

Joint Operating Principles of the Humanitarian Country Team in Yemen

A Principled Delivery of Humanitarian Assistance in Yemen

1. The humanitarian community¹ engaged in humanitarian response in Yemen agrees that the principles outlined in this Protocol reflect humanitarian policies, guidance and well established practices for interaction with parties to the conflict. Humanitarian organisations agree that this Protocol forms the basis for such engagement.
2. Humanity, neutrality, impartiality, and operational independence are core fundamental principles that the humanitarian community adheres to. These principles are the cornerstone of any humanitarian operation, and are derived from International Legal Framework (including International Humanitarian Law², Human Rights Law³ and UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 (10 December 1991))⁴ and are part of codes of conduct and organisational mission statements guiding humanitarian organisations.
3. Humanitarian operations and organisations are guided by:
 - a. **Humanity:** Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found, with particular attention to the most vulnerable population, such as children, women and the elderly. The dignity and rights of survivors must be respected and protected.
 - b. **Neutrality:** Humanitarian actors will not participate in hostilities or taking sides in controversies of a political, religious or ideological nature.
 - c. **Impartiality:** humanitarian assistance is provided, without discrimination on the basis of ethnic origin, political opinion, gender, nationality, race or religion. Provision of assistance is guided solely by needs, and priority is given to the most vulnerable cases.
 - d. **Operational Independence:** Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian activities is being implemented.
 - e. **Dignity:** People in need shall be respected as equal partners in action in all activities and support the maintenance of their dignity as human beings in all communications.
 - f. **Do no harm:** Humanitarian organisations must strive to 'do no harm' or to minimize potential harm when being present and providing assistance. Humanitarian organisations should provide assistance in ways that are supportive of recovery and long-term development.
 - g. **Transparency and accountability:** Humanitarian partners act in a transparent manner with all parties and are accountable to those whom they assist.
4. In order to be able to address human suffering and provide life-saving assistance, humanitarian organisations will:
 - Engage with all parties to the conflict and relevant actors in areas of operations;
 - Call for all parties to conflict to respect and promote humanitarian principles;
 - Seek rapid and unimpeded access to all conflict-affected people, including the most vulnerable cases;
 - Identify beneficiaries for humanitarian assistance based on established vulnerability criteria;
 - Seek the unhindered access of conflict-affected people to humanitarian organizations, assistance and services and identifying the most vulnerable cases;

¹ United Nations agencies, international organisations, international NGOs and national NGOs.

² On rules for provision of humanitarian assistance by humanitarian actors, see Art. 3(2) Common to the Geneva Conventions; GC IV, Arts. 10 and 59(2); AP I, Art. 70(1); AP II, Art. 18(1) and (2). With regard to obligations of parties to conflict to allow and facilitate humanitarian relief, see AP I Art. 62(1) and AP II Art. 33(1).

³ See e.g. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Art. 22(1), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Art. 23(1), and Kampala Conventions, Art. 5(6) and (7), Art. 7(5)(b) and (5)(g).

⁴ UNGA Res. 46/182 (1991), 19 December 1991, and UNGA Res. 58/114 (2004).

- Provide assistance based on independent needs assessments and international recognized methodologies and independent monitoring and evaluation of needs;
- Provide relevant publicly available organisational information to local authorities;
- Provide relevant information on planned humanitarian activities.

5. Humanitarian organisations will not accede to requests to:

- Provide beneficiary information revealing personal particulars. This is in order to protect the security, privacy and dignity of those receiving humanitarian assistance as agreed in accepted standards of confidentiality;
- Influence the selection of staff, partners or vendors for humanitarian organisations or provide confidential information about staff, partners and vendors.
- Use armed escorts for humanitarian vehicles or personnel, except in last resort as per guidelines⁵ and when agreed in advance with clearly defined parameters;
- Interference over the content or findings of needs assessments;
- Deliver humanitarian assistance to parties to the conflict. Under International Humanitarian Law, only persons recognized hors de combat may be treated by medical agencies;
- Take control of humanitarian facilities - including warehouse, vehicles, commodities and any other humanitarian assets;
- Pay taxes or duties or other payments on humanitarian projects, deliveries or services to beneficiaries. Where authorities require taxes and duties to be paid by law, the formal procedures and requirements necessary to pay taxes or duties should be publicly available and modalities clearly established;
- Accompany humanitarian personnel carrying out their humanitarian activities;
- Enter humanitarian facilities or vehicles with weapons.

⁵ Interagency Standing Committee (IASC), Non-binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts, Feb. 2013.