

# European Humanitarian Forum Forum humanitaire européen



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## European Humanitarian Forum (EHF) - Regional Consultation in MENA and European Neighborhood

### “Humanitarian Access”

25 November 2021

#### Advocacy Messages

- Humanitarian actors should benefit from the presumption of innocence rather than having to prove that they are not guilty of financing terrorism when they are supplying humanitarian aid.
- Increased advocacy with local officials from national authorities should be a priority in order to ensure work visas and permits for humanitarian workers are processed on a regular and timely basis.
- Data regarding access should be collected and presented to authorities to make a targeted, strong joint advocacy case for access, or for implementing an access mechanism for all.

#### Identified Recommendations

- EU should continue support to NGO coalitions in the region by providing the financial means and expanding support for advocacy with key institutional donors and through diplomatic communication and advocacy efforts with members states.
- Humanitarian actors expect continuous engagement from member states and key institutional donors, applying political pressure on national authorities to facilitate negotiation and address access issues.
- Implement a “counterterrorism humanitarian exemption” for financial transactions and provision of goods and services under all humanitarian aid funding. Requirements vary among donors, and more coordination and alignment between them is expected. Member states should be sensitized to the humanitarian impact of anti-terrorist legislation.
- The EU is expected to play a vital role with other key institutional donors to better understand and accept constraints on the ground via greater openness (i.e. incidents can be shared with donors), ultimately leading to a risk-sharing approach (between donors and responders).
- Enhance local actors’ role on access through increased inclusion and meaningful participation in access working groups and coordination efforts. Local actors need clarity and information sharing from donors on red lines in operations and communication with non-state armed

groups, access negotiation etc. Moreover, there is a need for more training programmes for security staff on enabling humanitarian programmes.

- Utilize a risk-sharing methodology—instead of one of risk-transfer—with local organizations when dealing with access and implementation.
- The EU to extend its support to implement more localized programming, premised on quality, multi-year and flexible funding, to give humanitarian organizations stability and continuity while allowing them to quickly and rapidly adapt to changing situations. The extension of time of such frameworks allows local or implementing organizations to build relationships that are crucial for understanding the dynamics in which humanitarian actors operate.
- Build a more cohesive and uniform platform for engaging with non-state armed actors and offer them IHL trainings (i.e., training in access norms).
- Continue progress towards a "humanitarian specificity" for DG ECHO to ensure that IHL and humanitarian principles are taken into account.