European Humanitarian Forum
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SAFEGUARDING HUMANITARIAN SPACE – PROTECTION OF HUMANITARIAN AND MEDICAL WORKERS
Asks and recommendations from the Asia Field Consultation ahead of the European Humanitarian Forum

The discussion and thus recommendations are structured around the four topics that were in focus during the Discussion Series hosted by the EU together with France, Germany, Mexico, Niger, Norway, and Switzerland in New York from March-June 2021.

Data collection and analysis on attacks against humanitarian workers
- EU/MS should promote the use of existing data sets while recognising that there are different purposes of data collection (advocacy vs. operations) and that different mechanisms/tools serve different purposes and cannot/should not be harmonised merely for the sake of harmonisation. Collection of qualitative narrative data should be strengthened by promoting further engagement with local actors and affected people. EU/MS should use the EHF as an opportunity to find a way to share data for common analysis across the nexus.
- Data and advocacy: EU/MS should prioritise collection of data for accountability purposes as high as data collection for operational purposes and ECHO should increase engagement with the political side of the EU to fulfil its advocacy role. EU/MS should use data better – not only for public advocacy, but also for private advocacy, e.g., with ANSAs.
- The EHF should be used to initiate and spearhead avenues in pursuing IHL awareness and humanitarian access to higher level of policy advocacy, such as where frameworks and other policy instruments can be developed and called to action. EU/MS should fulfil their legal mandate and public advocacy role in using these data and analyses in promoting IHL.

Security risk management practices of humanitarian organisations
- Risk appetite: EU/MS should have realistic expectations considering security environments and there should be informed consent between donors and partners on having projects in high-risk areas. There is a need for a structured approach to ensure feasibility and avoid NGOs feeling they are pushed to work in some areas.
- EU/MS should ensure proportionality and equity in: risk management for international staff versus national staff; security budgets overall, including respectively a) for local organisations and b) for contexts considered less at risk but where teams still need to operate in high-risk areas.
- EU/MS should ensure that all their partners share security risk analysis with relevant coordinating bodies.
- EU/MS should understand that remote security management/trainings do not work and that there is a need to find alternative ways.

Countering the criminalisation of humanitarian aid
- EU/MS and the humanitarian sector must accept the limits of risk transfer: as 'zero-tolerance to risk' approaches in the humanitarian sector are leading to further remote management and reliance on local actors in high-risk areas, with local staff facing greater risk exposure, the sector needs to understand/accept/ manage/share those risks to achieve localisation commitments whilst retaining duty-of-care responsibilities.
- EU/MS should acknowledge the particular risks faced by local staff and actors in criminalisation of humanitarian aid, e.g. extrajudicial impact if being associated to some organisations.

- EU/MS must ensure clarity on counterterrorism measures and risks entailed with the localisation of aid; demystify the impact of counterterrorism measures to avoid over-compliance and non-action; ensure that the subtilities and legal language around exemptions are detailed as much as possible.

Strengthening accountability in the fight against impunity for attacks against humanitarian workers in armed conflicts.
- EU/MS should recognise that evidence documentation is critical for accountability and ultimately for behaviour change promotion and should further encourage collaborative relationships between humanitarian protection and human rights actors to work together on risk analysis and identification of mitigation measures.
- EU/MS should encourage and support the establishment of a platform for discussion on accountability amongst humanitarian community: this is particularly needed with the HCT and humanitarian coordinators.
- RCs/HCs bear a responsibility for both access and protection of humanitarian workers, but often access is highest on the agenda. EU/MS should play a role in facilitating these conversations and ensuring red lines to avoid that it becomes a trade-off between access and safety.