

European Humanitarian Forum

Forum humanitaire européen



24-26 JAN, 2022



ARMED NON-STATE ACTORS AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE – FIELD PERSPECTIVES ON WHY AND HOW TO ENGAGE

Asks and recommendations from the Asia Field Consultation ahead of the European Humanitarian Forum

The EU and its MS should ensure that humanitarian actors have space to openly engage with ANSAs. Engagement is a pre-condition for behaviour change and thus long-term engagement is an opportunity for enhancing protection of civilians. Engagement should be understood widely to encompass not only access negotiation, dissemination of principles and IHL, but also changing ANSAs openness and willingness to engage and their perception of humanitarian actors as representatives of western values. This entails:

- Engaging diplomatically with relevant regional and national government actors through EU and MS advocacy on promotion of humanitarian norms as a pathway for acceptance of engagement. Humanitarian diplomacy vis-a-vis regional actors/powers should be strengthened and there should be more attention to acting fast in shifting political contexts, which provide openings for engagement.
- Recognising that engagement with ANSAs is not a quick fix, it requires long-term engagement, specialised organisations, and dedicated staff. More should be done to operationalise the HDP nexus on engagement with ANSAs, and specifically for ECHO to engage more with the political side of EU services around this.
- Counteracting risk-adversity and self-censorship by ensuring that EU and MS language around exemptions is sufficiently detailed and clear, and that risks are not transferred downwards but accepted, shared, and managed between all actors.