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STUDY GUIDE

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Special Economic, Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Assistance

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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance

Economic and Social Council
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Agenda item 9
Special economic, humanitarian and disaster relief assistance

Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report was prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance. The report is also submitted in response to Assembly decision 80/532 and Council resolution 2024/8. The period covered by the report is from 1 January to 31 December 2025.

The report contains an outline of measures taken to strengthen humanitarian coordination and response, information on humanitarian trends, challenges and recommendations, including in response to escalating suffering due to conflicts and disasters.

* A/81/50.

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I. Introduction

Overview of key trends

1. Humanitarian action is confronted with growing challenges: crises are escalating rapidly; resources are tightening; and the norms that protect civilians and enable humanitarian access are increasingly being defied. In response, the humanitarian system is being forced to adapt by prioritizing only 87 million people among the 135 million people targeted by life-saving assistance programmes and by strengthening coordination and reforming aid delivery to reach those most in need.[1]

2. Humanitarian partners continued to deliver assistance in 2025 despite worsening crises and intensifying operational constraints. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee partners reached 98 million people, 65 per cent of whom were targeted through United Nations-coordinated responses.

3. In 2025, the gap between humanitarian needs and available resources widened sharply. Donors contributed $15.84 billion, or 34.8 per cent of the $45.47 billion requested,[2] forcing humanitarian partners to close essential programmes and reduce their presence, leaving millions of people without life-saving assistance.

4. In the 2026 *Global Humanitarian Overview*, 239 million people are projected to need assistance in 2026. Of these, humanitarian partners plan to target 135 million. Within those responses, organizations are compelled to prioritize the 87 million people facing the most severe cases of need – not because overall needs have diminished, but because funding has.

5. The urgency of funding programmes for those most in need led the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, with the support of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to launch the "87 million lives" campaign in December – an initiative aimed at mobilizing $23 billion to support people facing the most extreme needs.

6. Conflicts and other situations of violence inflicted enormous human suffering. Millions of people, including many children and refugees, have spent their entire lives in situations of protracted crisis. Violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses continued, including the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare.[3] In 2025, over 92 million people in crisis-affected contexts required protection from gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, in addition to other forms of violence. Fifty-five per cent of all maternal deaths worldwide occurred in 17 fragile contexts.[4] Impunity for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses remained pervasive.

7. By June 2025, more than 117.3 million people were forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence and human rights violations.[5] More than 42 million of them were refugees, mostly hosted in neighbouring low-income countries, and 67.8 million were internally displaced persons as a result of conflict and violence.

[1] See www.unocha.org/publications/report/world/global-humanitarian-overview-2026-enesfr.
[2] Available at https://fts.unocha.org/ (accessed on 30 March 2026).
[3] Nathaniel Raymond and others, "Special report: Rapid Support Forces intentionally targeted agricultural communities to starve people in El-Fasher", Yale School of Public Health, 10 March 2026.
[4] World Health Organization, *Maternal Mortality in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations: Technical Brief* (Geneva, 2026).
[5] Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "Mid-year trends 2025", 4 November 2025.

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Something to Think About 01

WThe 2026 response plans distinguished between people identified as needing assistance, people targeted for assistance (i.e., those an operation plans to reach) and people prioritized for the most urgent life-saving support (i.e., a narrower group selected when resources are insufficient). When funding is insufficient, humanitarian organizations may compare the severity of food shortages, threats to safety, lack of medical care and the ability of other organizations to respond. What information should determine who receives assistance first, and how should organizations explain decisions to communities that remain without support?

Definition 02

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the primary mechanism for coordinating humanitarian assistance among United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian organizations. It brings together key humanitarian actors to develop policies, establish priorities and coordinate responses to humanitarian crises.

Definition 02

International humanitarian law (IHL), also known as the law of armed conflict, is a set of rules that seeks to limit the humanitarian effects of armed conflict. It protects people who are not, or are no longer, participating in hostilities and places limits on the means and methods of warfare.

Something to Think About 02

Starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited under international humanitarian law. Parties to a conflict must not attack or destroy food supplies, drinking-water installations or other objects indispensable to civilian survival for the purpose of denying their sustenance value. What practical steps could parties take to protect these facilities and facilitate relief supplies, and how should alleged violations be documented and investigated?

8. Acute food insecurity remained alarmingly high in 2025, with 266 million people assessed to have been acutely food insecure.[6] Funding shortfalls and capacity constraints impeded the collection of related data.

9. Preliminary data indicate that 2025 was among the deadliest years on record for humanitarian personnel, continuing a disturbing trend of increased attacks on aid workers in recent years.[7]

10. Climate change is deepening humanitarian needs faster than response systems can alleviate them. Extreme weather events, including droughts, floods and storms are intensifying displacement, food insecurity and fragility across many regions. As disasters grow more frequent and severe, humanitarian response capacities are under increasing strain, further widening the gap between needs and available resources.

11. Against this backdrop, in 2025, humanitarian organizations continued to adjust to a rapidly evolving environment. Led by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in collaboration with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the humanitarian reset seeks to strengthen the coordination of humanitarian assistance to make it more efficient and effective by prioritizing assistance, reducing bureaucracy by streamlining processes, pooling support services, strengthening leadership at the country level, devolving power and resources to affected communities and defending humanitarian norms and principles. At the same time, the Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative advances the new humanitarian compact, which focuses on strengthening efficiency, coherence and collaboration across United Nations humanitarian actors.[8]

II. Overview of humanitarian emergencies

A. Complex emergencies

12. The United Nations and its partners responded to complex emergencies, many of which were marked by serious protection risks for civilians, including violations of international humanitarian law and human rights violations and abuses, often in contexts of impeded humanitarian access.

13. The situation in the Sudan remained the largest humanitarian crisis worldwide, with an estimated 30.4 million people requiring life-saving assistance. In September 2025, El Fasher in North Darfur and Kadugli in South Kordofan were classified as experiencing famine (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) phase 5). The Sudan also had 14 million refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons. There were reports of alarming rates of rape, abuse, coercion and child marriage.[9] At the same time, heavy rains caused floods and landslides that displaced hundreds of thousands of people, including internally displaced persons and refugees.[10]

[6] Food Security Information Network and Global Network Against Food Crises, *Global Report on Food Crises 2026* (Rome, 2026), available in April 2026.

[7] Aid Worker Security Database, available at www.aidworkersecurity.org/.

[8] The humanitarian reset (https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/humanitarian-reset) and the UN80 Initiative (General Assembly resolution 79/318) are aligned but distinct, and reinforce each other. The humanitarian reset is led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and applies across the entire humanitarian system.

[9] United Nations Population Fund, "'As widespread as guns and bullets': sexual violence used to terrorize Sudan's women and girls", 19 June 2025.

[10] Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, "Sudan – landslide", update of 9 September 2025, available at https://erccportal.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ECHO-Products/Echo-Flash#/echo-flash-items/29642.

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Definition 08

Acute food insecurity occurs when a person's inability to access adequate food places their life or livelihood in immediate danger. Unlike chronic food insecurity, it reflects severe conditions at a particular point in time that may require urgent action. Acute food insecurity can be driven by factors including conflict, economic shocks and extreme weather events.

Something to Think About 09

Humanitarian workers face risks from armed attacks, kidnappings and threats, while national staff often remain exposed after international teams leave. Governments and parties to conflict can improve protection by communicating humanitarian movements, investigating attacks and protecting medical facilities and transport. Which of these measures should be prioritized, and how could Member States determine whether attacks and access restrictions are declining?

Something to Think About 10

Humanitarian funding is often directed towards responding to crises after they occur. "Anticipatory action" instead uses forecasts, pre-agreed triggers, actions and financing to reduce humanitarian impacts before they fully unfold. For example, forecasts of severe flooding could trigger cash transfers to vulnerable households, preparations for evacuation and the movement of medical supplies to safer locations. Could cost-benefit analyses help governments and donors determine when anticipatory action is less expensive and more effective than responding after a disaster has occurred? What are the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and donor countries already doing to help countries particularly vulnerable to climate-related hazards establish early warning systems and prepare for disasters? How could these existing efforts be strengthened?

Definition 11

TThe humanitarian reset seeks to change how relief is organized amid growing needs and reduced funding. Its four priorities are: 1) define (focus on the most urgent needs), 2) deliver (simplify operations and reduce delays), 3) devolve (give local and national responders greater resources and decision-making authority), and 4) defend (protect humanitarian principles and the ability to assist people safely). The test is whether these changes result in faster, more appropriate assistance rather than simply fewer meetings or lower administrative costs. This reform process is led by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) to make humanitarian action more efficient, effective and responsive amid growing needs and constrained resources. It seeks to simplify coordination and reduce bureaucracy, strengthen leadership at the country level, prioritize assistance to those facing the most severe needs, shift greater power and resources towards local and national actors and affected communities, and protect humanitarian principles. It is aligned with, the Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative

Definition 12

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) defines a complex emergency as a multifaceted humanitarian crisis in which internal or external conflict causes a total or considerable breakdown of authority and requires a multisectoral international response beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency or the ongoing UN country programme. Such emergencies may involve large-scale civilian suffering and displacement, difficulties delivering humanitarian assistance and significant security risks for humanitarian personnel.

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Definition **13**

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) uses a five-phase scale to classify the severity of acute food insecurity, ranging from Phase 1 (None/Minimal) to Phase 5 (Catastrophe/Famine). "Catastrophe" and "Famine" both fall within Phase 5 but are not interchangeable: Catastrophe is classified at the household level, while Famine is classified at the area level. An area is classified as experiencing Famine when specific thresholds for extreme food deprivation, acute malnutrition and mortality are met.

14. In Yemen, 22.3 million people required humanitarian assistance. Nearly half of the population – around 18 million people – faced acute food insecurity. Yemen is also the country with the largest number of people – 5.5 million – experiencing emergency food security conditions classified as IPC phase 4 or above.

15. In Afghanistan, 22.9 million people required humanitarian assistance, driven by a fragile economy, large-scale displacement and the forced return of some 2.9 million persons who were previously displaced. Strained public services and restrictive operating conditions continued to limit access to essential services, especially for women and girls.[11]

16. In the Syrian Arab Republic, 16.5 million people required humanitarian assistance. An estimated 14.6 million were food insecure, including more than 9 million in acute conditions. More than 7 million Syrians were internally displaced, and another 4 million were refugees in neighbouring countries.

17. In Myanmar, 21.9 million people required humanitarian assistance due to intensifying conflict, recurrent disasters and continued economic decline. Conflict caused civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, in addition to leaving 5.2 million people forcibly displaced, including 3.5 million internally displaced persons and 1.5 million refugees or asylum-seekers in neighbouring countries. Some 16.7 million people faced rising food insecurity.

18. In Burkina Faso, 5.9 million people required humanitarian assistance owing to persistent security challenges compounded by the impacts of climate-related shocks and public health issues.

19. In Cameroon, 3.3 million people needed humanitarian assistance due to concurrent crises in the Lake Chad basin and the North-West and South-West Regions.

20. In the Central African Republic, 2.4 million people required humanitarian assistance owing to continued insecurity and recurrent disasters, including more than 35,000 refugees from the Sudan in the north-eastern region of the Central African Republic.

21. In Chad, an estimated 7 million people required humanitarian assistance, including 1.65 million refugees. This was one of the most complex humanitarian crises in the region, with refugee spillover from the conflict in the Sudan.

22. In Colombia, 10.4 million people required humanitarian assistance, driven by renewed conflict, climate-related disasters and the needs of refugees and migrants arriving largely from the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

23. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 16.5 million people required humanitarian assistance, driven primarily by armed conflict and compounded by gender-based violence, climate-related hazards and outbreaks of disease. Nearly 100,000 Congolese nationals fled abroad, while Uganda and Burundi accounted for more than 75 per cent of new arrivals.[12]

24. In Haiti, 6 million people required humanitarian assistance amid widespread armed violence, large-scale displacement, powerful storms, movement restrictions, the shrinking humanitarian space and collapsing essential services. Gang rapes perpetrated by armed groups reached an alarming level, accounting for 65 per cent of reported cases of gender-based violence in the first half of 2025.[13]

[11] Global Protection Cluster, "Afghanistan: protection analysis update", October 2025.
[12] UNHCR, "Mid-year trends 2025".
[13] Global Protection Cluster, "Haiti: protection analysis update", September 2025.

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Definition **14**

IPC Phase 4 is classified as "Emergency." At this level, households face large food-consumption gaps that are reflected in very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality, or are able to reduce those gaps only by using emergency livelihood strategies and liquidating essential assets. Phase 5, the highest classification, is Catastrophe/Famine.

Something to Think About **15**

Humanitarian needs do not necessarily end when displaced people return home. Returning families may face damaged housing and infrastructure, limited access to essential services and livelihoods, or difficulties reintegrating into their communities. How can Member States support the safe and sustainable reintegration of displaced people after conflict? What forms of assistance may be needed to help returning families rebuild their lives and reduce the risk of renewed displacement?

Something to Think About **15**

Afghanistan illustrates how humanitarian emergencies can become more difficult to address when public services are under severe strain and restrictions on humanitarian operations limit access to assistance, particularly for women and girls. How should humanitarian organizations respond when national laws or policies restrict their ability to provide assistance to particular groups? What practical steps could help ensure that assistance reaches those most in need? How can Member States balance respect for national sovereignty with the need to ensure that humanitarian assistance is provided without discrimination?

Something to Think About **17**

When armed conflict, flooding and economic decline occur together, families may lose income, housing, food supplies and access to health services at the same time. Relief plans that treat each problem separately may miss these overlapping needs. How could humanitarian coordinators combine information about displacement, food prices, disease outbreaks and damaged infrastructure to identify which communities need several types of assistance at once?

Interesting Facts **21**

Responsibility for hosting refugees is not distributed evenly worldwide. At the end of 2025, 68 per cent of refugees and other people in need of international protection were hosted by low- and middle-income countries, while 65 per cent lived in countries neighbouring their countries of origin. Low-income countries accounted for only 0.3 per cent of global GDP and 8 per cent of the global population, yet hosted 18 per cent of refugees. This highlights the importance of international responsibility-sharing and support for both refugees and host communities.

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Definition **24**

Humanitarian space refers broadly to the conditions that allow humanitarian actors to reach and assist affected populations safely, independently and in accordance with humanitarian principles. Humanitarian space may shrink when insecurity, violence, administrative restrictions, political interference or other barriers limit humanitarian access or operations.

25. In Mali, 6.4 million people required humanitarian assistance because of insecurity, movement restrictions and forced displacement, structural vulnerabilities, socioeconomic challenges and climate shocks.

26. In Mozambique, 1.3 million people required humanitarian assistance owing to the protracted armed conflict in Cabo Delgado.

27. In the Niger, 2.6 million people required humanitarian assistance due to protracted instability in the country and the region, which triggered internal displacement and refugee movements.

28. In Nigeria, 7.8 million people required humanitarian assistance, driven by protracted conflict, climate-related disasters, food insecurity and outbreaks of disease.

29. In Somalia, 5.98 million people required humanitarian assistance due to the combined impact of protracted conflict, recurrent climate shocks, particularly severe drought, economic pressures and insecurity.

30. In South Sudan, 9.3 million people required humanitarian assistance owing to climate shocks, continued violence, outbreaks of disease, food insecurity and economic fragility. Approximately 2.5 million people remained internally displaced, and an estimated 1.3 million people arrived in South Sudan from the Sudan.

31. In Ukraine, 10.8 million people faced severe hardships, driven by attacks on civilians and critical civilian infrastructure, front-line evacuations and recurrent displacement.

32. In the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, some 7.9 million people required humanitarian assistance due to persistent economic, political and social challenges, as well as climate-related challenges.

33. In the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 3.3 million people, including the entire population of Gaza (2.1 million), required humanitarian assistance amid intense hostilities, the collapse of essential services and severe restrictions on humanitarian access. Famine was confirmed in the Gaza Governorate in August 2025.

B. Disasters associated with natural hazards

34. As climate-related hazards increase in frequency and intensity, they are compounding existing vulnerabilities and placing additional pressure on already stretched humanitarian response capacities and financing.

35. In 2025, 358 disaster events affected 110.2 million people globally, reflecting the growing scale and frequency of extreme weather events.[14] Several major disasters caused widespread destruction and displacement.

36. Across Asia, disasters took their toll, with multiple hazards causing widespread human and economic impacts: in Viet Nam, successive typhoons, combined with severe flooding, affected around 4 million people and damaged homes, infrastructure and agriculture; in Sri Lanka, a cyclone caused extensive coastal damage and disrupted livelihoods and critical services; and in Myanmar, a powerful earthquake led to widespread destruction and thousands of deaths, underscoring the region's acute vulnerability to large-scale disasters.

[14] EM-DAT International Disaster Database, available at www.emdat.be/ (accessed on 10 March 2026).

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Definition **34**

A natural hazard is a process or phenomenon, such as an earthquake, flood, drought or storm, that has the potential to cause harm. A disaster occurs when a hazardous event interacts with conditions such as exposure, vulnerability and capacity, causing serious disruption and losses. This distinction is important because disasters are not caused by hazards alone: social, economic, environmental and physical conditions can influence how severely communities are affected.

Something to Think About **34**

The same natural hazard can produce very different humanitarian consequences depending on levels of exposure, vulnerability and capacity. Factors such as poverty, infrastructure, access to essential services and disaster preparedness can therefore influence how severely communities are affected. How should international disaster assistance account for differences in vulnerability between and within States? When resources are limited, how should Member States balance funding for immediate disaster response with investment in preparedness and disaster-risk reduction before disasters occur?

Interesting Facts **35**

Disaster impacts are not measured only by deaths or the number of people affected. International disaster databases may also track displacement and economic damage, helping governments and humanitarian actors compare the scale and consequences of disasters and identify patterns of risk over time. However, disaster data can vary in availability and quality, particularly where reporting capacity is limited.

37. The worst natural disasters in Africa in 2025 were caused by severe flooding, with the deadliest events occurring in Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Eastern Cape in South Africa, along with major cyclone impacts in Mozambique that affected more than 1 million people and displaced nearly 500,000. Flooding was the primary hazard, often intensified by extreme rainfall, urban vulnerability and landslides. The Greater Horn of Africa returned to drought conditions, driving food insecurity and displacement, and North Africa continued to experience a prolonged drought, punctuated by deadly floods.

38. In Latin America, the most significant disasters in 2025 were drought and wildfires in southern Argentina and Chile, along with severe storms and tornadoes in Argentina and Brazil. In the Caribbean, Hurricane Melissa, a category 5 storm, killed dozens of people, displaced thousands more and devastated homes, crops and infrastructure. Evidence suggests that such intense storms have become about four times more likely, with disasters in 2026 likely to compound damage from that hurricane.[15]

III. Humanitarian response in 2025: key challenges

A. Armed conflict

Protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law

39. Armed conflict remained the primary driver of deepening humanitarian needs, with civilians bearing the brunt of violence. In numerous conflicts, parties showed disregard for their obligation to protect civilians and for other obligations under international humanitarian law. Across multiple contexts, protracted conflicts and eroding respect for the rules of war drove repeated attacks harming civilians and infrastructure, as well as the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, including in situations of siege.

40. Reports of violations of international humanitarian law persisted, including indiscriminate attacks, torture and sexual violence, often committed without any accountability. In some contexts, parties used widely banned weapons, including cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines, while some Member States' decisions to withdraw from treaties banning such weapons continued to set a dangerous precedent.

41. The use of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, or of weapons systems with increasingly autonomous functions had a growing impact on the conduct of hostilities, presenting significant risks for the protection of civilians. The potential loss of human control over the use of force raises serious humanitarian, ethical and legal concerns, including heightened risks to civilians and the danger of conflict escalation. Permissive interpretations of international humanitarian law, particularly regarding the definition of military objectives and the principles of proportionality and precautions, together with the false notion that compliance is contingent on reciprocity, further undermined respect for the law and contributed to civilian harm. In 2025, 64.5 per cent of funding under the Central Emergency Response Fund ($285.5 million) supported responses to conflict-driven crises.

[15] Grantham Institute – Climate Change and the Environment, *Climate Change Impact Attribution of Hurricane Melissa* (London, 2025), available at www.imperial.ac.uk/grantham/research/climate-science/modelling-tropical-cyclones/hurricane-melissa/.

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Something to Think About 37

A hazardous event does not affect every community equally: disaster risk is shaped by exposure, vulnerability and the capacity to cope. Rapid or poorly planned urbanization can increase risk when settlements expand into hazard-prone areas or when infrastructure and essential services do not keep pace with population growth. How can Member States better integrate disaster-risk reduction into land-use planning, infrastructure and urban development? What role should international assistance play in strengthening local capacity while preserving national and local ownership of disaster-risk reduction?

Did You Know That... 38

Scientists can use climate models to estimate how human-caused climate change has affected the likelihood or intensity of particular extreme weather events. For Hurricane Melissa, researchers at Imperial College London compared the likelihood of a Melissa-type hurricane in the 2025 climate with a climate before significant human-caused warming. They estimated that such a hurricane at landfall was about four times more likely in the 2025 climate.

Definition 40

Indiscriminate attacks are attacks that do not distinguish between military targets and civilians or civilian areas. This can include attacks that are not aimed at a specific military target or that use weapons or methods whose effects cannot be sufficiently controlled. Such attacks are prohibited under international humanitarian law because of the risk they pose to civilians.

Interesting Facts 40

International treaties prohibit anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions for countries that have joined them. However, not all countries are members of these treaties, and enforcing them can be difficult, meaning violations do not always result in accountability. Mines and unexploded cluster munitions can also endanger civilians long after conflict ends, making it harder for displaced people to return home and communities to recover.

Something to Think About 41

The UN Secretary-General has emphasized that decisions involving life and death must remain under human control. For human control over autonomous or AI-enabled weapons to be meaningful, military personnel must have enough information to understand what the system is doing, the authority to intervene or stop an attack, and sufficient time to act before harm becomes irreversible. However, the speed and complexity of these systems may make it difficult or even impossible to meet all three conditions. How can Member States ensure that autonomous weapons are not used in circumstances where meaningful human control cannot be maintained? Since autonomous weapons cannot themselves be held legally accountable, how should responsibility be determined when their use results in violations of international humanitarian law, including unlawful harm to civilians?

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III. Humanitarian response in 2025: key challenges

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40. Reports of violations of international humanitarian law persisted, including indiscriminate attacks, torture and sexual violence, often committed without any accountability. In some contexts, parties used widely banned weapons, including cluster munitions and anti-personnel mines, while some Member States' decisions to withdraw from treaties banning such weapons continued to set a dangerous precedent.

41. The use of new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, or of weapons systems with increasingly autonomous functions had a growing impact on the conduct of hostilities, presenting significant risks for the protection of civilians. The potential loss of human control over the use of force raises serious humanitarian, ethical and legal concerns, including heightened risks to civilians and the danger of conflict escalation. Permissive interpretations of international humanitarian law, particularly regarding the definition of military objectives and the principles of proportionality and precautions, together with the false notion that compliance is contingent on reciprocity, further undermined respect for the law and contributed to civilian harm. In 2025, 64.5 per cent of funding under the Central Emergency Response Fund ($285.5 million) supported responses to conflict-driven crises.

[15] Grantham Institute – Climate Change and the Environment, *Climate Change Impact Attribution of Hurricane Melissa* (London, 2025), available at www.imperial.ac.uk/grantham/research/climate-science/modelling-tropical-cyclones/hurricane-melissa/.

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Definition **41**

Under international humanitarian law, the principle of proportionality prohibits attacks expected to cause incidental civilian death or injury, or damage to civilian objects, that would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated. The principle of precautions requires parties to take all feasible measures to avoid, and in any event minimize, incidental harm to civilians and civilian objects when conducting attacks.

Interesting Facts **41**

The obligation to respect international humanitarian law does not depend on reciprocity. If one party to an armed conflict violates IHL, this does not release the opposing party from its own obligation to respect the law. This principle helps ensure that protections for civilians and other persons affected by armed conflict do not depend on the conduct of the opposing side.

Humanitarian access

42. In 2025, access constraints severely impeded the delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection services to vulnerable people. Bureaucratic and administrative measures impeded humanitarian operations, including interference in the selection of staff and beneficiaries, such as restrictions on female national staff in Afghanistan,[16] travel and movement restrictions and arbitrary delays. Pressure from parties to conflict and other factors regarding aligning humanitarian assistance with military or political objectives further compounded access challenges. In some contexts, this included attempts to privatize aid delivery and bypass United Nations-led principled humanitarian coordination or to impose the use of military escorts for humanitarian operations. Attacks harming humanitarian convoys, personnel and assets further exacerbated access constraints and threatened the safety of humanitarian personnel.

43. International humanitarian law requires parties to conflict to allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage of humanitarian relief for civilians in need. Arbitrary restrictions, interference in humanitarian operations and the denial of access leave affected populations without adequate assistance and protection services, with severe consequences for their survival and well-being.

44. The United Nations and its humanitarian partners continued to coordinate access strategies to enable assistance in complex environments, including through engagement with relevant parties and the development of joint operating principles. Such humanitarian tools, deployed in operations in the Sudan and Ukraine, and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, among others, supported coherent negotiations, enhanced collective accountability and helped to safeguard humanitarian principles. Local and national actors, who often have critical access advantages and contextual knowledge, remained essential partners in coordinated humanitarian responses and were increasingly integrated into collective access strategies.

Protecting humanitarian personnel and assets

45. Humanitarian personnel continued to operate in environments marked by widespread violence and acute insecurity. In 2025 alone, more than 326 humanitarian personnel had reportedly been killed across 21 countries and settings,[17] bringing the number of aid workers reportedly killed over the past three years to more than 1,010, according to available data.[18] The vast majority were national and locally recruited personnel. Most fatalities occurred in a small number of highly insecure contexts. Humanitarian personnel were also subjected to arrests, detention, kidnapping and intimidation across a broader range of countries. In many contexts, reductions in funding and resources during the year constrained security risk management, including the ability to maintain a humanitarian presence close to affected communities and build trust. These trends highlight the need for parties to conflict

[16] United Nations, "Afghanistan: New restrictions on women nationals working for UN, put aid efforts at risk", 11 September 2025.

[17] Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic (the), Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo (the), Ethiopia, Haiti, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan (the), Syrian Arab Republic (the), Ukraine and Yemen and in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. See Aid Worker Security Database (provisional data retrieved on 31 March 2026). Data on incidents affecting humanitarian personnel are drawn from the Aid Worker Security Database. While the Database includes United Nations personnel engaged in humanitarian operations, figures may differ from those of the Department of Safety and Security due to different methodologies. The Department remains the authoritative source for data on United Nations security management system personnel but does not disaggregate between personnel engaged in humanitarian and non-humanitarian functions.

[18] See Aid Worker Security Database.

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Definition 42

Humanitarian access concerns the ability of humanitarian actors to reach people affected by crises and the ability of affected populations to obtain humanitarian assistance and protection. Access may be restricted by insecurity and conflict, attacks on humanitarian personnel, movement restrictions, bureaucratic or administrative measures, or interference in humanitarian operations. Maintaining humanitarian access is therefore essential to ensuring assistance can reach people in need.

DID YOU KNOW THAT 42

Humanitarian organizations use a range of methods to reduce interference by governments and armed groups in their operations. These include negotiating access with authorities and armed groups while maintaining their neutrality and independence; using needs assessments to determine who should receive assistance; monitoring distributions to detect diversion; and providing confidential ways for affected communities to report exclusion, coercion or abuse. Organizations also coordinate their responses to restrictions and may use independent monitoring when staff cannot safely reach an area. However, these measures do not always prevent interference, particularly when authorities control access, threaten local staff or demand information about aid recipients. Protecting personal data is another important concern because information collected to deliver assistance could be misused to identify or target vulnerable people

Something to Think About 42

Humanitarian assistance is intended to be provided according to need rather than used to advance political or military objectives. However, humanitarian organizations often depend on Member States and parties to conflict for funding, access and security. How can humanitarian actors preserve their neutrality and independence while still cooperating with political and military authorities when cooperation is necessary to reach affected populations?

Definition 42

Principled humanitarian action is guided by four principles: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Together, they mean providing assistance based on need, without discrimination or taking sides, while remaining independent from political or military objectives. These principles help humanitarian organizations maintain trust and access to affected populations.

Something to Think About 42

Military escorts can protect humanitarian operations, but association with armed actors may undermine neutrality, trust and humanitarian access. Before accepting an escort, organizations may assess the immediate threat, possible alternatives, community perceptions and whether the escort would endanger later operations. Under what conditions should an escort be considered a last resort?

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Did You Know That... 44

ELocalization means giving local and national organizations a meaningful role in planning, financing and leading humanitarian responses—not simply asking them to distribute supplies chosen by international agencies. Following the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, participating organizations committed to directing at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible. Progress should also be assessed by whether local groups can influence priorities, obtain funding and receive appropriate security support.

Interesting Facts 45

National and locally recruited personnel bear a particularly large share of the risks faced by humanitarian workers. The Aid Worker Security Database, which is used as a source in this report, separately tracks serious incidents affecting national and international aid workers, including killings, serious injuries, kidnappings and detentions. This distinction is important when considering humanitarian staff protection: strengthening locally led responses also requires ensuring that security resources, protections and risk-management support extend to the national and local personnel who often remain closest to affected communities.

and Member States to uphold their legal obligations to respect and protect humanitarian personnel and their assets and premises, consistent with Security Council resolution 2730 (2024), and to take forward the recommendations contained in my letter dated 22 November 2024 (S/2024/852). The Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel, launched in 2025 as a voluntary initiative, was aimed at complementing applicable legal frameworks.

Protecting medical care in conflict

46. Attacks on healthcare continued at alarming levels across multiple conflicts, with pervasive impunity. Attacks on health facilities, including maternity wards, disrupted the delivery of essential health services, undermined disease outbreak management and contributed to rising malnutrition. Such attacks also worsened already high rates of maternal mortality in conflict-affected and fragile settings. In 2025, 1,358 attacks affecting healthcare services were recorded across 19 countries, resulting in 1,981 deaths and 1,168 injuries. Most incidents affected health facilities (932) or transport (411), while 613 incidents harmed health personnel, and 495 affected patients. Heavy weapons were used in 62 per cent of attacks; obstruction of healthcare was documented in 31 per cent of cases, and psychological violence was noted in 20 per cent of incidents.

Impact of urban warfare on civilians

47. The use of explosive weapons in populated areas remained the leading cause of civilian casualties in armed conflict, with 2025 continuing to see alarming levels of civilian harm resulting from their use. Large-scale use of heavy explosive weapons with wide-area effects in densely populated areas led to civilian deaths and injuries and extensive destruction of housing, medical facilities and schools, as well as water and energy infrastructure. Widespread use of such weapons prolongs displacement, increases the cost of reconstruction, limits access to essential services and disrupts livelihoods. Around 90 Member States that had endorsed the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas took important steps, including the adoption of national policies and guidelines related to explosive weapons in populated areas. National and international implementation efforts must be significantly accelerated and focus more on refraining from the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects when fighting in populated areas.

B. Climate crisis

48. Climate hazards are becoming more frequent and intense, increasing uncertainty about where and when humanitarian needs will arise. In 2025, climate shocks compounded crises across fragile contexts, including cyclones in Madagascar and Mozambique, monsoon flooding in Pakistan, drought in Somalia, wildfires in the Syrian Arab Republic and a super typhoon in the Philippines. Hurricane Melissa, which affected Cuba, Haiti and Jamaica, was among the most powerful storms recorded at landfall.

49. In fragile and conflict-affected contexts, limited safety nets and institutional capacity mean that even moderate climate shocks can trigger or prolong crisis dynamics, accelerate displacement and deepen protection risks. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 3 of every 4 refugees or people displaced by conflict, violence or persecution are currently living in countries facing high to extreme exposure to climate-related hazards, while weather-

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Definition **45**

Security Council resolution 2730 (2024), adopted on 24 May 2024, focuses on the protection of humanitarian personnel and United Nations and associated personnel in armed conflict. It calls on Member States to respect and protect humanitarian personnel, including national and locally recruited personnel, and calls on States and parties to armed conflict to respect applicable international humanitarian law. The resolution also emphasizes accountability for violations against humanitarian personnel and requests continued United Nations reporting and recommendations on measures to strengthen their protection.

Definition **45**

The Declaration for the Protection of Humanitarian Personnel was launched on 21 September 2025 and has been endorsed by over 110 countries. Rather than creating a new legally binding treaty, the Declaration is a political commitment intended to strengthen implementation of existing protections. Its commitments include promoting respect for international humanitarian law, facilitating safe and unhindered humanitarian access, strengthening protection for international, national and local humanitarian personnel, and pursuing greater accountability and justice when incidents occur.

Something to Think About **46**

AAn attack on a hospital may kill or injure people immediately and also interrupt surgery, vaccination, maternity care and treatment for chronic illnesses. Although information about the longer-term effects of attacks on health facilities remains limited, one study conducted during the conflict in Syria found significant reductions in outpatient care, trauma consultations and facility-based births that continued for many days after an attack. Such findings demonstrate the importance of collecting data not only on attacks themselves, but also on their effects on access to health services. The WHO already collects information on attacks through its Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care. How could this and other existing data collection efforts be strengthened to provide humanitarian organizations with more comprehensive information about the immediate and longer-term consequences of attacks, enabling them to make better decisions about where to deploy medical staff and resources, how to maintain essential health services, and how to protect health workers and patients in active conflict zones?

Definition **47**

Explosive weapons with wide-area effects are weapons whose explosive effects may extend over a large area. This can result from the large destructive radius of an individual munition, the inaccuracy of its delivery system, or the delivery of multiple munitions across a wide area. Examples can include large bombs and missiles, artillery, mortars, rockets and multi-barrel rocket launchers. When used in populated areas, these characteristics create particularly serious risks for civilians and civilian objects.

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Interesting Facts **47**

The humanitarian effects of damage to civilian infrastructure can extend far beyond the immediate site and time of an attack. These are sometimes called "indirect" or "reverberating" effects. Because essential services are interconnected, damage to electricity infrastructure can disrupt water supply, sanitation and health care, while damage to other critical infrastructure can similarly create cascading consequences for civilian populations over the short, medium and long term.

Did You Know That... **47**

The Political Declaration on Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas was formally adopted in Dublin on 18 November 2022. It is a political commitment rather than a legally binding treaty. States that endorse it commit to measures aimed at reducing civilian harm, including reviewing and improving military policies and practices, strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law, collecting and sharing relevant data, assisting victims, and restricting or refraining from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas when their use may be expected to cause harm to civilians or civilian objects.

Something to Think About **49**

People displaced by conflict may escape one immediate danger only to live in areas highly exposed to floods, droughts, storms or other climate-related hazards. How should humanitarian responses address situations where displacement, conflict and climate risk overlap? Should refugee-hosting and displacement responses include longer-term investment in climate adaptation and disaster-risk reduction, and if so, how should these measures be financed?

related disasters have caused around 250 million internal displacements over the past decade, equivalent to about 70,000 displacements every day.[19]

50. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs operationalized the Central Emergency Response Fund climate action account in late 2023 as a dedicated financing window to channel additional resources, including climate finance, through the Fund's needs-based allocation model. In 2024 and 2025, nearly $20 million was allocated through the climate action account to support climate-related action in vulnerable settings. These allocations enabled life-saving interventions that also strengthened resilience to climate shocks, including through approaches with potential for wider application.[20]

C. Food insecurity and famine

51. In 2025, the number of people facing emergency food security conditions based on the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) (IPC phase 4) reached over 39 million in 32 countries or territories. In six countries and territories, 1.4 million people experienced conditions classified as Catastrophe (IPC phase 5), with famine confirmed in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza Governorate) and several localities of the Sudan, while catastrophic levels of food insecurity were projected in parts of Haiti, Mali, South Sudan and Yemen. All six countries or territories classified as Catastrophe were affected by conflict and insecurity, and over 50 per cent of all those experiencing high levels of acute hunger were in conflict-affected and insecure contexts.

52. Food crises intensified in 2025 as conflict, climate shocks and economic pressures deepened protracted emergencies. Over 80 per cent of people facing acute food insecurity were concentrated in 33 countries experiencing long-term crises. Funding declined sharply, returning to 2016–2017 levels, despite the doubling of needs.

D. Gender equality and women and girls

53. In conflict-affected settings and fragile health systems, women and girls face specific and heightened risks, with gaps in sexual and reproductive health services, including emergency maternal care, which resulted in preventable deaths. Since 2022, casualties among women and children have quadrupled, while conflict-related sexual violence has risen by 87 per cent (see S/2025/556).

54. Services related to gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health face deep funding shortfalls. In 2025, only 23.6 per cent of the $1.12 billion required for services to prevent and respond to gender-based violence were funded.[21] As a result, one third of women's organizations reported programme suspensions or closures, with over 40 per cent forced to close or scale back.[22] For example, in the Central African Republic, service coverage fell from 44 per cent to 22 per cent from

[19] See www.unhcr.org/media/no-escape-ii-way-forward.
[20] For further information about the Central Emergency Response Fund climate action account, see https://cerf.un.org/about-us/climate-action.
[21] Available at https://fts.unocha.org/ (accessed on 9 March 2026).
[22] United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), "At risk and underfunded: how funding cuts are threatening efforts to end violence against women and girls", October 2025.

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Definition 50

The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) is the United Nations global emergency response fund, established by the General Assembly in 2005 and managed by the Emergency Relief Coordinator. CERF provides humanitarian funding through two main windows: Rapid Response, which supports time-critical life-saving action when emergencies arise or deteriorate, and Underfunded Emergencies, which supports life-saving activities in crises facing significant funding gaps. CERF pools contributions from donors so that resources can be allocated according to humanitarian needs and priorities.

Something to Think About 51

Conflict can contribute to food insecurity by disrupting agriculture, markets, livelihoods, infrastructure and humanitarian access. At the same time, severe food insecurity can deepen instability and displacement. How should humanitarian responses address hunger when its drivers are linked to ongoing conflict? What measures can Member States take to protect food systems and humanitarian access without politicizing the provision of food assistance?

Something to Think About 52

PrWhen new emergencies compete for funding with long-running crises, humanitarian organizations may be forced to reduce food rations, limit health services or suspend programmes that help displaced people rebuild their lives. If funding continues to decline, essential assistance could collapse in some communities. As part of the humanitarian reset, aid organizations are concentrating limited resources on the most urgent life-saving needs, seeking more flexible funding and working with development organizations to reduce long-term dependence on emergency aid. The UN's Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) also has a special funding mechanism for underfunded emergencies that receive insufficient donor attention. Given these existing efforts, what more should Member States and humanitarian organizations do to prevent essential assistance from collapsing in long-running crises while still responding to new emergencies?

Definition 54

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to harmful acts committed against a person because of their gender. It can include physical, sexual or psychological harm, threats, coercion or restrictions on a person's freedom, and can occur in public or private. Although anyone can experience GBV, women and girls are disproportionately affected.

DID YOU KNOW THAT 54

Women-led organizations provide essential humanitarian assistance, including shelters, medical care, counselling and protection for survivors of gender-based violence. Yet these organizations have long received only a small share of international aid. In 2021–2022, just 0.2% of global development assistance supported programmes to prevent violence against women and girls. Recent reductions in foreign aid by major donor governments have made the situation worse. In 2025, the United States terminated approximately $377 million in grants to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) for maternal health care, protection from violence and other life-saving services in crisis-affected countries. A UN Women survey of 411 women's organizations operating in humanitarian crises found that 51% had already suspended programmes and 47% expected to close within six months if funding shortages continued. The consequences extend beyond organizational closures: UNFPA reported that funding cuts in 2025 forced more than 250 safe spaces for women and girls to close and left over 1,000 health facilities and mobile medical teams closed or at risk of closure. These cuts threaten the survival of organizations that many women and girls depend on for essential assistance.

2024 to 2025, and in Mali, only 28 per cent of localities offer services to address gender-based violence.[23]

55. Women-led organizations continue to lead gender-responsive humanitarian action, with more than 600 partner organizations working across 60 countries within the humanitarian system.[24] According to data from the One Grant Management System, in 2025, 14 per cent of overall humanitarian funding was directed to women's organizations through country-based pooled funds, up from 11 per cent in 2024. Through the underfunded emergencies window of the Central Emergency Response Fund, $10 million was allocated to address protection risks and widening inequalities affecting women and girls.

E. Centrality of protection

Protection in humanitarian responses

56. The Global Protection Cluster estimated that 395 million people across 23 countries were exposed to protection risks, largely driven by conflict, including harm to civilians and civilian infrastructure, abductions, arbitrary detention, movement restrictions and forced displacement.[25] Despite funding shortfalls, the United Nations and its partners prioritized maintaining critical protection services. However, in several contexts, funding shortfalls meant that programmes were scaled down or suspended, weakening early warning and protection monitoring capacities.

Child protection

57. Child protection remained a core humanitarian priority. Children continued to bear a particularly heavy toll from conflict, displacement, family separation and the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Grave violations persisted, including recruitment and use, sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, killing and maiming and the denial of humanitarian access. In the 2025 report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/79/878-S/2025/247), a 25 per cent increase in grave violations against children was recorded compared to 2023, as well as a 35 per cent rise in cases of sexual violence against children, with many subjected to multiple violations.[26] Analysis by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) further showed that explosive weapons accounted for over 69 per cent of verified child casualties in 2024.[27]

58. Humanitarian partners continued to engage with relevant parties to prevent and address grave violations and to scale up child protection programming, including case management and referral services, family tracing, community-based protection, mental health and psychosocial support and survivor-centred services for children. Coordination efforts also prioritized child-sensitive explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance, alongside sustained humanitarian diplomacy to secure safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access to provide children with essential services.

[23] Humanitarian Action, "Under fire and under pressure: what happens when humanitarian action is hindered", 8 December 2025.
[24] UN-Women, "UN-Women highlights 2024–2025", 2025.
[25] The estimate is based on extensive monitoring of protection risks at the subnational level undertaken by the Global Protection Cluster. See https://globalprotectioncluster.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/briefing_note_annual_donor_meeting_2025.pdf.
[26] Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, "Children affected by grave violations: trends and developments 2024", 2025.
[27] See www.unicef.org/media/176371/file/EWIPA_FactSheet_Digital_3.pdf.

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Definition **55**

Country-Based Pooled Funds (CBPFs) are humanitarian financing mechanisms managed by OCHA in crisis-affected countries. They pool donor contributions into single, unearmarked funds that can finance humanitarian responses according to priorities identified at the country level. Funding is directly available to United Nations agencies, national and international NGOs, and Red Cross/Red Crescent organizations. CBPFs can therefore also provide an important mechanism for directing humanitarian financing to local and national organizations.

Definition **56**

The "centrality of protection" means that protecting the rights, safety and dignity of people affected by humanitarian crises should be a central concern of humanitarian decision-making and response, rather than protection being treated only as a separate specialized activity. It requires humanitarian actors to consider protection risks when designing and implementing humanitarian action across different sectors.

Something to Think About **56**

Protection activities such as early warning and monitoring may help identify risks before further harm occurs, but their impact can be less immediately visible than the delivery of food, shelter or medical assistance. When humanitarian funding is insufficient, how should Member States balance funding for immediate material assistance with protection activities intended to prevent or reduce future harm?

Definition **57**

The United Nations monitors six grave violations against children in armed conflict: killing and maiming; recruitment or use of children by armed forces or armed groups; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks against schools or hospitals; abduction; and denial of humanitarian access for children. These violations form the basis of the United Nations monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict.

Something to Think About **57**

Children can face particular risks from explosive weapons, including death and injury as well as longer-term consequences when homes, schools, hospitals and essential services are targeted and damaged. What measures could Member States and humanitarian actors take to reduce children's exposure to explosive weapons and their consequences? How should child protection be incorporated into humanitarian responses in areas affected by explosive ordnance?

Protection against sexual exploitation and abuse

59. Important progress has been made by Inter-Agency Standing Committee partners in strengthening system-wide capacity to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse was further strengthened through humanitarian coordinators and field-level inter-agency coordination, with most operations supported by dedicated networks and capacity, particularly in high-risk contexts. Common standards and procedures were further advanced, strengthening prevention, reporting and access to assistance for victims and survivors.

60. However, this progress remains fragile. Funding reductions in 2025 significantly weakened system-wide capacity to ensure protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Agency-specific teams dedicated to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment had to be reduced, coordinator roles eliminated and country-level victim support, such as networks for tackling gender-based violence, scaled back. Sustained and predictable resourcing will be essential to safeguard these capacities and ensure that humanitarian action consistently upholds protection standards and accountability to affected populations.

F. Displacement

61. Global forced displacement linked to conflict declined for the first time in a decade, representing 5.9 million fewer people remaining displaced than at the end of 2024, driven by significant refugee returns and the return of internally displaced person. Many of these returns – notably in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan – occurred under adverse conditions, leading to difficult and unsustainable reintegration. At the same time, several regions saw complex, mixed movements of refugees, migrants and others on the move, creating humanitarian needs along movement routes and in transit locations.

62. Worldwide, 9.8 million people remained displaced due to disasters at the end of 2024,[28] and 67.8 million people remained internally displaced by conflict and violence by mid-2025.[29] The Sudan remained the country experiencing the largest internal displacement crisis for the second consecutive year, with 10 million people remaining forcibly displaced (1.5 million fewer people than in 2024). The global refugee population fell slightly to 42.5 million from the record number of 43.7 million reached in mid-2024.

63. Conflict and violence continued to be the predominant drivers of displacement. In the first six months of 2025 alone, at least 5.1 million people were forced to flee their homes. Conflict and violence in just five countries – the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1.5 million), the Sudan (518,900), Ukraine (480,500), South Sudan (421,800) and Myanmar (391,400) – accounted for 65 per cent of all new displacements in 2025.[30] During the same period, natural hazard-induced disasters caused an estimated 18 million to 20 million internal displacements, largely due to major floods and storms in Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines.

G. Adverse consequences of counter-terrorism measures

64. In the wake of the adoption of Security Council resolutions 2615 (2021), 2664 (2022) and 2761 (2024), several Member States extended humanitarian exemptions

[28] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, Global Internal Displacement Database, available at www.internal-displacement.org/database/displacement-data/.
[29] UNHCR, "Mid-year trends 2025".
[30] Ibid.

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Definition **59**

Within the United Nations system, "sexual exploitation" means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes, including profiting monetarily, socially or politically from another person's sexual exploitation. "Sexual abuse" means an actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Sexual exploitation and abuse constitute serious misconduct for United Nations staff.

Something to Think About **59**

Humanitarian organizations are intended to protect and assist crisis-affected populations, but misconduct by humanitarian personnel can itself cause serious harm and undermine trust in humanitarian operations. How can humanitarian organizations create reporting and investigation mechanisms that are safe and accessible to affected populations while protecting victims and survivors from retaliation or further harm? How should organizations balance confidentiality, due process and accountability when allegations are made?

Something to Think About **60**

When humanitarian budgets are reduced, functions such as safeguarding, monitoring and victim support may compete for funding with food, shelter and medical assistance. Should protection from sexual exploitation and abuse be treated as a non-negotiable core cost of humanitarian operations rather than an activity that can be reduced when funding declines? How could donors and humanitarian organizations ensure that accountability systems remain adequately resourced during funding crises?

Definition **61**

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are people who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, particularly as a result of armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations or natural or human-made disasters, but who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border. Unlike refugees, IDPs remain within their country and do not acquire a separate international legal status as a result of their displacement.

Something to Think About **61**

A decline in the number of displaced people does not necessarily mean that displacement has been sustainably resolved. People may return to areas where housing, livelihoods, essential services or security remain inadequate. What conditions should exist before a refugee or internally displaced person's return can be considered sustainable? How should humanitarian and development actors support communities after people return?

to domestic asset-freezing measures, including those related to counter-terrorism sanctions regimes.

65. However, other counter-terrorism measures that do not fall under such humanitarian exemptions continued to expose humanitarian organizations and personnel, as well as their donors, banks and contractors, to operational and legal risks, which led to private sector de-risking and restrictive donor practices. In some countries, administrative measures, including regulations applied specifically to non-governmental organizations, restricted the ability of humanitarian organizations to reach people in need in areas where non-State armed groups operate.

IV. Humanitarian response: developments in operations

A. Improving humanitarian coordination and response

66. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee accelerated efforts to simplify the humanitarian programme cycle, digitize planning tools and strengthen the evidence base for severity analysis. Humanitarian organizations also continued to strengthen, simplify and adapt humanitarian coordination mechanisms to ensure effective, agile and people-centred responses. Emphasis was placed on enhancing leadership, the inclusion of local actors, coordination, accountability and the strategic prioritization of crisis responses. Cluster simplification advanced with the decision to move from 11 clusters and four areas of responsibility to 8 clusters, in an effort to reduce fragmentation and strengthen accountability. Area-based coordination and complementarity among humanitarian actors were further strengthened to support context-specific, inclusive and locally led responses.

67. In highly volatile and complex environments, such as in the Sudan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, coordination mechanisms were further adapted to remain flexible and responsive. Continued refinement of area-based and subnational coordination approaches supported more localized humanitarian action – including in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Nigeria, Somalia and Ukraine – strengthening linkages between strategic decision-making and front-line implementation to better meet the needs of affected communities.

68. Cash and voucher assistance maintained a central role in humanitarian responses, with local actors fully involved. Cash coordination through cash working groups continued to be critical in guiding humanitarian responses, bolstering predictability, transparency and accountability for cash-based assistance across operations and in alignment with the preferences of affected people. Where feasible and aligned with market conditions and people's choices, multipurpose cash-based assistance enhanced cost-effectiveness and responsiveness across the humanitarian programme cycle, reinforcing efforts to tailor assistance to the priorities expressed by affected populations. Localization continued to expand, with 46 per cent of cash working groups worldwide co-chaired by local or national actors.

B. Emergency preparedness and response

69. In 2025, emergency response mechanisms coordinated by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to mobilize partners and expertise to support preparedness and response. United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination teams were deployed to Ecuador following a major oil spill, to Jamaica after Hurricane Melissa, to Myanmar after an earthquake and to Sri Lanka in response to flooding, providing rapid coordination support to Governments and partners.

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Interesting Facts 65

Security Council resolution 2664 (2022) established a humanitarian exemption to asset-freeze measures imposed under United Nations sanctions regimes. It permits specified humanitarian actors to provide funds, goods and services necessary for humanitarian assistance and activities supporting basic human needs without violating those asset freezes. Resolution 2761 (2024) subsequently confirmed the continued application of the exemption to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida sanctions regime.

Something to Think About 65

Counter-terrorism measures seek to prevent resources from reaching designated individuals and groups, but humanitarian organizations may need to operate in areas controlled by or containing those same actors in order to reach civilians. How can Member States design counter-terrorism measures that prevent the diversion of humanitarian resources while avoiding unnecessary restrictions on principled humanitarian assistance? What safeguards could balance these two objectives?

Definition 66

Humanitarian clusters are coordination structures that bring together organizations working in particular areas of humanitarian response, such as health, shelter, food security and protection. They help humanitarian actors coordinate activities, clarify responsibilities and identify gaps in a response. Cluster leadership is shared across designated United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations depending on the sector.

Something to Think About 66

The current humanitarian coordination system divides assistance into 11 clusters and four areas of responsibility, bringing together organizations with specialized expertise in areas such as health, food security, shelter, and water and sanitation. This helps organizations divide responsibilities and avoid duplication, but having separate coordination structures for each area can also increase administrative work and slow decision-making. One objective of the humanitarian reset is to simplify coordination so assistance can be delivered more quickly and effectively. How can the humanitarian system simplify coordination mechanisms without losing the specialized expertise needed to respond to different humanitarian needs? And how can organizations determine whether these reforms are actually improving the speed and quality of assistance by shortening delivery delays, identifying communities that are not receiving services they need, preventing duplication, giving local responders a stronger voice, and ensuring that complaints from affected communities lead to changes in humanitarian programmes?

Definition 68

Cash and voucher assistance (CVA) refers to humanitarian programmes that provide cash transfers and/or vouchers for goods or services directly to crisis-affected people. Unlike in-kind assistance, CVA can allow people greater flexibility to prioritize their own needs. Where markets and operational conditions permit, it can provide an effective and efficient form of assistance while supporting people's choice and potentially stimulating local markets.

to domestic asset-freezing measures, including those related to counter-terrorism sanctions regimes.

65. However, other counter-terrorism measures that do not fall under such humanitarian exemptions continued to expose humanitarian organizations and personnel, as well as their donors, banks and contractors, to operational and legal risks, which led to private sector de-risking and restrictive donor practices. In some countries, administrative measures, including regulations applied specifically to non-governmental organizations, restricted the ability of humanitarian organizations to reach people in need in areas where non-State armed groups operate.

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Definition **69**

The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system is an OCHA emergency-response mechanism designed primarily to support the first phase of sudden-onset emergencies. UNDAC teams can deploy at very short notice and consist of experienced emergency managers who support national authorities, United Nations teams and international responders with coordination, needs assessment and information management. Their role is to support and strengthen response capacity rather than replace the affected State's own disaster-response authorities.

70. The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group enhanced the readiness of urban search and rescue teams through classification exercises and training. An international earthquake response exercise in South Africa improved interoperability, while training sessions in Canada, Qatar and the Russian Federation expanded regional capacity.

71. The Standby Partnerships Programme provided surge capacity for operations implemented by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, enabling the deployment of 45 experts to 17 offices in response to new and escalating emergencies, including in Lebanon, the Sudan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Deployments supported key functions, such as information management, communications, civil-military coordination and humanitarian access.

C. Optimizing humanitarian financing

Trends in humanitarian funding

72. Total reported humanitarian funding fell from around $37 billion in 2024 to $26 billion in 2025, while funding for United Nations-coordinated plans dropped from around half of requirements in 2024 (50 per cent, or $24.93 billion) to roughly one third in 2025 (35 per cent, or $15.84 billion).

73. The impact of funding shortfalls was felt most acutely by those facing the most severe risks, including forcibly displaced people and people living in areas where high operating costs and access constraints already limit the margin for adaptation. In 2025, the top three appeals (for the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Ukraine and the Sudan) accounted for 32 per cent of total reported funding, up from 24 per cent in 2024.

Humanitarian pooled funds

74. In 2025, donors contributed over $1.3 billion to humanitarian pooled funds managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, including $436 million to the Central Emergency Response Fund and $886 million to country-based and regional pooled funds. Together, these mechanisms allocated $1.46 billion to humanitarian partners across 38 countries and territories, supporting prioritized responses in some of the most severe crises.

75. Where both mechanisms supported the same emergency, humanitarian coordinators ensured complementarity between the Central Emergency Response Fund and country-based pooled funds, alongside bilateral financing. In the Sudan – the largest recipient of pooled funding in 2025 – $219 million was allocated through the Central Emergency Response Fund and the Sudan Humanitarian Fund, helping to sustain humanitarian operations across sectors and geographical areas.

76. In a year of severe funding constraints, pooled funds played a critical role in enabling coordinated and prioritized humanitarian responses. Their complementary use supported the objectives of the humanitarian reset by directing limited resources towards the most urgent life-saving needs and strengthening collective action across the humanitarian system.

77. Country-based and regional pooled funds remained the primary pooled financing mechanisms for large, ongoing humanitarian operations at the country level. They supported coordinated responses and enabled action by a wide range of humanitarian partners, including national and local organizations, to contribute to the response. Where needs exceed available resources, allocations from the Central

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Definition **70**

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) is a global network operating under the United Nations umbrella that develops standards and coordination practices for international urban search-and-rescue assistance following disasters such as earthquakes. Its classification system assesses whether international urban search-and-rescue teams meet established INSARAG standards, helping affected countries understand the capabilities of incoming teams during an emergency.

Something to Think About **72**

United Nations-coordinated humanitarian appeals depend heavily on voluntary contributions from donor governments. However, some governments have concerns about providing funding through UN agencies rather than directly supporting humanitarian projects. These include administrative costs, delays in delivering assistance, the risk that funds may be diverted, and difficulties verifying how money is spent when several organizations are involved in delivering aid. Donors may also prefer to control where their contributions go by restricting them to particular countries or programmes, a practice known as "earmarking." Although this gives donors greater control over their contributions, it limits the UN's ability to redirect funding when new emergencies arise or neglected crises become more severe. Another source of tension is the UN's "single audit principle," under which UN organizations are generally audited through their own established oversight arrangements rather than by each donor government's auditors. How can the UN address donor concerns about transparency, accountability and the effective use of funds while preserving the flexibility needed to respond to humanitarian emergencies?

Something to Think About **73**

Humanitarian funding can become concentrated in a relatively small number of high-profile crises, while other emergencies may struggle to attract comparable donor attention. To what extent should donors retain discretion over which crises they fund, and to what extent should humanitarian financing be allocated collectively according to assessed levels of need? What mechanisms could help reduce disparities between highly visible and comparatively neglected crises?

Emergency Response Fund can complement these mechanisms by enabling rapid scale-up and reinforcing critical response activities.

78. The Central Emergency Response Fund continued to play a distinct role in humanitarian financing. It provided rapid funding for sudden-onset emergencies, supported responses in underfunded crises and increasingly enabled anticipatory action ahead of predicted shocks. In 2025, 64.5 per cent of such funding ($285.5 million) supported conflict-driven crises. Allocations from the Fund also helped to reinforce system-wide priorities, including protection, gender equality and climate-related responses.

79. Country-based and regional pooled funds also supported efforts to strengthen locally led humanitarian action. By providing flexible funding to a diverse range of partners and directing resources through coordinated decision-making at the country level, pooled funds helped to ensure that the limited resources were allocated to the most urgent priorities.

D. Advancing anticipatory approaches

80. In 2025, the United Nations remained the largest contributor to anticipatory financing. Prearranged resources channelled through pooled funds managed by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs increased by 13 per cent to $151 million. By the end of the year, the United Nations and partners had 27 coordinated anticipatory action frameworks across 21 countries addressing natural hazards and disease outbreaks. These frameworks enabled earlier, more coordinated assistance based on national early warning systems and strengthened collaboration with Governments through shared triggers, harmonized operating procedures and joint targeting.

81. Nine such frameworks were activated during the reporting period. They enabled support to vulnerable people and communities ahead of droughts in Afghanistan and Guatemala; tropical cyclones in Cuba, Haiti, Mozambique and the Philippines; floods in Burkina Faso and Nigeria; and an outbreak of cholera in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Partners were able to provide cash-based assistance, early warnings, evacuation support and essential services to millions of people ahead of predicted shocks, demonstrating the growing reach and operational value of anticipatory systems. In several contexts, anticipatory action also supported resilience-building measures that helped communities to reduce future humanitarian needs and facilitated transition pathways.

82. The Central Emergency Response Fund pre-arranged $138 million and released $38 million for anticipatory action frameworks. Country-based and regional pooled funds in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso and Nigeria prearranged an additional $13 million and released $10 million. Active frameworks also mobilized an estimated $21 million in cofinancing from United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, reflecting strengthened burden-sharing and improved predictability.

83. Evaluations in 2025 showed that forecast-triggered cash delivered ahead of floods improves food security and psychosocial well-being. Early, coordinated and multipurpose life-saving cash-based assistance further enhances dignity and resilience while protecting lives. Joint analyses by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme highlight gains in speed and cost efficiency when financing and responses are prearranged. The lessons learned underscore the importance of national ownership and operational readiness.

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Something to Think About **78**

Anticipatory action can involve transferring cash before a predicted flood, reinforcing temporary shelters ahead of a storm or moving livestock before severe drought. These measures require agreed forecast thresholds and funds that can be released quickly. How should agencies assess whether the action was timely, reached exposed households and reduced losses, including when a forecasted event is less severe than expected?

Definition **80**

An anticipatory action framework sets out in advance how humanitarian actors will act when forecasts indicate that a particular hazard is likely to occur. It links agreed triggers or thresholds to pre-arranged financing and pre-agreed humanitarian actions, allowing assistance to be delivered before the predicted impacts of a crisis fully materialize.

Something to Think About **83**

Anticipatory humanitarian action can depend on international financing and technical expertise, but effective early action also requires national early-warning systems, institutions and response capacity. How can international organizations strengthen anticipatory action without creating long-term dependence on external systems? What responsibilities should affected States, donors and international humanitarian organizations each have for financing and maintaining preparedness capacity?

E. Humanitarian-development collaboration and linkages to peace

84. Collaboration between humanitarian, development and peace actors is a core element of the Secretary-General's UN80 Initiative. Under workstream 3, the shared platform initiative seeks to foster collaborative leadership across the following pillars: the co-location of resident coordinators' offices and those of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs at the country level; the establishment of joined-up performance management and accountability frameworks for multi-hatted resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators; and the advancement of joint strategies for nationally owned transitions and advocacy in crisis-affected settings. These efforts connect with broader inter-agency work on durable solutions for forcibly displaced populations, aimed at simplifying coordination, strengthening country-level leadership and improving system-wide efficiency.

85. The Joint Steering Committee (co-chaired by the Development Coordination Office, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Peacebuilding and Peace Support Office and the United Nations Development Programme) prioritized support to resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators in eight countries transitioning out of internationally led humanitarian coordination arrangements: Cameroon, Colombia, Eritrea, Iraq, Libya, Nigeria, Pakistan and Zimbabwe. Support was focused on addressing system-wide gaps identified through calls for assistance from resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators, including development engagement and financing, political and peacebuilding capacity, inter-agency coordination and transition-related messaging.

F. Accountability to affected populations

86. Accountability to affected populations is a core element of principled and effective humanitarian response. In 2025, this was further operationalized through the adaptation of the humanitarian programme cycle to be more responsive to people's stated priorities and preferences and to assess response-wide decisions against these. Entities continued to systematically roll-out the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's collective feedback standards and taxonomy, ensuring that community feedback was systematically recorded, categorized and analysed in a harmonized way to inform humanitarian responses.

87. Tools and advocacy developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, including the collective Accountability to Affected Populations Framework, were adapted to strengthen community engagement and response-wide feedback mechanisms in support of humanitarian coordinators. In Afghanistan, community feedback informed efforts to make humanitarian services more accessible, gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive by improving information access and increasing the availability of female service providers. Across contexts, community voices more directly shaped humanitarian decision-making, leading to responses that better reflected people's needs, preferences and protection concerns.

G. Reinforcing local action

88. In 2025, country-based and regional pooled funds strengthened humanitarian coordination and local action by enabling humanitarian coordinators to prioritize needs collectively, to direct resources to best-placed responders and to support coherent, cost-efficient interventions. The country-based and regional pooled funds supported local and national actors in leading delivery where they had a comparative

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Definition **84**

Humanitarian-development-peace collaboration seeks to strengthen links and complementary action between humanitarian, development and peace actors in crisis-affected settings. While humanitarian action addresses immediate needs and suffering, stronger collaboration with development and peace actors can help address underlying drivers of need, risk and vulnerability and support longer-term resilience. Such collaboration should respect the distinct mandates of different actors and safeguard humanitarian principles and humanitarian space.

Something to Think About **85**

International humanitarian coordination mechanisms are generally intended to respond to exceptional needs rather than operate indefinitely. Ending or reducing them too early could leave gaps in assistance, while maintaining them for too long could weaken national ownership or create dependency on international structures. What criteria should determine when a country is ready to transition away from internationally led humanitarian coordination? How should responsibility be transferred without leaving vulnerable populations without adequate support?

Definition **86**

Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is a commitment by humanitarian actors to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to and being held to account by the people they seek to assist. In practice, this includes enabling affected people to participate in decisions that affect them, providing accessible information and establishing mechanisms through which communities can provide feedback and raise concerns about humanitarian assistance.

Something to Think About **87**

During humanitarian emergencies, aid organizations often have to make rapid decisions about what assistance people need. However, affected communities may have different priorities from those identified by international organizations or donors. How can humanitarian actors balance their assessments of need with the stated preferences of affected communities? Humanitarian organizations can consult community members, provide ways for people to report problems or suggest changes in person, by telephone or through local community representatives, and hold follow-up meetings to discuss how assistance is being delivered. For example, community feedback may reveal that a food distribution point is too far away for older people or persons with disabilities, or that distribution times are unsafe for women. How can humanitarian organizations ensure that women, persons with disabilities, minorities and other groups whose views may be overlooked are heard? What evidence would demonstrate that community feedback actually influenced decisions about the assistance provided, rather than simply being collected?

advantage, directing over 55 per cent of total allocations to local and national partners.

89. The funds adopted a "local partner first" approach, while recognizing the complementary role of United Nations and international non-governmental organizations and establishing standards for equitable partnerships. This approach included tailored consortium models, measures to support partner safety and visibility and the equitable sharing of programme support costs, in line with humanitarian principles and agreed system-wide rules.

H. Mental health and psychosocial support

90. Mental health and psychosocial support remained a critical component of humanitarian responses as conflict, displacement and repeated shocks continued to heighten psychological distress among affected populations. Inter-agency analysis shows that interventions related to mental health and psychosocial support strengthen coping capacities, improve treatment adherence and enhance community cohesion while contributing to broader health, education and protection outcomes.[31]

91. Despite growing needs, mental health and psychosocial support services faced significant funding constraints in 2025, threatening both continuity and coverage. In response, humanitarian partners prioritized integrating mental health and psychosocial support across sectors and expanded use of the minimum service package to reinforce coordination and accountability. Approximately $10 million was allocated from the Central Emergency Response Fund to mental health and psychosocial support programmes. These efforts reflected a shift towards embedding mental health and psychosocial support as a foundational element in humanitarian action, while underscoring the need to sustain services amid ongoing financial pressures.

V. Recommendations

92. **On the basis of the foregoing, the Secretary-General recommends the following:**

(a) **Member States, parties to armed conflict and humanitarian organizations should promote full respect for and adherence to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence to ensure that people in need receive humanitarian assistance without discrimination, interference or politicization;**

(b) **Member States and parties to conflict must take tangible action to protect civilians, including by complying with their obligations under international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law, as applicable;**

(c) **Member States and parties to conflict must allow and facilitate rapid, unhindered, safe and sustained access to and for impartial humanitarian relief, including medical care, at scale and remove barriers and constraints impeding such access, including administrative and counter-terrorism measures that may unnecessarily restrict humanitarian operations;**

[31] Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings and others, "Advocacy paper: MHPSS in humanitarian action – a 2025 multi-agency resource", 2025.

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Something to Think About **89**

Local and national organizations may have stronger knowledge of affected communities, established relationships and the ability to remain after international responders leave. However, international organizations may provide additional financing, specialist expertise or capacity for large-scale operations. How should humanitarian funding balance a preference for local responders with the need to select organizations best able to deliver assistance safely and effectively? What would an "equitable partnership" between local and international organizations look like in practice?

Definition **90**

Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) is a broad term for any type of support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and/or prevent or treat mental health conditions. In humanitarian emergencies, MHPSS can range from strengthening community and family support and providing basic psychosocial assistance to focused psychological interventions and specialized mental health services.

Something to Think About **91**

Mental health and psychosocial support may compete for limited humanitarian funding with immediately life-saving needs such as food, water, shelter and emergency medical care. Should MHPSS be treated as a core component of emergency response from the beginning of a crisis, or should it receive greater priority once immediate survival needs have been stabilized? How can humanitarian actors avoid creating mental health services that disappear when short-term emergency funding ends?

(d) Member States and parties to conflict are called upon to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas where civilian harm is expected and to advance implementation of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas;

(e) Member States must redouble efforts to end impunity, strengthen accountability mechanisms and investigate and ensure accountability for alleged breaches of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including those committed against civilians and United Nations and humanitarian and medical personnel, assets and premises, including attacks on healthcare;

(f) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should advance and protect the rights and health of women and girls in humanitarian action, including by scaling up the prevention and mitigation of and response to gender-based violence, and should ensure that local women's organizations are represented in humanitarian decision-making and provide them with adequate, predictable and flexible funding;

(g) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should scale up efforts to prevent, mitigate and respond to gender-based violence, including sexual violence;

(h) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should scale up efforts to anticipate, prevent, mitigate and address disaster risks and impacts, including the adverse effects of climate change, and support adaptation and resilience-building through preparedness, response and recovery, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings, including through mechanisms that reach the people and communities that are most vulnerable to and affected by natural hazards and the climate crisis;

(i) Member States, parties to conflict, the United Nations, humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organizations and other relevant actors should take urgent steps to prevent famine, to end and prevent the use of starvation as a method of warfare and to scale up actions for immediate food security, nutrition, health, water, sanitation and hygiene and protection, while also addressing the root causes of food crises;

(j) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organizations should protect the rights and respond to the needs of internally displaced persons in accordance with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and strengthen efforts to achieve durable solutions and address the root causes of forced and protracted displacement;

(k) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should bring to scale mental health and psychosocial support for affected populations, as well as for humanitarian and medical personnel, including local and national staff, as an integral component of humanitarian response and operations;

(l) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should ensure that humanitarian action is accountable to affected people, including through systematic community engagement, inclusive consultations, accessible feedback and complaints mechanisms, and ensure the meaningful participation of women, young people, older persons, persons with disabilities and other groups in vulnerable situations;

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Something to Think About **92(i)**

Humanitarian assistance can save lives during acute food crises, but repeated emergency assistance alone may not address the conditions that cause food insecurity to recur. How should Member States balance resources between immediate food, nutrition, health and WASH assistance and longer-term measures addressing underlying causes such as conflict, displacement, livelihood loss, weak infrastructure or climate-related risks? Which challenges can humanitarian actors realistically address themselves, and which require development, peacebuilding or political solutions?

Definition **92(j)**

A durable solution to internal displacement is achieved when internally displaced persons no longer have specific assistance and protection needs linked to their displacement and can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement. A durable solution may be achieved through sustainable reintegration at the place of origin, sustainable local integration where displaced people have taken refuge, or sustainable integration elsewhere in the country.

(m) Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations should accelerate efforts to reinforce the role of local and national responders in humanitarian action, including by supporting their systematic participation and leadership in coordination and decision-making processes, and Member States should support an enabling environment for these efforts, consistent with humanitarian principles;

(n) Member States and donors and the private sector are encouraged to prioritize early and flexible financing and resources and to provide political support for the effective implementation of the needs-based 2026 *Global Humanitarian Overview* and aligned country-level response plans presented by the United Nations and humanitarian partners, which seek $33 billion to help 135 million people, prioritizing, within this, $23 billion to provide immediate life-saving assistance and protection for 87 million people facing the most severe humanitarian needs;

(o) Member States and donors are encouraged to support the Central Emergency Response Fund in reaching the annual target of $1 billion in 2026, including the Fund's climate action account, and to contribute to the regional and country-based pooled funds, as effective and efficient instruments for reaching the people in greatest need;

(p) Member States, donors and the private sector are called upon to significantly increase timely, predictable and multi-year core funding to humanitarian organizations, including through direct support for local and national responders and accelerating efforts to diversify the donor base and partnerships, and to expand support for innovative and coordinated anticipatory financing mechanisms;

(q) Member States and donors should support coordinated, collective humanitarian approaches by avoiding fragmented and project-based financing; incentivize and fund system-wide efficiency measures, including shared services, streamlined coordination and simplified planning and reporting processes; and reduce earmarking, conditionality and duplicative requirements to enhance the coherence, cost-effectiveness and speed of responses;

(r) Member States, donors and development partners should support realistic, context-specific transition pathways through development financing for conflict-sensitive essential services, social protection and resilience-building action in complex settings, ensuring that transitions from relief to development do not leave communities without support.

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Something to Think About **92(q)**

Earmarking allows donors to restrict their contributions to particular crises, activities, sectors or purposes, providing greater control over how their funding is used. However, highly earmarked funding can limit the ability of humanitarian organizations to redirect resources as needs and priorities change. Conditionality can require funds to be used only when specified conditions are met, while duplicative reporting requirements mean that agencies must prepare different reports on similar activities for several donors. These requirements can delay the use of funds for urgent needs and consume staff time. Could simplifying and harmonizing reporting requirements improve the efficiency of humanitarian programmes? How can donors maintain oversight and accountability while giving humanitarian organizations the flexibility to allocate resources according to changing needs?