inform their own programming. For instance, 20 agencies made specific requests to DRC in 2004 (LeJeune, 2004). In light of the authorities' interest in portraying displacement as resolved, and with the withdrawal of support from donors, the IDP database is an important way of highlighting continued needs within this vulnerable population. It has also assisted the humanitarian community in understanding needs and targeting assistance.

While DRC's registration activities and IDP database are protection tools insofar as they help identify those most in need of assistance, they were used mostly by the food security team, and the protection potential was not fully realised. This was recognised by DRC staff, who indicated that the tool offered the opportunity to highlight where people had disappeared, but recognised that this potential was never acted upon due to concerns that such overt protection activities would have negative repercussions with the authorities, possibly placing the entire programme at risk. External actors felt that it was a highly respected and potentially influential tool, but that it was under-utilised both in terms of advocacy and programmatic responses. In order to orient the database towards protection issues, DRC could have included questions regarding the protection risks that people were facing, which would have provided an opportunity to integrate a protection analysis into the agency's work and potentially

develop programmes based on this analysis. For instance, ICRC has highlighted the lack of a central register on the disappeared, a function that the database could have fed into.

The lack of focus on protection also meant that some protection issues were overlooked. For instance, one assessment of the registration system in Ingushetia indicated that DRC had followed UNHCR's policy of only targeting IDPs from the second conflict, with little attention to the needs of those displaced as a result of the first war. Whilst DRC has produced regular IDP updates on the basis of the database, staff were unclear as to their purpose and felt that they were rarely used for advocacy. One issue that many actors highlighted was the acquiescence of the international community in 2001 in what was considered a premature decision by the federal authorities to stop registering IDPs. This, it was felt, resulted in a 'two-tier' system, with some IDPs recognised by the federal authorities through the FMS, and others recognised by the international community through the various databases, including DRC's. This was highlighted as requiring more dedicated engagement by the international community, action which the DRC database could have supported with statistics.

Due to the reduction in food assistance, DRC is now faced with a decision regarding the future of the database. The agency is currently investigating transferring the data to federal social welfare centres which are due to be established in every district in order to provide assistance (such as food and social services) to vulnerable groups. DRC is planning to provide technical and material assistance in order to facilitate the handover of the database. This appears to be the most relevant future use of the database, although DRC should first check to ensure that the confidentiality of the data will not be compromised. Another possibility might be to undertake a final, in-depth analysis of the numbers, legal status, socio-economic profile, livelihood opportunities, risks and threats to people's protection, and priorities for the future. This might underpin policy engagement with the authorities regarding the continuation of compensation schemes and/or durable solutions for those still residing in the TACs and TSs, and in discussions with donors around ongoing support to displaced populations, as well as specific support for those in need of turn-key assistance. UNHCR conducted a similar study in 2007, which suggests that the relevance and potential influence of such work would require further investigation.

Standalone protection projects

Between 2000 and 2005, DRC ran a large social development programme including psycho-social, educational and recreational activities. While not presented as such within the DRC programme, this work sought to help people recover from exposure to protection threats, and thus can be understood as protection programming. Support was provided, first to tented camps in Ingushetia and later to TACs and schools in Ingushetia and Chechnya. A wide range of activities were undertaken, including establishing women's groups for pregnant and postnatal women (approximately ten groups at the height of the programme); children's educational and psycho-social support (about 120 groups); youth leadership groups (five) and groups covering social issues such as drug and alcohol abuse and community conflict (about ten). DRC also ran summer schools for children in Ingushetia and Chechnya, and from 2003 undertook mobile educational and recreational activities.

Since 2006, DRC has moved away from direct implementation, instead supporting the work of 19 NGOs, 12 of which are based in Chechnya. DRC provides equipment and funding to NGOs, as well as some technical assistance on organisational management. A wide range of NGOs are supported, although the focus remains on women's and children's development. NGOs targeted include local organisations providing summer camps and rehabilitation assistance to children. DRC also helps a number of organisations providing support to new and expectant mothers, female teachers and sewing groups. Peace and tolerance activities with young people are also supported, and there is a new focus on the provision of peace and tolerance support to the staff of local NGOs. DRC has also supported capacity development of local organisations through the provision of 'master classes', for instance on proposal writing and project reporting.

It was not possible to judge in detail the effectiveness of this work, but in light of the severe traumatic impact of the conflict on the people of Chechnya the assistance that DRC provided to women, children and communities seeking to recover from the effects of exposure to violence must be viewed as particularly relevant. It is also appropriate that DRC progressed from direct assistance to supporting local organisations, although it appears that the scale and coverage of the work may be affected as many of these local organisations are concentrated in Grozny. The two

organisations visited (a children's music centre and a women's psycho-social support centre) were providing what appeared to be professional services to their clients. They emphasised the financial support and equipment provided by DRC. One indicated that it had also received master classes on organisational development, which were felt to have been useful. The work that DRC has undertaken in facilitating linkages between local organisations and visiting donors and delegations was also seen as important.

Opportunities may have existed to link this work on social development with other activities undertaken by DRC. In particular, psycho-social work could have been linked with livelihood skills training, particularly for women and young people. DRC has been supporting a local organisation, Sintem, which provides psycho-social support, education and hygiene assistance for mothers. Over time, Sintem has developed an employment programme assisting women in understanding their employment rights and helping them in the development of employment contracts. Had there been a stronger focus on legal assistance earlier in the programme, there may also have been opportunities to include a legal component in this work (for instance in supporting legal assistance to survivors of gender-based violence during the crisis, through referral to local human rights organisations), although given concerns about the sensitivity of this work, it is difficult to know whether this would have been possible.

Peace and tolerance activities focusing on youth are also a useful entry-point for supporting vocational skills development for young people. However, DRC staff felt that the social development department has not been prioritised within DRC's programme, and has received less technical support from expatriate staff than other departments. This may be due to the small size of the programme relative to other components, but again this is an issue of prioritisation. Social development, in particular capacity development of local organisations, offers major potential for future programming, promoting service delivery, inclusive governance and accountability through advocacy. This has been recognised by DRC, and the expansion of social development work is seen as the cornerstone of the agency's future strategy to ensure that its work is undertaken with and through local actors.

Box 5: Links between psycho-social assistance and livelihoods in Grozny

Sintem focuses on pregnant and lactating women. There are major psycho-social issues amongst their target group, which affect not only their health but also their livelihoods as it causes problems at work, as well as family life where many suffer domestic violence. Many women face high levels of anxiety, particularly in recent years. The delayed psycho-social impact is attributed to the fact that in the early days people were focused on survival and reconstruction, but as time passed the trauma has increased. Sintem provides the women with a range of activities, including psycho-social support and counselling. Assistance with domestic violence is also provided. The high levels of poverty and unemployment are increasing levels of despondency amongst the women and therefore Sintem also provides skills training and a recruitment service.

Learning from DRC's work in Chechnya

As DRC took a strategic decision not to focus on protection due to concerns about the risk to programmes, this section identifies opportunities to build on DRC's programmes in contexts where protection activities are less sensitive.

i. *DRC's rights-based approach to assistance provides a platform for orienting programmes towards the achievement of durable solutions to rights violations. However (and as expected), without a dedicated focus on protection within the programme, reinforced with appropriate capacity – whether short-term or full-time – integrating protection analysis and approaches into other programmes is difficult.*

ii. *Shelter and livelihoods programmes should be approached from the perspective of sustainable return and durable solutions, rather than as relief operations.*

iii. *Livelihoods and protection targeting are complementary to a degree, as livelihoods support can be directed at those most at risk. However, as livelihoods programming progresses from protection to promotion, this complementarity is reduced as the criterion of feasibility becomes more important. From a protection viewpoint, a strong emphasis on vulnerability and risk will be emphasised, with support and technical assistance provided to improve viability.*

iv. *Integrated approaches to assistance are useful in reinforcing a rights-based approach, and offer an entry-point for protection issues.*

v. *Legal information and assistance is a useful platform for integrating protection activities with other forms of aid. Legal assistance on socio-economic issues may be viable in contexts where working directly on human rights issues may be too sensitive. DRC could consider supporting local human rights organisations to work on socio-economic issues (medical issues, employment, social welfare, documentation).*

vi. *The IDP profile is an excellent platform for integrating protection analysis and action into DRC's work, but there needs to be a dedicated strategy and capacity to achieve this. Questions regarding protection risks could be included in future registration activities in other contexts, with links to protection actors established. The analysis emerging from such activities could be used to direct programming, as it would identify key protection risks as well as those most endangered.*

vii. *Psycho-social support to women and children is an effective tool to reduce the impact of violence. This could be extended to men in future contexts. Opportunities exist to link this programming with livelihoods activities, particularly vocational skills development, income generation and business support.*

4.4 DRC going forward

DRC is at a crossroads in Chechnya. Many people have returned home and the situation is stabilising. Emergency donors are reducing their support and new development donors have not yet been tested. The move away from displacement means that agencies like UNHCR will play a very limited role in the future. However, Chechnya still has between 30,000 and 50,000 internally displaced people, and a further 60,000 are considered still to be 'war-affected'. The violence in the southern mountains means that a return to conflict, though unlikely, is possible. Poverty is still endemic amongst a large proportion of the population. The federal and republic authorities, although showing greater capacity and willingness to support the vulnerable in society, are less interested in recognising fundamental rights, as evidenced by continued human rights abuses and the high level of political repression. In line with DRC's internal analysis, this suggests that an exit by DRC in 2008/2009 would be premature.[13]

While people are still recovering from the effects of violence, current threats are linked to broader issues of rule of law and economic development. This requires a two-pronged approach by DRC. DRC should continue supporting work to meet needs and create durable solutions for those most affected by violence and displacement, whilst also recognising that this is linked to longer-term recovery. This requires a greater focus on encouraging the authorities to accept their role as primary duty-bearers, and supporting them to meet their responsibilities to protect and provide for their citizens. It also means helping civil society actors to hold the authorities to their responsibilities and to continue to serve as advocates and service providers for those at risk or in need. However, in shifting its focus to supporting national structures, DRC cannot compound social inequities, poor governance and accountability and lack of human rights.

Linking livelihoods and protection provides DRC with some opportunities to respond to the changing context and declining funding. However, DRC is not well placed to take on a strong role in protection, for a number of reasons. First, its lack of focus on legal protection to date means that DRC does not have the experience, credibility or relationships it needs, while staff remain concerned that a more overt protection role may damage their currently good relations with the local authorities. Furthermore, given the presence of strong local protection organisations and DRC's progressive phase-out, the focus of an expanded role in protection should be on supporting these organisations, as well as integrating a greater protection focus into current and planned assistance work. As such, DRC should continue to emphasise social and economic entitlements, rather than rule of law, though working through local organisations potentially provides an opportunity to support them. Stand-alone

[13] DRC exits on the basis of the following criteria: fundamental rights applicable and relevant to IDP, refugee and displacement situations are upheld and protected by capable and willing national and international institutions; no renewed outbreak of violent conflict appears likely; and no renewed displacements are likely (DRC Handbook, p. 208).

protection or rule of law programmes are not advised.

Needs-based approaches to displaced and war-affected people

DRC should continue to move from activities to outcomes in order to help achieve durable solutions. While it is attractive from a development and cost-effectiveness point of view to focus on the most capable in society, from a protection and humanitarian perspective DRC's primary focus should be on helping those most affected by the crisis.

In **shelter**, DRC should continue to investigate opportunities to resolve issues of non-completion and non-occupation of houses. Where this relates to the inability to complete houses due to vulnerability, DRC should consider providing additional support, whether construction brigades or turn-key houses, as it is already doing where permitted by donors. DRC should reverse its decision not to support people living in Ingushetia, and should either extend completion times or target assistance to facilitate completion, either through construction brigades or turn-key houses. While it may be unpopular and certainly does not represent a durable solution, DRC should consider reintroducing box tents to encourage return from Ingushetia. Similarly, box tents may be appropriate to ease overcrowding. This potentially includes situations where more than one family is sharing a one-bedroom apartment, where young families are sharing with parents or where families are currently renting but tenure is insecure; all of these groups indicated a preference for box tents rather than their current accommodation. This may only be suitable for families not in the process of constructing a new residence, as a DRC housing project in Zony village in 2006 indicated that providing people with box tents while they were engaged in building did not increase the likelihood of habitation. Staff indicate that suppliers of box tents in Nazran are reluctant to provide them to Chechen purchasers due to concerns about reliability; in such instances, DRC may be required to serve as a conduit, or indeed support local production, given the simplicity of the tent design. Finally, DRC should continue to advocate for a 25% provision for assisted construction in all shelter programmes, whether facilitated through construction brigades or through turn-key houses. DRC is already making efforts to convince donors of the need for this, and these efforts should continue. Where non-occupation is related to a lack of services (for instance, in Platina several houses are unoccupied due to lack of water supplies), DRC should consider including those communities in community development projects (see below).

In **livelihoods**, DRC should prioritise the most vulnerable, although a secondary focus should be on larger-scale business opportunities where potential exists for employment. In light of concerns about the feasibility of business opportunities for the most vulnerable, DRC should refocus its efforts on agricultural production in order to support self-sufficiency and income generation. A recent WFP study highlighted the potential in stimulating production at the level of smallholders, indicating that, through refining techniques and supporting smallholder needs 'a far more coherent form of development will be achieved than by re-creating macro-enterprises'. WFP argues that smallholder agriculture (either through private plots or small farms) had been underestimated in livelihoods analysis, ignored as a subject for research and disregarded as an engine of development. The report recommended more analysis on whether basic machinery could support small-scale farming; the introduction or promotion of crop varieties suited to smallholder practices; and support for low-maintenance livestock (Robinson, 2008). This analysis is consistent with an earlier market assessment by USAID, which indicated that the bulk of agricultural production in Chechnya has shifted from large-scale farms to small-scale household plots and private farms. The out-migration of Russian Slavs, who traditionally cultivated the larger commercial farms in the plains, has led to an increase in family- and local market-oriented production by those with less commercial farming experience than their predecessors (USAID, 2006: 7). The assessment recommended efforts to encourage small-scale farmers to develop from self-sufficiency to commercial production, suggesting that farmers should be supported through extension training, marketing support, cooperative development and the provision of small-scale dairy and meat processors.

DRC has in the past undertaken horticultural development programmes, but problems of access to arable land led it to focus on livestock. This should be reviewed. DRC should redouble its efforts in horticulture/agriculture, to encourage self-sufficiency and income generation. This will require greater analysis of local barriers to agricultural production, whether access to land, poor soil, limited agricultural experience or poor market access. DRC could employ a range of tools

and approaches, including grants to the most vulnerable, cost recovery/revolving funds and credit schemes for larger grants. DRC should also explore the potential for facilitating and supporting linkages between supplier and trader groups or cooperatives, to assist in marketing. DRC should also consider the introduction of farmer training and extension schools or classes, supporting the Ministry of Agricultural and/or agricultural unions. The involvement of local authorities should be prioritised, particularly to facilitate access to land. DRC should enhance the links between its livelihoods programmes and shelter and infrastructural programmes, so that water and other utilities are made available where required. Linkages to the Danish De-mining Group should also be developed.

For micro-enterprise and small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), DRC should prioritise larger-scale assistance as staff indicated that smaller grants of €1,000 were too small to be effective. This resulted in DRC offering pre-bought 'business packages', such as joinery packages or a shop kit, but these were insufficiently tailored to the requirements of the beneficiaries, and in any case many of the projects were not feasible due to lack of experience. The focus, therefore, should be on larger grants or credit schemes to support the development of enterprises which offer employment prospects and are feasible and sustainable. This has already begun within the programme and should be continued. Where possible, cost recovery or credit schemes should be introduced, or at the very least a social component (e.g. pass on gifts) included. Similar to agricultural support, capacity-building and vocational skills training should be pursued through local authorities or institutions. DRC should undertake market assessments to better understand the viability of its larger-scale business assistance. Staff in DRC have raised concerns about whether the agency will have the capacity to take forward this two-pronged approach, with the recognition that each will demand different expertise and competencies. Given the uncertainty surrounding a potential trickle-down effect as well as the limited opportunities for the most vulnerable in Chechnya, it is recommended that priority is given to those most in need of assistance.

In **food assistance**, DRC should consider allowing local NGOs to take over food assistance or cash support to the most vulnerable. The potential of a local organisation undertaking the food for schools programme should be explored, as a civil society capacity-building programme, as well as a relief programme. DRC should consider undertaking a household economy assessment to better understand how the most vulnerable are coping with the effects of the withdrawal of cash and food assistance. This could be built into impact evaluations (although the relief department did not believe that any such evaluations had been budgeted for). Alternatively, future budgets could include this component. This household economy assessment should be used to press donors to continue support to these groups through civil society organisations, as well as in advocacy to the authorities to ensure a facilitative regulatory environment for local organisations' work in this area.

Focus on 'risk groups'

Although DRC has not in the past introduced a 'risk' criterion into its targeting, a number of opportunities present themselves at this juncture.

The first is to focus on **youth**. As described in Section 4.i, young people are continuing to be conscripted into rebel movements. Local NGOs indicated that, for many, the only employment option is to enter private or Chechen security forces. In a recent World Bank report, young people cited the right to own a gun and therefore ensure one's own safety as one of the chief benefits of working in the military or the police (La Cava, 2006: 45). The report indicated that young Chechens have the highest rate of idleness and the lowest employment rates in the Russian Federation (indicated by the percentage neither in school nor in work), ranging from two to seven times the national average of 10%. Average age in Chechnya is 22.7 years (Goskomstat, 2004a, quoted in Cava, 2006). The report cited high unemployment levels amongst youth as a potential source of social instability, increased drug use and crime. International reviews have shown a link between abusive and repressive measures towards young people and their involvement in organised violence. The costs of a lack of support to youth are clear in South-Eastern Europe. In Kosovo in March 2004, 50,000 young people rioted over the lack of economic and political opportunities available to them. Interviews indicated that young men's economic activity was directly linked to their family's livelihood; many families spoke of pinning all their hopes on their eldest son. At the same time others complained that young people were unable to marry because they could not afford to do so.

DRC should consider undertaking an integrated livelihoods protection programme for young people. This should start with analysis of some of the risks they face in terms of protection and livelihoods. Potential interventions include catch-up and vocational skills development, with flexible training to allow work in the informal sector at the same time. Staff identified driving skills, masonry and car mechanics as three important areas. The development of entrepreneurial skills should be emphasised; this was a key finding from the World Bank report. DRC should consider supporting internships and work experience – linking vocational and university education to chambers of commerce. Grants for young people to attend vocational training courses could also be considered. Voucher schemes for accredited institutions have worked well in the past. Young people should also be considered for IGA/micro-credit work, particularly in Shatoy, Atum Kali, Gudermes, Kurtchaloy and Grozny, all of which were identified by local NGOs as regions where young people are particularly at risk. DRC's social development work should be included by building in complementary trauma support and tolerance training where required. DRC could work through and support the Youth Council, which by all accounts is an active body, currently focused mainly on recreational activities.

A second group that DRC could potentially target for a joint livelihoods/protection programme is **women**. Women are already supported through DRC's social development work, but this could be extended to target them specifically with livelihoods support (in particular agricultural support). This could be undertaken directly or through civil society partners. As outlined above, there are a large number of widows and mothers of the disappeared, many of whom continue to suffer trauma. Interviewees also mentioned high levels of discrimination and violence against women. While some of this is linked to the conflict (high levels of trauma and overcrowding in shelters were highlighted), others felt that it related to Chechen cultural values. In addition to targeting livelihoods support to single-headed households and families of the missing, DRC could also consider major investment in civil society groups aimed at promoting women's equality, reproductive health and livelihoods. Models such as the Bosnia Women's Initiative and the Kosovo Women's Initiative might usefully be drawn upon. However, it should be noted that these initiatives were developed in the immediate post-crisis phase; funding for a similar initiative in Chechnya might be harder to find.

Increase capacity amongst communities and duty-bearers in relation to protection and livelihoods

An important component of both protection and livelihoods work is support to the authorities as the primary duty-bearers protecting and providing for their citizens. At the same time, increasing the capacity of individuals and groups within civil society to obtain their entitlements, advocate for their rights and demand accountability from the authorities is critical. These are also essential elements of any transition from relief to development programming, and should be the central pillar of DRC's ongoing strategy and future exit from Chechnya.

One important element here will be to build on the **legal assistance work** that DRC is currently undertaking through its information centres. This helps people to understand their entitlements, assists the most vulnerable in accessing their social insurance, reinforces accountability amongst local structures and is an important element of DRC's exit strategy from relief activities. DRC should actively publicise this service through its registrars, monitors and field staff. At present, most recipients are referred through the authorities, rather than through information centres or DRC staff. DRC should also expand the scope of its legal assistance to include property rights, employment, medical and education rights. Other local agencies are doing this, and indicated that there is continued need in these areas. Work on land and property should be linked to DRC's shelter and livelihoods work. DRC should integrate a legal component into each of its information centres. The work should be extended to other republics, as interviewees indicated that they were less well served by local human rights groups.

DRC should build into the extended legal assistance programme a strategy for partnership and progressive handover to local human rights and civil society groups. DRC needs to better understand the degree to which current success in the legal assistance programme is linked to its international status, as a number of local organisations indicated that they could not provide assistance on documentation or social entitlements as bribes were required. If this is the case, DRC will need to continue to play an oversight role to ensure that success is not sacrificed as a result of the handover.

An important component will be to better understand the Chechen system of 'integrated social assistance centres', described in a DRC

proposal to ECHO but not referred to during the mission (DRC proposal to ECHO, June 2008). It is envisaged that these centres (which are expanding into all districts) will provide material assistance to the vulnerable, and care to handicapped people and the badly ill. DRC should consider providing capacity-building assistance to these centres, in the form of training, equipment and, potentially, staff. DRC should ensure that there is a direct referral system from these centres to its legal assistance programme. DRC should also encourage human rights organisation to set up mobile clinics in DRC's information centres. These organisations have good capacity but lack outreach in rural areas. DRC should also support their networking and partnership activities, and potentially their expansion into other republics. DRC should explore supporting the deployment of the Ombudsman's office to district level, although concerns were raised by some about the independence and influence of the office.

DRC should consider undertaking a large-scale **civil society development** project. While this work is part of DRC's durable solutions scenario as it relates to recovery from the conflict, it is also linked to Chechnya's longer-term development and good governance. The objective should not simply be transferring current relief programmes to local partners, or supporting the social development of women and children; a strong element of capacity-building, networking and institutional development should also be included.

DRC should develop partnerships with local organisations so that they can undertake some of the key relief activities that donors will no longer support. A critical component of this work is to assist in the development of a cadre of organisations able to respond to future needs. Currently, many local organisations face obstruction from the authorities, and there are indications that DRC has been directed to work with a limited group. DRC should advocate for greater acceptance of local organisations. Enabling local organisations to undertake relief activities may facilitate such acceptance, although DRC should also consider inviting representatives from the local authorities to civil society meetings outside Chechnya, to increase their understanding of and support to the sector.

DRC should support the development of civil society activities outside Grozny and Urus Marten. One potential way of doing this is to turn DRC's information centres into community services centres. This may require moving to premises that can be used for this purpose. The objective would be to establish civil society hubs which different organisations could use for the provision of services. For instance, Danish De-mining Group is considering setting up mine information centres. These could be folded into this strategy. DRC should identify potential civil society organisations to manage the hubs, and support their institutional capacity to do so.

DRC should start its increased investment in civil society with an assessment of capacities, current programmatic and geographical foci, coverage, funding and regulation, as well as a review of policy processes in Chechnya that are relevant to civil society engagement. DRC may require additional capacity to undertake this assessment and to respond to the programming opportunities that emerge. DRC should continue and if possible increase its grant support to NGOs. Technical support, organisational development and fundraising skills should be emphasised. DRC should consider supporting networking and mentoring between different NGOs, within the region and beyond. As a nascent sector, exposure to other approaches is critical, and regional conferences, visits and mentoring schemes should all be considered.

Should DRC decide to remain in Chechnya for the medium term (3–5 years), the agency should consider undertaking **community reconstruction or development** projects, with a particular emphasis on engagement and capacity-building with duty-bearers. This is a new departure for DRC and will require new staff capacity, as well as multi-year funding. The planned devolution of financial responsibility to local districts in 2009 presents an opportunity for DRC to engage with nascent structures. There is much concern within the local administration about this decentralisation, as responsibility for local taxation, financing and elections will also be devolved. This work could involve DRC supporting the elaboration of administrative development plans to foster dialogue and the participation of local individuals and civil society. DRC's financial contribution to the implementation of the plan would be contingent on the authorities' contribution, whether direct or in-kind. There is a precedent for this in DRC's current infrastructure projects, where 33% of the costs are borne by the authorities. However, as there have been difficulties with this in the past, DRC should consider a phased approach similar that undertaken with shelter beneficiaries. DRC should

work with the local administration and local representatives to identify large-scale income generation and SME opportunities. Market assessments should be undertaken to inform this work, with DRC providing the finance and facilitating technical training from local institutions, the local authorities facilitating the regulatory environment and assisting with direct and in-kind funding and communities engaging in public works through cash for work schemes, as well as the development of income generation and SME schemes.

4.5 Resources

DRC will require new skills to develop its work on livelihoods and protection/rule of law and to build the capacity of local institutions and civil society in good governance. This includes facilitation, mentoring and monitoring skills, rather than the direct implementation skills DRC has built up over the years. If DRC engages further in legal assistance and civil society work, strategic and technical capacity within the social development department will need to be developed. This department is neglected within DRC's programme, perhaps because it is located within the livelihoods department, with which it has only management links. If expanded, DRC should consider establishing a separate department. In any case, the head of social development should be involved in strategy development to ensure that this component is a strong pillar of DRC's ongoing work. DRC will also require greater technical capacity within its livelihoods department to undertake larger and more complex livelihoods recovery programming.

DRC must diversify its donor portfolio, focusing in particular on recovery and development donors. USAID, the EC, UNDP, FAO and the World Bank are all active in the region, and DRC needs to invest time and resources to better understand their priorities and foster relations.

DRC occupies an important place in the humanitarian/development sector in Chechnya. It has a strong reputation, on the basis of running the largest relief operation in the region, and for an extended period. It has good relations with the local authorities, donors and communities, as well as experienced and committed staff. There is an opportunity to build on these assets and progressively develop the agency's work.

4.6 Recommendations

- DRC should consider continuing its support to those most affected by violence and displacement, whilst also shifting to durable solutions and longer-term recovery.
- DRC should prioritise the most vulnerable, either through direct support or by incorporating a safety net component for the vulnerable in all future programmes.
- DRC should consider partnering with the Chechen Social Welfare office with regard to the future of the IDP database.
- DRC should consider providing additional support to the very vulnerable to help them complete unfinished houses or access construction assistance or turn-key houses. The feasibility and appropriateness of box houses for those suffering acute housing problems should be explored. DRC should continue to advocate for at least 25% of beneficiaries to be exempt from the 'self-help' approach to housing.
- DRC's primary focus in livelihoods support should be the provision of horticultural/agricultural support to the vulnerable, transitioning from food security to self-sufficiency/income-generating objectives. This sector of activity should be enhanced, including the introduction of larger grants/credit schemes to support the development of cooperatives and trading schemes. DRC should cooperate with local authorities and should support skills development through local authorities and institutions.
- DRC should integrate livelihoods and shelter programming to facilitate the introduction of utilities for agricultural programming. Links to DRC's de-mining work should also be fostered.
- DRC's secondary focus in livelihoods support should be on income generation/employment generation through supporting micro enterprises and SMEs. Cost recovery or credit schemes should be prioritised, or a social component built in.
- DRC should consider supporting local organisations to undertake food distribution targeting those most in need. A household economy assessment should be undertaken in order to justify continuing with this work.
- DRC should consider focusing on key risk groups. The priority should be youth, where DRC is well-placed to develop a joint livelihoods/protection programme. Targeting livelihoods support to female-headed households or families of the missing (either

directly or indirectly through civil society partners) should also be considered, complemented by investment in civil society networks for women.

- DRC should develop its legal assistance programme, expanding into other areas such as property, employment, medical services and education. DRC should ensure that the service is promoted by staff and expanded to other information centres. DRC should partner with local rights organisations, with a view to them progressively taking over the service. DRC should find out more about integrated social assistance centres and support their effective and accountable development, if appropriate.
- DRC should consider community reconstruction/development projects involving local administrations and communities through the development of community action plans.

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