Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination

A Guide for the Military

United Nations
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Civil-Military Coordination Section
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Introduction

In major emergencies or conflict situations, a variety of individuals, groups and organizations provide assistance to people affected by the crisis. This ranges from neighbours; community-based organizations; local, regional and national government actors; to national and international humanitarian organizations; and military and security forces.

The need for assistance can result from the consequences of **natural disasters**, or from armed conflict and displacement. If a humanitarian crisis takes place in an environment 'characterized by a breakdown of authority resulting from conflict', the humanitarian community refers to this as a **complex emergency**.

National and foreign military forces can play a vital role in the response. In natural disasters, many national militaries are designated auxiliary or even primary first responders in-country. If a large-scale disaster exceeds the response capacity of an affected country, the Government may seek assistance from the international community or neighbouring and partner countries. As part of their response, foreign Governments tend to deploy their military forces, especially if these are already deployed in the region. In armed conflicts and complex emergencies, humanitarian and military actors share the same operating space, but not the same mission. They are likely to have very distinct roles and mandates.

Given the very different settings, the interaction between humanitarian and military actors ranges from close cooperation to sheer co-existence. **Humanitarian - military dialogue** at all levels is essential in any case – and the basis for effective civil-military coordination on the ground. Mutual understanding of each other's role, mandate, objectives, principles and concerns is essential to succeed.

OCHA, Civil-Military Coordination Section
July 2014

About This Guide

The Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination, which brings together humanitarian, civilian and military components of Governments and Organizations involved in humanitarian response, has tasked the **Civil-Military Coordination Section (CMCS)** within the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), to provide a

> ***Guide for the Military****, to explain, in simple terms, the humanitarian community, how it operates and how the military can best interact with, support and complement humanitarian action.*

The guide is written for operational military commanders and their staff. It provides an overview of humanitarian action and the related principles (**Chapter I**), the various humanitarian actors and their mandates (**Chapter II**), what they do and how they coordinate (**Chapter III**), their security mechanisms (**Chapter IV**), and how the military can best interact with, support and complement humanitarian assistance (**Chapters V**). It also covers the concepts and some practical considerations of **Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord)** in **Chapter VI**. The annexes contain key terminology, web-links, literature and a list of abbreviations.

Good to know: Effective civil-military dialogue starts with understanding each other's language. The yellow exclamation mark highlights important terminology or concepts which frequently lead to confusion and gives some tips on understanding and engaging with humanitarian actors.

LEARN MORE! Sources, handbooks and guidelines, or any further and more comprehensive information, are linked.

Some **key points to remember** are summarized at the end of each chapter.

I What is Humanitarian Action?

Humanitarian action comprises **assistance**, **protection** and **advocacy** actions in response to human needs resulting from complex emergencies and natural disasters.

An overarching issue in humanitarian action is **protection**, which in humanitarian terminology has different meanings and implications to military usage. For humanitarian agencies, protection is a concept that encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of an individual, regardless of ethnic, political, or religious background, in accordance with Human Rights and Refugee Law, and International Humanitarian Law (**IHL**).

LEARN MORE! See also chapter V.5 Protection of Civilians and chapter I.5 Humanitarian Action and International Law.

I.1 Humanitarian Assistance

Humanitarian assistance seeks to save lives and alleviate suffering of people affected by a crisis, be it a natural disaster or conflict. It focuses on short-term emergency relief, to provide basic life-saving services that are disrupted due to the crisis. Humanitarian assistance is needs-based, with the sole purpose to save lives and reduce human suffering that originated from a crisis.

This is distinct from development programmes, which focus on a long-term improvement of the social and economic situation and work primarily through the means of capacity building within a country. Humanitarian assistance includes enhancing preparedness for disasters. Humanitarian actors may operate in both humanitarian assistance and long-term development cooperation.

In the humanitarian language a **sector** is not a geographical unit, but a thematic area of work. Different sectors of life-saving activities are e.g. health care, food, shelter, and water and sanitation. They are depicted in the **clusters**, described in **chapter III.4**. Most humanitarian actors use national administrative boundaries as geographical reference.

I.2 Humanitarian Principles

The international humanitarian community does not consider all acts of charity or emergency relief as humanitarian assistance and not all providers of relief as humanitarian actors. 'Humanitarian' for the humanitarian community refers to organizations and action guided by **HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES**. These principles define how humanitarian assistance is delivered and are a basic consensus among humanitarian actors, irrespective of affiliations or ideologies. The core of and rationale behind all humanitarian work is the principle of **HUMANITY**:

> *Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.*

To do so, humanitarian assistance must be carried out **IMPARTIALLY**, on the basis of need alone, to all people regardless of their nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class, or political opinion. Humanitarian actors must act **NEUTRALLY** and not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies. To ensure humanitarian actors' ability to act in accordance with these three principles – humanity, neutrality, impartiality – a fourth principle of **OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE** was formulated, to highlight that humanitarian assistance must be delivered autonomously from military, political or economic objectives.

LEARN MORE!

OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Principles
General Assembly Resolution 46/182 & General Assembly Resolution 58/114
OCHA on Message: General Assembly Resolution 46/182

One of the core legal documents for humanitarian assistance is **General Assembly resolution 46/182** on strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations. In addition to the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality, the resolution formulates other guiding principles for humanitarian assistance, e.g.:

- Each State has the **responsibility** to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies on its territory.
- In the context of **sovereignty**, humanitarian assistance should be provided with the consent of the affected country.
- The affected states are called upon to **facilitate** the work of humanitarian organizations.

I.3 Principled Humanitarian Action

Besides being the motivation for humanitarian assistance, adherence to humanitarian principles is also a means to an end and essential for the ability to provide life-saving assistance. Adherence to these principles is what allows humanitarian action to be distinguished from the activities and objectives of other actors, and thus not considered improper interference in States' domestic affairs.

Being (and being perceived as) neutral and impartial, with the sole aim to provide assistance to those in need, leads to broad acceptance of humanitarian organizations and their staff by relevant actors on the ground, including parties to a conflict. It thus helps to ensure **access** to affected people and safety of humanitarian personnel and recipients of humanitarian assistance. Most humanitarian actors will only interact with the military if humanitarian principles are not compromised.

LEARN MORE!

For key considerations of humanitarian actors when liaising with the military see chapter V.1 Sharing an Operational Space.

See also Humanitarian Access and Humanitarian Space in chapters IV and V.

I.4 Do No Harm

In a humanitarian crisis the health, lives and well-being of people will be in danger as a consequence of the disruption of daily routine and access to basic goods and services. Affected people might be injured; have lost family and friends, their houses and sources of livelihood; be displaced; and have limited access to water, food, medical services and other basic necessities. Humanitarian assistance seeks to alleviate suffering and provide those basic, life-saving goods and services. This assistance complements local services and subsistence routines, ideally on a very short-term basis, and aims to enable people to revert to the pre-crisis situation.

Any such assistance, e.g. food distribution or provision of health care, is a **significant external intervention** in the local system and can considerably affect the local economy, power balance, and population movements. It can also contribute adversely to crime or misuse of power. In the worst case, well-meant humanitarian assistance *can do more harm than good*.

The **do no harm principle** is ascribed to the "Hippocratic Oath", and has been adapted by development and humanitarian actors. It states that any unintentional consequences of humanitarian assistance should be critically examined – and any potential negative consequences negated.

This is **distinct** from **malpractice** or **collateral damage!**

Humanitarian organizations live up to the principle of 'do no harm' in different ways. Projects should **follow certain standards**, but also be designed and reviewed according to the specific situation and **adapted to local circumstances**, culture and customs. This requires the conduct of needs assessments in close cooperation with local partners and the affected community, closely monitoring project implementation, evaluating project results and installing feedback mechanisms for the affected people. Humanitarian personnel are trained and experienced in this respect within their respective field of work.

It is important to understand that not all individuals or groups in a community are equally affected by a crisis. Some may be more **vulnerable** to disasters due to a combination of physical, social, environmental and political factors. They may be marginalized by their society due to their ethnicity, age, sex, disability, class or caste, political affiliations or religion. Those affected have various capacities to manage and recover from disasters. Certain factors, like poverty or disabilities, will reduce those **coping capacities**.

LEARN MORE!

Best practices, handbooks, toolkits and guidelines, as well as training courses are publicly shared. A good source is http://reliefweb.int/topics

The **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)** issues guidelines and handbooks endorsed by a large number of UN and non-UN actors:

http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/

The **Sphere Standards** are an internationally accepted set of common principles and universal minimum standards for the delivery of humanitarian response.

LEARN MORE!

The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response was developed by over 400 organizations in 80 countries, and is the leading reference for many humanitarian actors regardless of their background.

Example: Helicopter Distribution of Food and Non-Food Items (NFI)

In disaster situations people are regularly cut off from infrastructure and supplies. With communication being limited or absent, little to no information is likely to be available about the number of affected people and their needs.

The only way to reach inaccessible affected areas is often by helicopter, which makes it possible to assess the situation and provide relief items and food. Airlift capacity is one of the most important, but also most limited resources during the first days of a disaster. The following are examples from recent disasters:

- Helicopters identified devastated areas from the air and landed or hovered over open spots to drop or unload relief items, like food or bottled water.
- Local people heard of help arriving either by actually hearing the sound of the helicopters or learned via word of mouth, and flocked to the landing place. The helicopters threw up debris which injured many people who came for help – and who had no access to health care.
- The helicopter crews did not stay and did not manage the distribution. This resulted in the local residents who were the most able claiming relief items, while many others – usually women, children; sick, disabled or elderly people – were left with nothing.
- The people did not know if and when the helicopters would return, so they camped in the open field to wait for the next distribution. This could make the landing spots dangerous areas and subject to all kinds of crime, including rape and abduction.
- When the helicopters returned, people tried to enter the helicopter, threatened the crews, and in worst cases, the situation ended up in riots – with people killed by security forces or helicopter crews in self-defence.
- The helicopters brought random items which were not necessarily needed, e.g. if the water supply was not affected and food was scarce, the helicopters came with bottled water, rather than food.
- In cases where local markets did offer sufficient wares, local sellers suffered significant losses as a result of the 'free' competition.
- Operations were suspended without notification, leaving no time to find alternative supply routes – and leaving people behind still in need, and upset.

Although the helicopter distributions seemed to be the only way to get immediate help into the worst affected areas and were highly appreciated by the national Government and international media, they had some undeniable negative effects.

Mitigation Measures and Alternatives

- **Prioritize:**

Airlift capacity is critical to save lives during the first days of a disaster – but it is an expensive and scarce resource. It should transport the most critical life-saving assistance to the people experiencing the greatest need.

- **Assess the situation:**
  Identify affected women, men, girls and boys and their specific needs and provide targeted aid. Draw on humanitarian assessment data, which is openly shared through humanitarian coordination and information tools.
- **Rely on humanitarian and local partners:**
  International and local NGOs in the area of operation, and especially local authorities and community leaders, understand the local situation and can close information gaps.
- **Communicate:**
  People need to be informed about when and what help to expect, and what criteria is being used to distribute relief items. Communicate with local organizations and governments who can then directly communicate with affected people.
- **Organize distributions:**
  Local partners can help to organize the distribution sites, identify vulnerable groups and select and pre-register beneficiaries based on need and according to clearly communicated standards.
- **Coordinate:**
  Coordination with local, national and international actors helps to fill gaps and avoid duplication.
- **Be principled:**
  Political and media pressure to act quickly must be balanced against the need to provide targeted and efficient aid, which will have a greater impact.
- **Follow standards:**
  People need 15l of clean water per person per day. This is ideally not transported as bottled water, but provided by water purification plants, which can produce between 3,000 and 75,000l per day, i.e. water for 200 to 5,000 people, and does not create a waste problem.
- **Find local solutions:**
  Wherever possible, local capacity should be used and strengthened.

LEARN MORE!

Food assistance is a particularly sensitive issue that can cause many negative effects. The World Food Programme (WFP) has developed a checklist in the handbook Protection in Practice: food assistance with safety and dignity.

Another important source to guide humanitarian practice is **the Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief. It is a voluntary code which is self-enforced by each of the currently more than 520 signatory organizations:

- *The humanitarian imperative comes first.*
- *Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.*
- *Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.*
- *We shall endeavour not to be used as an instrument of government foreign policy.*
- *We shall respect culture and custom.*
- *We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.*
- *Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.*
- *Relief aid must strive to reduce vulnerabilities to future disaster as well as meeting basic needs.*
- *We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.*
- *In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognize disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.*

Many humanitarian organizations have adapted these principles for their own organizational **code of conducts**, by which staff and sub-contractors have to abide.

LEARN MORE! Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief

I.5 Humanitarian Action and International Law

International Law with particular relevance for humanitarian action is International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Human Rights Law and Refugee Law. For natural disasters, there are a number of global and local laws, treaties, and regulations. The **IDRL Guidelines** (for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance) are meant to assist Governments to improve their own disaster laws with respect to incoming international relief, ensuring better coordination and quality.

LEARN MORE!

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has established a disaster law database, a collection of **international disaster response laws, rules and principles (IDRL).**

The **World Customs Organisation (WCO)** has compiled a customs directory with national focal points and legislation, instruments and tools related to the movement of emergency relief aid, as well as international resolutions.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL) regulates the law of armed conflict. The most important sources are the **Geneva** and **Hague Conventions**. The inspiration for this set of rules in armed conflict was humanitarian: "Even in war, rules apply; even war does not justify all means and methods of warfare." The Geneva Conventions introduced the distinction between combatants and non-combatants, promoting the protection of individuals who are not or no longer participating in hostilities. (This includes the protection of civilians; the wounded, sick and shipwrecked; medical facilities and personnel; prisoners of war; etc.). **196 nations** are signatories to the treaties.

The **Fourth Geneva Convention** defines the responsibilities of an **occupying power** vis-à-vis the population, e.g. providing food, medical assistance and other supplies essential to their survival (Art. 55-60). The default option is to provide these services through civilian actors. The **Additional Protocols** from 1977 relating to the Protection of Victims of International (Protocol I) and Non-international (Protocol II) Armed Conflicts contain regulations for the protection of civilians, and the status, protection and access of relief actors.

LEARN MORE!

Geneva Conventions of 1949

The **International Committee of the Red Cross:** What is IHL? gives a good overview of IHL sources and their content.

While IHL is only applicable in situations of armed conflict, **International Human Rights Law** is universal. The basis for most binding legal instruments referring to human rights is the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UN General Assembly 1948). Many humanitarian actors base their work on a broader human rights approach and non-governmental organizations (NGO) often act as both humanitarian relief organizations and advocates for human rights.

The United Nations **Rights Up Front** Plan of Action emphasizes the imperative for the United Nations to protect people, wherever they may be, in accordance with their human rights and in a manner that prevents and responds to violations of International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (IASC, Centrality of Protection).

Refugee Law is the branch of international law which deals with the rights and protection of refugees. It is related to, but distinct from, International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law.

Refugee is a legal term only applicable if a person has crossed an internationally recognized state border.

When people have to leave their homes but remain within their own country, they are known as **Internally Displaced Persons (IDP).** This might be as a consequence of armed conflicts, situations of generalized violence, violation of human rights or natural disasters.

LEARN MORE!

OCHA on Message: Internal Displacement.
UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (OCHA 2004).

Key points to remember: What is Humanitarian Action?

- Humanitarian action is guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and operational independence.
- Principled humanitarian action creates the operational environment in which humanitarian actors can operate unhindered and unthreatened, referred to as **humanitarian space**.
- Humanitarian action is need-based and must never be instrumentalized – or appear to be used – for political/military purposes.
- Humanitarian action must not do harm – humanitarian actors ensure this by adhering to global standards and tailoring all programmes to local circumstances.
- The primary responsibility for providing assistance to people affected by a humanitarian crises lies with the affected state. International humanitarian assistance is only provided with the consent of the affected state's Government.

II The Humanitarian Landscape

The primary responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance lies with the **affected state**. The **first responders** in emergencies are the affected people and communities themselves, local organizations and government institutions, including **national security actors** and **armed forces**. According to the guiding principles of responsibility and sovereignty of the affected state, international humanitarian actors respond to a crisis only **at the request or consent of the affected state**.

The **international humanitarian community** is not a constituted system with a defined membership. It comprises a large number of humanitarian organizations that differ considerably depending on their individual role and *raison d'être*. These include:

- International organizations (IO), including regional organizations.
- Non-governmental organizations (NGO).
- The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC Movement).
- Governments and governmental organizations.

Humanitarian organizations may cooperate with the private sector for funding and logistic or technical support.

Foreign military forces that deliver aid – be it fulfilling obligations under IHL, offering assistance to affected populations as part of a wider stabilization mandate, *in extremis,* or in support of humanitarian operations – **are not considered humanitarian actors**. Even if they fulfil or support humanitarian tasks, the military is a tool of the foreign policy of a Government, and as such is not perceived as neutral or impartial. The separation of humanitarian and political or military objectives is not given or at least unclear – and military units are certainly not primarily perceived as humanitarians by the civilian population.

Given the increased number of military units deployed in disaster response, humanitarian organizations fear a **politicization of aid**, with negative effects on principled humanitarian action. The IASC has formulated **key considerations** in the **IASC Reference Paper on Civil-Military Relations**, see also **chapter V.1**.

LEARN MORE! For further reading: Overseas Development Institute – The interaction between humanitarian and military actors: where do we go from here?

II.1 International Organizations

A number of United Nations (UN) agencies, funds and programmes, such as the World Food Programme (WFP), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO), and UN Development Programme (UNDP) are specialized in different sectors of humanitarian assistance and development, and many more are directly or indirectly involved in emergency response.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is the part of the United Nations Secretariat responsible for bringing together humanitarian actors to ensure a coherent response to emergencies. OCHA assists Governments in mobilizing international assistance when the scale of the disaster exceeds the national capacity. It takes the lead in **coordinating humanitarian action**, although in response to specific disasters specialized agencies may take on this role, like UNHCR in the case of a refugee crisis.

Other **International Organizations (IO)** outside the UN system that are active in humanitarian assistance are for example the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the World Bank.

Regional Organizations, such as the European Union (EU), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), play an increasingly important role in humanitarian assistance. They are major donors, ensure regional cooperation in disaster response, and promote preparedness among their Member States.

II.2 Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-governmental organizations (NGO) are not supposed to be part of or affiliated with any Government, neither are they profit-oriented businesses. Many of them are founded and constituted by citizens, often as volunteers. The term NGO is usually applied only to organizations that pursue a wider social or humanitarian aim, but not to political organizations. If the main purpose of an organization is to promote civil rights, democracy, etc., they are often referred to as civil society organizations (CSO), although that term is not exclusive.

NGOs exist at the local, national and international levels and have different mandates and motivations, e.g. they may be faith-based or otherwise ideologically motivated, or be founded to advocate or work for a singular purpose or a variety of tasks. In an emergency, many organizations that have other primary goals and mandates provide humanitarian assistance too, such as local churches. Local organizations without an institutionalized legal status are referred to as **community-based organizations (CBO)**.

Many NGOs work in both humanitarian assistance and long-term development. They often have the advantage of being already in-country when an emergency occurs and having established partnerships and networks. They play a crucial role in the transition from short-term relief to long-term development. The work of international NGOs often strengthens the skills of local experts and trainers, reducing dependency on external assistance. A considerable number of NGOs are also active in advocating for and monitoring human rights.

To maintain their operational independence, NGOs can receive their funding from different sources, such as private individuals and groups or corporations, as well as from governmental and intergovernmental institutions and UN agencies.

Depending on the context, local and national NGOs may have better access to affected people because of their local knowledge and networks. Relief work is often sub-contracted to or carried out jointly with local partner NGOs.

Many – *but not all* – NGOs coordinate with the international humanitarian community through the cluster system and other coordination mechanisms (see also chapter III). At the national level, they are often represented by national or international **NGO consortia**.

Many of the large NGOs and the NGO consortia have **their own guidelines** and policies on whether and how to **engage with the military**:

LEARN MORE!

World Vision, 'Principled Pragmatism: NGO cooperation with armed actors'.
SCHR Position Paper on Humanitarian Military Relations.
Other organization specific policies can be found on OCHA's website.

II.3 Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

The **International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC Movement)** is the largest humanitarian network in the world. It comprises distinct components which are neither government organizations nor NGOs, but have their own legal foundation and role, based on the Geneva Conventions, the Statutes of the RCRC Movement and the national law of the 196 States that are party to the Geneva Conventions.

The exclusively humanitarian mission of the **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)** is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence and to provide them with assistance. The ICRC also endeavours to prevent suffering by promoting and strengthening humanitarian law and universal humanitarian principles. The ICRC therefore deals directly with Governments and armed forces, as well as armed opposition groups, to promote compliance with and respect for IHL. The activities of the ICRC include

the restoration of family links disrupted by armed conflict and other situations of violence, visiting prisoners of war (PoW) and civilians interned during conflict, and providing humanitarian assistance (e.g. health care, water and sanitation). The special mandate and humanitarian mission of the ICRC requires its strict neutrality, impartiality and independence, to have access to all parties to a conflict and people in need of assistance. The ICRC has an observer status to the humanitarian coordination bodies, without committing to joint decisions.

The 189 **Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies** act as "auxiliary to the public authorities" (Statutes of the RCRC Movement, Art. 4) of their own countries in the humanitarian field, and provide a range of services including disaster relief, health and social programmes. They also promote awareness of humanitarian values and speak and act on behalf of the most vulnerable in their country. During wartime, National Societies also assist the affected civilian population and support the medical services of the armed forces where appropriate. Their local knowledge and expertise, access to communities and existing infrastructure allow them to act fast and efficiently. This makes them important first responders in many countries and invaluable partners for international organizations and NGOs.

The **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)** may assume a lead role in the RCRC Movement's response to natural disasters in peacetime. In this capacity, it coordinates and mobilizes relief assistance for disaster situations, promotes cooperation between National Societies and represents them at the global level. IFRC also promotes organizational development and capacity building of the National Societies.

The IFRC observes and contributes to the humanitarian coordination mechanisms described in chapter III (e.g. by co-leading the emergency shelter cluster). However, the IFRC conducts its own assessment and launches its own emergency appeals for natural disasters.

The RCRC Movement is united by **seven Fundamental Principles** - humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary status, unity and universality. The components of the RCRC Movement have special relationships with the armed forces and thus their own guidelines and policies.

II.4 Governments and Governmental Organizations

Governments provide a large percentage of all funding for humanitarian assistance. Donors vary widely in their approaches towards humanitarian needs. These may include:

- Providing in-kind donations directly to an affected country.
- Funding, either directly for projects carried out by NGOs, IOs or the RCRC Movement, or by contributing to appeals and pooled funds.
- Deploying professional humanitarian advisers of governmental aid agencies, e.g. the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Office of the United States Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).
- Deploying disaster response teams or military and civil defence assets (MCDA) and units, e.g. the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), the German Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW), the Canadian Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART).

LEARN MORE! OCHA tracks contributions in the Logistics Information About In-Kind Relief Aid (LogIK) data base and Financial Tracking Service (FTS).

To directly report on the progress of funded projects, many donors, such as the European Commission Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO), have representatives present in the country of operation. Governments, as major donors, may have significant influence on the humanitarian response operation. Their participation in humanitarian coordination mechanisms is a controversial topic and handled differently in every country and emergency, based on the context.

Key points to remember: The Humanitarian Landscape

- The humanitarian community is diverse. Each actor has its own motivation, legal status, mandate, mission and policies.
- International actors work closely with national partners.
- Humanitarian actors and NGOs may have different engagement policies with the military and the UN.
- The components of the RCRC Movement – ICRC, IFRC and the National Societies – are neither NGOs nor IOs. They have a special legal status, role and relation to the military, based on the Geneva Conventions, the Movement's statutes and national law.
- Governments have different options and assets to respond to requests for international assistance from a disaster-affected country. Deploying military assets is one among them, but not the default option.

III Humanitarian Coordination

The **national Government** has the primary responsibility to provide and coordinate humanitarian assistance on its territory. If the scale of a disaster exceeds the response capacity of the affected country, the national Government might **request international assistance**. The way by which the affected state coordinates incoming international assistance varies considerably.

Most international humanitarian organizations have offices and organizational structures at three levels:

1) **Global** or strategic level (Headquarters).
2) National, country or **operational** level (Regional and Country Offices)
3) **Sub-national** or tactical level (Field Offices).

Humanitarian coordination – including humanitarian civil-military coordination – takes place at all levels. **The operational level** is the focus of this guide.

The terms "strategic / operational / tactical" can mean different things in the humanitarian community and are used differently. E.g. in a country of operation, the country offices and in-country coordination tools have a "strategic" function. Also, every level will refer to the levels below as "field level", meaning that from a headquarter perspective everything is "field". "Operational" can be used for all activities in a country, including those at sub-national levels.

In this guide, the terms **global** and **operational level** will be used, the latter relating to all activities in the country of operation. If necessary, the terms **country** and **sub-national level** will provide further distinction from the operational level.

At the time of a request for international assistance, many NGOs and UN organizations are already present in-country, or do at least have a related regional office. They have existing relationships and infrastructure, and **humanitarian coordination mechanisms** may be in place already. Additional actors may arrive in the first 24 hours to several days after the disaster.

OCHA plays a key role to support the humanitarian coordination at all levels. This chapter covers some of the key humanitarian coordination tools, focussing on the **operational level.**

III.1 UN Coordination In-Country

The UN presence in a country is not a single organization, but a number of UN programmes, funds and agencies, which report to their respective **headquarters**. To ensure unity and coherence of all UN development efforts, these actors form a **United Nations Country Team (UNCT)**. The UNCT is chaired by the **Resident Coordinator (RC)**, the designated representative of the UN Secretary-General and highest UN representative in a country. The RC represents the UN vis-à-vis the national Government and, together with the UNCT, coordinates and advocates for development issues and mandates.

The RC is the link to the global level, and reports to the Secretary-General through the Head of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Head of UNDP also chairs the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), which brings together all UN entities working in development at the global level.

If there is a **UN Peacekeeping Operation** in-county, the highest representative of the UN is the **Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG)**. The RC in that case is the **Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG)** and reports to both the Head of UNDP and the SRSG.

III.2 Humanitarian Coordination In-Country

The humanitarian community comprises many actors which are not UN entities, for example other IOs and NGOs. Humanitarian coordination mechanisms are therefore voluntary agreements, based on the conviction that coordination is crucial to be predictable and reliable partners, to avoid gaps and duplications, to improve quality and speed of the response, and to join resources. Most humanitarian coordination tools are developed at the global level through the **Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)**, which comprises 18 major humanitarian organizations, among them UN agencies, with a standing invitation to IOM, ICRC, IFRC, NGOs represented through NGO consortia, and the World Bank. The IASC is chaired by the **Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC)**, who is also the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Head of OCHA. There are no command and control structures; **humanitarian leadership** is consensus-based.

If international humanitarian assistance is required, the ERC, in consultation with IASC, appoints **a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC)** for a country. HCs are accountable to the ERC for all humanitarian affairs. They are the link between the operational and the global level and chair **the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)** which brings together all major UN and non-UN humanitarian organizations in a country (see also below). The HC leads humanitarian coordination in cases of international assistance (this does not affect the responsibility of the affected state's Government). Some of the HC's tasks are to:

- Represent the humanitarian community vis-à-vis the national Government and advocate for principled humanitarian action.
- Oversee inter-cluster coordination and ensure the integration of cross-cutting issues.
- Propose to the ERC and IASC which clusters to activate at country-level, assign cluster leads, and ensure implementation of the cluster system at the sub-national level.

The HC **is responsible for initiating requests for and approving the use of military and civil defence assets (MCDA),** with consent of the affected state. The HC ensures that country-specific civil-military coordination mechanisms and guidelines are in place, for a coherent approach and effective use of MCDA. The HC will also regularly review with MCDA commanders the *modus operandi* of forces providing support to humanitarian operations, and will offer advice and guidance in this regard.

The HC function can be a separate one – or be assumed by the **Resident Coordinator (RC)**, who then becomes an **RC/HC**. The RC/HC is responsible for ensuring complementarity between the HCT and the UNCT, which coexist and do not replace each other. An RC/HC chairs both and is the highest representative of the UN and the representative of the humanitarian community at the same time.

If a **UN peacekeeping operation** is in-country, and the RC assumes the HC role, this creates a **triple-hatted DSRSG/RC/HC** function. This might imply some friction: The DSRSG reports to the SRSG who is responsible to the Secretary-General for all UN activities, including peace-keeping. The HC chairs the HCT, in which many NGOs participate. The HCT and the NGOs often operate independently and distinctly from the wider peacekeeping mandate.

Depending on the context, it may be decided to maintain a separate HC function, and not integrate it into the UN mission.

When arriving in a country, it is important to understand the leadership arrangements, and whether the HC is a separate function or integrated in the UN mission. This also has implications on his or her relation to the **Force Commander** of the Peacekeeping Operation.

LEARN MORE! OCHA on Message - UN Integration: Structural Arrangements

The **Humanitarian Country Team (HCT),** under the leadership of the HC, is the centre-piece of humanitarian coordination in a country. It is composed of organizations that undertake humanitarian action in-country and that commit to humanitarian principles and to participate in coordination arrangements. These may include UN agencies, IOM, NGOs and, subject to their individual mandates, components of the RCRC Movement (see figure 1). The size of the HCT is limited, to allow for effective decision-making. The main membership criterion is operational relevance. Members represent their respective agency at the highest level (country representative or equivalent), as well as the thematic clusters their agency may be leading (see III.4).

The HCT ensures that humanitarian action is coordinated, principled, timely, effective, efficient, and contributes to longer-term recovery. The HCT might also steer preparedness activities. **The HCT holds itself ultimately accountable to the people in need.** Whenever possible, the HCT operates in support of and in coordination with national and local authorities. The HCT's main responsibilities are:

- Agreeing on common strategic issues, setting common objectives and priorities and developing **strategic plans**.
- Proposing a **cluster system** and cluster lead agencies (see III.4).
- Providing guidance to cluster lead agencies, activating **resource mobilization** mechanisms, and advising the HC on the allocation of resources from in-country humanitarian pooled funds.
- Agreeing on common policies (including **country-specific guidelines** for the **use of armed escorts** and **engagement with armed actors**).
- Promoting adherence to humanitarian principles and adopting **joint policies and strategies**.

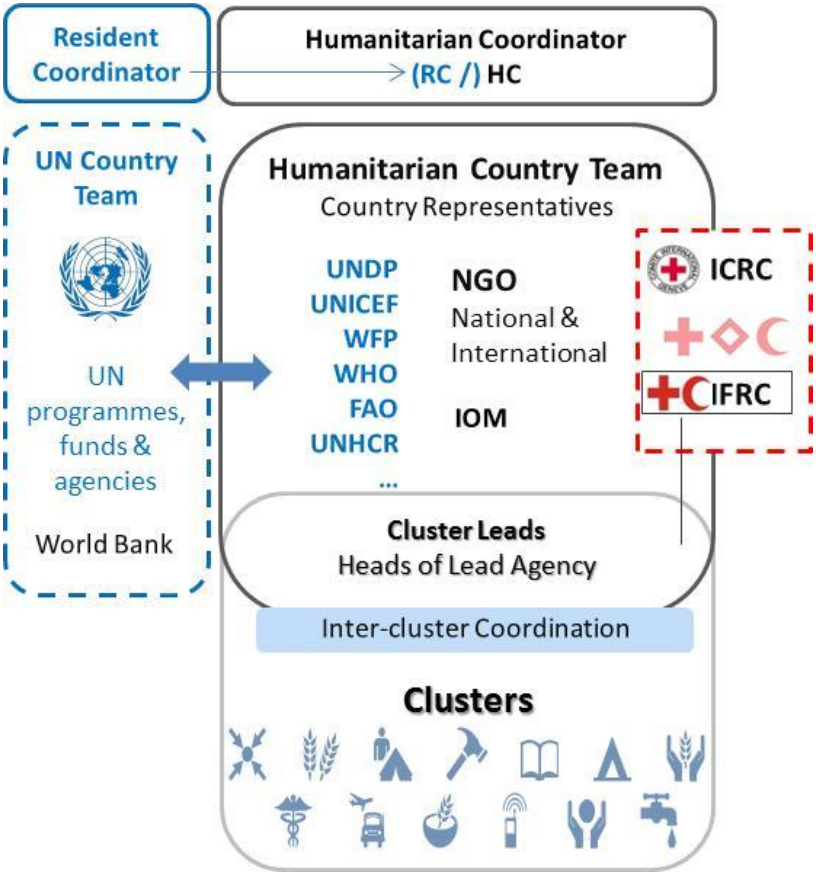

Figure 1: The composition of Humanitarian Country Teams

III.3 OCHA's Role in Humanitarian Coordination

OCHA is part of the UN Secretariat and assists Governments in mobilizing international assistance when the scale of the disaster exceeds the national capacity. OCHA's five core functions are:

Coordination: OCHA supports the various coordination mechanisms, including the HC, HCT, cluster meetings, inter-cluster coordination (see also III.4) and other tools as described in chapter III.5, as well as all steps of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle as described in chapter III.6.

Policy: OCHA drafts (country-specific) policy to ensure a uniform and collaborative approach on key humanitarian issues.

Advocacy: OCHA issues key messages on behalf of the affected people to ensure respect for humanitarian principles and support – in public, via "quiet diplomacy" with Governments, or through negotiations with armed groups.

Information Management: OCHA collects, analyses, and shares information about the situation among the various organizations involved, and provides visual information material and situation reports.

Humanitarian Financing: OCHA manages joint resource mobilization mechanisms and pooled funds.

OCHA country offices are an intersection for information and an important entry point to the humanitarian community. Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) is an important part of OCHA's coordination mandate and UN-CMCoord Officers are OCHA staff. See also chapter VI.

III.4 The Cluster System

The **Cluster System** is the main functional coordination mechanism of the humanitarian community. It works around humanitarian areas (sectors), to prevent gaps in humanitarian response and ensure a coherent approach. A **cluster** is a grouping of humanitarian organizations that work in a specific sector.

There are **11 global clusters** (see figure 2). At the **operational level,** clusters are **activated** according to need. The global level clusters may be merged or further sub-divided for specific needs in a country and are established from the operational to the sub-national level as required. The **cluster activation** is time-limited and is agreed by the HC and HCT, in consent with the national Government, and approved at the global level through the ERC and IASC.

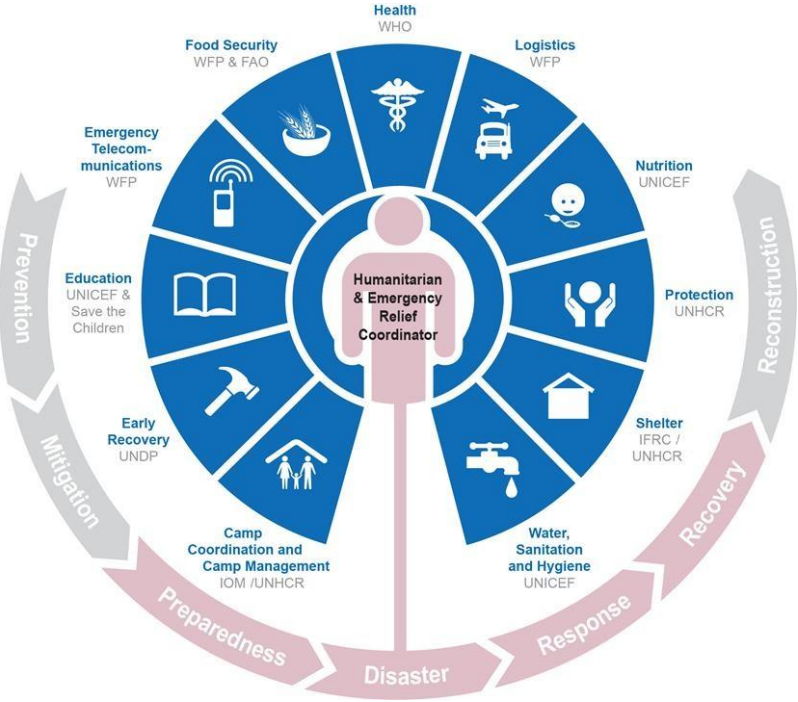

Figure 2: The 11 Global Clusters and the Global Cluster Lead Agencies

LEARN MORE! Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at the Country Level

Clusters mainly work through **regular meetings** and **working groups** and each has a **lead agency** (or option of two). Figure 2 shows the lead agencies at the global level – at the operational level, these might be different in each country.

The clusters are **not** command and control structures. Action is agreed through consensus, cooperation and information sharing, to gain a clear picture of the situation and prioritize resources to address needs and avoid duplication of effort. Equally, cluster **leadership** does not include command and control.

Clusters support the delivery of humanitarian assistance by coordinating, implementing and monitoring projects, and conducting joint **needs assessments** and **gap analyses** in the field. They also inform strategic decision-making of the HC/HCT, through sectorial planning and strategy development. Each cluster is represented at the **inter-cluster meetings**. Many cross-cutting topics are not dealt with in separate clusters, but as **inter-cluster functions**, such as gender issues, psycho-social support and mental health, HIV/AIDS, and early recovery.

The **military** may be invited to attend cluster coordination meetings if appropriate. Coordination can be conducted bi-laterally with the **cluster coordinator** (situated in the cluster lead agency) or the **inter-cluster coordination**, which is facilitated through OCHA.

LEARN MORE!

Clusters of importance to the military are the **Protection Cluster** led by UNHCR and the **Logistics Cluster** led by WFP. A detailed description of the Logistics Cluster is given in **Annex C**.

The cluster system in specific countries and related information can be found on www.humanitarianresponse.info

III.5 Surge Capacity and other Tools

In a sudden-onset natural disaster or a rapidly deteriorating on-going crisis, OCHA and its humanitarian partners have several tools to quickly enhance the response and coordination capacity in a country. It has various surge rosters to send additional staff for the first weeks of an emergency, who may then be replaced by longer-term personnel. The surge staff come from headquarters, regional and country offices, external rosters and partner organisations.

Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) Officers are not necessarily in a country on a long-term basis. Many of them arrive with the first and second waves of surge. This might result in a turnover of contact persons in the first 6 months.

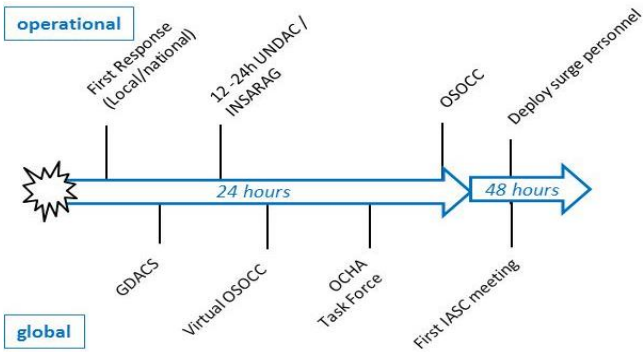

Figure 3: OCHA activities within the first 48 hours of an emergency

The RC and the affected state's Government may request a **United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC)** deployment to assess the humanitarian consequences of a disaster in its first phase and to assist in the coordination of incoming international relief. UNDAC teams can deploy at short notice (12-48 hours) anywhere in the world.

An **On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC)** is set up as soon as possible after a sudden-onset disaster by the first arriving international urban search and rescue or UNDAC team. It is a link between international responders and the Government of the affected country. In the first hours and days after a disaster it provides **a platform for cooperation, coordination and information exchange** among international humanitarian agencies.

Within minutes after major natural disasters that might require international assistance, automatic alerts are sent out to subscribers of the **Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS)**. A red earthquake alert automatically alerts the **International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)** network with world-wide located urban search and rescue teams.

At the same time, information about the disaster is exchanged among disaster managers worldwide in real-time on the web-based **virtual OSOCC.** First information exchanges typically include initial assessment results, contact details of (potential) responders, satellite images, and situation updates.

LEARN MORE! Sign up for GDACS disaster alerts at http://www.gdacs.org/ (free service) and obtain an account on the virtual OSOCC at http://vosocc.unocha.org/ (restricted to disaster managers in Governments and response organisations).

III.6 The Humanitarian Programme Cycle

The **Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC)** is the joint management process of international humanitarian response operations. All elements must be conducted, to the extent possible, in collaboration with and in support of national and local authorities. The HC initiates the preparation of the different steps and coordinates who does what in accordance with pre-agreed standards.

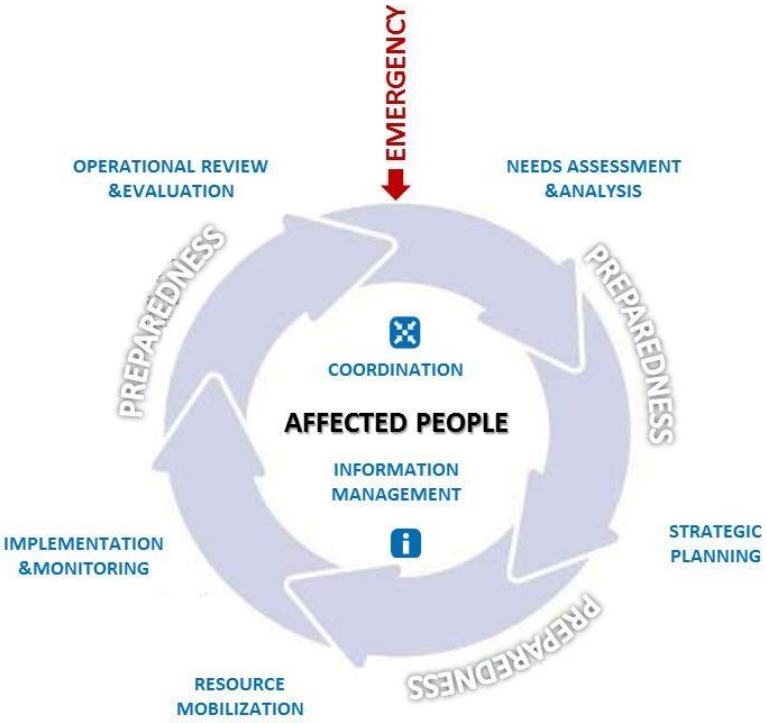

Figure 4: The Humanitarian Programme Cycle

- **Preparedness:** Countries and humanitarian organizations should be prepared as much as possible *before* an emergency. Preparedness includes contingency planning, pre-positioning of resources and capacity building for local actors.
- **Needs Assessments and Analyses** should be conducted jointly and for all sectors. Many humanitarian actors conduct their own assessments; however, all assessment data should be collected, compared and inter-linked.
- **Strategic Planning:** A joint humanitarian multi-sector needs assessment leads to a strategic response plan, which outlines resource needs and prioritizations.
- Resource mobilization.
- Implementation, monitoring and accountability.
- Operational review and evaluation.
- **Information Management:** The clusters and the HCT are important platforms to share information. OCHA collects this information and publishes it in situation reports, maps and visuals.

LEARN MORE! The HPC reference module is available online.

The following information material is available in each crisis:

- Regular Humanitarian Situation Reports (**SitReps**), initially every two days, later twice a month.
- Multi-cluster/sector rapid needs assessment (**MIRA**), within 14 days.
- **Strategic Response Plan** (SRP) or Action Plans, within 30 days.
- **Humanitarian Snapshots**: overview about humanitarian actors, sub-national presence, needs, population movements, all in one visual.

LEARN MORE! These documents and further information is publicly available on www.reliefweb.int and www.unocha.org

Coordination and cooperation: In humanitarian usage, coordination refers to exchanging information, agreeing on joint policies and actions and harmonizing individual activities, whereas cooperation is a concept of closer interaction, in which activities and planning are carried out jointly and/or in support of each other. This might be different of military understanding in some contexts, where coordination would describe the approach of closer interaction.

Key points to remember: Humanitarian Coordination

- Humanitarian coordination includes UN and non-UN actors. It might be linked closely to or remain more distant from the UN coordination mechanisms, depending on the context.
- Participation in humanitarian coordination is voluntary and mechanisms do not include command and control.
- Not all NGOs participate in the humanitarian coordination mechanisms.
- Humanitarian leadership is a consensus-based concept. The set-up depends on the context and operational environment.
- The affected state may ask OCHA to support the coordination of international relief when the scale of the disaster exceeds the national capacity.
- The cluster system clarifies the division of labour among humanitarian aid organizations in specific sectors and is a platform for cooperation and sharing of information and resources. The decision on which clusters will be activated will be taken according to the prevailing situation and on a country-by-country basis.
- Information management is crucial to fill gaps and avoid duplication. Different tools exist to collect, analyse and share this data. The products are publicly available online.
- Humanitarian organisations coordinate to carry out some basic programme management steps together. The how-to is described in the 'Humanitarian Programme Cycle'.
- The entry-points for military units are the cluster coordinators in the cluster lead agencies, the inter-cluster coordinators, the OCHA country office and UN-CMCoord Officers (see also chapter VI), and the Humanitarian Coordinator.
- Representatives of specific military units might be invited to attend HCT or cluster meetings on an ad hoc basis, and only in specific contexts.
- Information is shared publicly on the virtual OSOCC, reliefweb.int, humanitarianresponse.info and the OCHA website.

IV Humanitarian Security Mechanisms

Relief workers and organizations are protected by international humanitarian and national laws. Even in a conflict situation, relief organizations do not carry weapons to protect themselves – first and foremost they rely on the protection provided by IHL and the acceptance of their humanitarian mandate by all parties.

Security risks may be caused by lack of knowledge of IHL among armed actors; not being perceived as neutral and impartial, but as aligned with parties to the conflict; criminal activities; or they may be simply associated with the complexity of the operational environment. **Humanitarian Principles** remain the key to gain all parties' **acceptance** of humanitarian action and actors and to create **Humanitarian Space**. At the same time, many risks can be reduced by good security risk management.

> Humanitarian Space is "a conducive environment, where the receipt of humanitarian assistance is not conditional upon the allegiance to or support to parties involved in a conflict but is a right, independent of military and political action" (IASC). This includes the safety and security of humanitarian workers and the recipients of humanitarian assistance, not being subjected to harassment, looting, etc.

In recent years, relief workers have been routinely required to operate in complex security environments that require both a more robust security risk management regime and the acceptance of higher risk.

IV.1 Approaches to Security Management

Humanitarian organizations have developed several good practices to manage security risks and balance the remaining risk with the criticality of assistance. There are many steps to create humanitarian space and access and ensure an acceptable level of safety and security of aid workers. This includes a comprehensive **risk assessment** based on thorough **local knowledge**. The process to weigh the security risks with the criticality of life-saving programmes is called **Programme Criticality**.

Many risks can be reduced by **trust and acceptance**, if humanitarian actors are widely perceived as neutral and impartial, their humanitarian

mission is understood, and their presence and work do not have negative effects or offend local customs and culture. The more humanitarian action is perceived as actually changing the situation for the better, the higher the acceptance among the local communities will be – and with that the extent to which they actively contribute to the safety and security of humanitarian workers.

Acceptance-based approaches depend on long-term and continuous dialogue and partnerships. They include knowledge of and adaptation to the local environment; communication, consultation with and involvement of communities; and close monitoring of potential negative perceptions and threats. Local actors, partners and staff play a crucial role in understanding the environment, threats and possible perceptions; and in communicating the humanitarian messages. '*Do no harm*' strategies also play a crucial role, to avoid local tensions resulting from humanitarian programming.

Examples of good practices are **local co-ownership** of programmes and the involvement of all groups in programming, e.g. including the needs of host communities in humanitarian assistance to people living in IDP or refugee camps, and including local labour and livelihood in improvement components.

Negotiating access: Humanitarian access to affected areas can be constrained for instance by general insecurity or ongoing hostilities, by lack of infrastructure, or through restrictions imposed by actors controlling the area. The humanitarian community seeks to communicate on a regular basis with all actors that can provide, restrict or influence access, e.g. all parties to a conflict, the Government, local authorities and communities, local security actors, military and non-state armed actors.

Humanitarian Access concerns humanitarian actors' ability to reach people affected by crisis, as well as an affected population's ability to access humanitarian services.

OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Access

Access negotiations seek to enhance acceptance, notably through the promotion of humanitarian principles; raise awareness of IHL; and establish specific arrangements with relevant parties. Such measures can include **de-confliction** of military and humanitarian activities in an area, **'days of tranquillity'**, the provision of **area security** by local security actors, the establishment of humanitarian 'pauses' or 'corridors', and unhindered passage at check-points.

Low-profile approach: In high-risk situations, gaining acceptance may be extremely challenging and may need to be accompanied by other appropriate risk management measures. For instance, where some groups or organizations are ideologically opposed to parts of the international humanitarian response, humanitarian workers might be directly targeted. In these cases, low-profile approaches can include the de-branding of vehicles, staff not wearing organisation emblems, the use of local vehicles and un-marked offices, or not gathering in groups or offices identifiable as belonging to the organization.

Remote programming: In certain situations, the risks may be higher for international staff, staff from other parts of the country, or staff from certain nationalities. In these cases, static localized staffing and local capacity building for community-based organizations and volunteers can be considered. If the risk is equally high for all staff, complete remote programming - carried out by the community itself and monitored via visits and the internet - as well as providing **cash and vouchers** rather than goods, can be options for consideration.

LEARN MORE!

Good practices are described in detail in
TO STAY AND DELIVER: Good practice for humanitarians in complex security environments, OCHA 2011.

Deterrent measures, defined as those that pose a counter-threat in order to deter a threat, are the **last resort** considered before **suspending programmes**.

Chapter V explains under what circumstances and conditions **armed protection** may be considered, how the link to the military is established, and the role of UN-CMCoord in establishing these links.

IV.2 Safety and Security in the UN System

The primary responsibility for the security of humanitarians in a country of operation lies with the **Host Government**. Internal to the UN, the **Designated Official (DO)** is accountable and responsible for the safety and security of UN staff. This is another appointment held by the highest-ranking UN Official, **i.e. the RC(/HC) or the SRSG** (see chapter III). The DO is supported by the **Security Management Team (SMT)**, a forum which includes the Security Advisor/Officer and Heads of Offices from all UN agencies and, where there is a peacekeeping mission, the heads of its military and police components.

The **UN Department for Safety and Security (DSS)** provides leadership, operational support and oversight of the security management system, and ensures the maximum security for staff, while enabling the safest and most efficient conduct of the UN programmes and activities. DSS facilitates the SMT meetings.

The SMT meets regularly to exchange information pertaining to the security of UN (and associated) personnel in the field and supports the DO's security decision making. It is run by DSS and chaired by the DO. Key discussions include any issues relevant to the safety and security of UN personnel and operations.

A **Security Cell** is a working group of security officers from various UN and NGO agencies that gathers prior to the SMT meetings. Liaison officers from international security forces (CIMIC & Police) may be invited to contribute to the security cell planning or to brief the SMT. Usually, national security actors are not invited to security meetings, as information discussed may be sensitive or related to their activities.

The **Saving Lives Together (SLT) framework** gives representatives of international NGOs an opportunity to join SMT meetings as observers and collaborate with the UN security system. However, NGOs have individual security management regulations, systems and focal points. The same applies to the different components of the RCRC Movement: the ICRC has its own security system and the IFRC provides a security umbrella for all RCRC National Societies operating in a country.

Key points to Remember: Humanitarian Security Mechanisms

- Humanitarian principles matter: Many risks can be reduced by **trust and acceptance** if humanitarian actors are widely perceived as neutral and impartial.
- An acceptance-based approach is the most important strategy to create **Humanitarian Space**.
- Many remaining risks can be reduced by good security risk management.
- Local knowledge, staff and stakeholders are crucial.
- The humanitarian community communicates with **all** actors that can provide, restrict or influence **humanitarian access**.
- Deterrent measures are the **last resort** considered before suspending programmes.
- The **Host Government** has the primary responsibility for the security of humanitarians.
- **DSS** provides leadership, operational support and oversight of the UN security management system.
- The **SMT** and the **Security Cell** are coordination platforms for UN security management.
- The head of the military component of a UN peacekeeping mission is part of the SMT and may be invited to security cell meetings.
- The role of UN-CMCoord in establishing links to DPKO, military forces and armed groups is explained in chapter VI.

V Operational Civil-Military Interaction

The nature of interaction between humanitarian and military actors will be different in each operational context. It depends on the type of the emergency and the mission of deployed military forces. The humanitarian mission is to save lives and alleviate human suffering of all those affected by a crisis, regardless of their background and affiliation. Interaction with the military and the pursuing of common goals may help to do so, but must not compromise the neutrality, impartiality and operational independence of humanitarian actors – and the perception that humanitarians are neutral and impartial.

In a natural disaster in peacetime, foreign military forces may be deployed to assist relief operations with a similar mission to the humanitarian, in which humanitarian and military actors **cooperate** to save lives and assist the affected people.

In insecure and complex operational environments and where the causes of a humanitarian crisis are conflict-related, the relationship and interaction will be different. In such environments, military actors are inherently present and **share an operational space** with humanitarians, but not necessarily their objectives. The need for coordination may evolve simply from co-existence in the same operational theatre, a need for **security cooperation** and **military support to humanitarian actors**, or common goals of the humanitarian and military missions, in particular concerning the **protection of civilians**.

Different thinking – common goals:

It is important to get to know each other fast and understand each other's missions and concerns. Many organizations, civilian or military, are perfectly able to provide a framework within which other actors can also operate.

The military tends to look towards its own internal resources to solve coordination challenges. The strengths of the military are its situational awareness capacity, in particular with regard to security, and its ability to plan for different scenarios. Civilian actors tend to explore the outside and are focused on consensus building. They are reactive to emerging needs, which may pose challenges for joint planning.

Civil-military interaction helps to complement and, where appropriate, support each other and work together, or simply not impede on each other's operations in the many different operational environments.

Humanitarian Civil-Military Interaction: Key Considerations

1. **Humanity, Neutrality and Impartiality.**

2. **Humanitarian Space:** A conducive operating environment for humanitarians, where the receipt of humanitarian assistance is not conditional upon the allegiance or support to parties involved in a conflict but is a right, independent of military and political action.

3. **Needs-Based Assistance Free of Discrimination:** Humanitarian assistance must be provided on the basis of needs alone. The assessment of such needs must be independent from any other considerations than humanitarian ones.

4. **Humanitarian Access to Vulnerable Populations:** Humanitarian agencies must maintain their ability to obtain access to all vulnerable populations in all areas and to negotiate such access with all parties to the conflict. Coordination with the military should facilitate, secure and sustain - not hinder - humanitarian access.

5. **Perception of Humanitarian Action:** Humanitarian assistance must come without political or military conditions. Civil-military coordination must not jeopardize the local network and trust that humanitarian agencies have created.

6. **Civilian-Military Distinction in Humanitarian Action:** At all times, a clear distinction must be maintained between combatants and non-combatants, who are granted immunity from attack by IHL. Military personnel must refrain from presenting themselves as civilian / humanitarian workers, and vice versa.

7. **Operational Independence of Humanitarian Action:** Humanitarian actors must retain the lead role in undertaking and directing humanitarian activities. They must not implement tasks on behalf of the military or military policies. They must be free in movement, conducting independent assessments, selecting of staff, and identifying recipients of assistance based on their needs.

8. **Security of Humanitarian Personnel:** Any perception that humanitarian organizations may have become affiliated with the military could impact negatively on the security of their staff and on humanitarian access.

9. **Do No Harm:** Humanitarian action, including humanitarian civil-military coordination, must not have negative impacts on the people it seeks to help – physical proximity to or association with military involved in relief operations could put the recipients of humanitarian assistance at risk.

10. **Respect for International Legal Instruments** and **Culture and Customs.**

11. **Consent of Parties to the Conflict:** The risk of compromising humanitarian operations by cooperating with the military may be reduced if all parties to the conflict recognize, agree or acknowledge in advance that civil-military coordination might be necessary for certain humanitarian activities.

12. **Avoid Reliance on Military** resources or support.

V.1 Sharing an Operational Space

Dialogue is essential in any situation – whether military and humanitarian actors closely cooperate or just co-exist in the same operational space. The key elements of humanitarian civil-military interaction are information sharing, task division and joint planning. These key elements can be scaled up and down according to the context.

Figure 5: Operational Spectrum

The **sharing of information** between military and humanitarians should take place immediately. In natural disasters in peacetime, information sharing creates a common situational awareness to guide planning and decision-making, including on the use of available military assets to support humanitarian activities. In complex emergencies, information sharing is limited to aspects relevant for the safety and security of humanitarian workers and protection of civilians.

Under **no circumstances** will humanitarians disclose information to any group involved in an on-going armed conflict that may give tactical advantage over another group or put civilians at risk. To do so would be a direct violation of humanitarian principles and put humanitarian workers in danger. All information will be shared with all parties equally. This may include:

- **Security information:** Information relevant to the security of civilians and to the security situation in the area of operation.
- **Humanitarian locations:** The coordinates of humanitarian staff and facilities inside a military operating theatre.
- **Humanitarian activities:** Humanitarian plans and intentions, including routes and timing of humanitarian convoys and airlifts, in order to coordinate planned operations and to avoid accidental strikes on humanitarian operations or conflicting activities.

A best practice from recent complex emergencies is the early establishment of a **de-confliction mechanism,** i.e. a coordination system to share information necessary to ensure the safety of humanitarian convoys and premises (see also V.3). This can include:

- The provision of **post-strike information** on strike locations and explosive munitions used during military campaigns, to assist the prioritization and planning of humanitarian relief and mine-action activities.
- Mutual information on **mine-action activities** and **population movements.**

All humanitarian assessment data is shared online and relief activities are coordinated through the humanitarian coordination systems. If military actors carry out individual **relief activities,** these should be coordinated and shared through the coordination mechanisms to avoid duplication.

Intelligence vs. Information: For civilian and humanitarian actors, "intelligence" has a connotation of information being used for military purposes. Referring to information sharing as intelligence might alienate humanitarian actors.

Task division between military and humanitarian actors mostly happens during natural disasters. Humanitarian priorities (locations and clusters / areas of work) are identified through the humanitarian coordination mechanisms. This includes identifying potential or actual capacity gaps and the critical window of delivery of goods and services. All related military activities are ideally coordinated within this system, aligned with the identified priorities, and complementing humanitarian activities. In complex emergencies, task division may not be applicable, unless they are immediately life-saving, in particular in the context of protection of civilians.

Joint planning again depends on the context. In some natural disasters, like Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013, military and humanitarian actors are co-located in a joint operation centre and military staff officers participate in the humanitarian coordination mechanisms. In complex emergencies, joint planning is more applicable in terms of security measures, armed escorts, protection of civilians, or de-confliction mechanisms.

V.2 The Use of Military Assets

Militaries can contribute valuably to humanitarian action by responding to requests for specific capabilities and capacities to meet specific needs, for a limited period of time. Deployment of appropriate military capacity should include an exit strategy that defines how the activities can be continued with civilian personnel and means.

Military assets are often only available for a limited period of time. It is crucial to communicate the limitation of availability to the humanitarian community or organization directly assisted.

Tasks that military forces may be requested to perform in support of an overall humanitarian response operation are categorised as follows:

- **Infrastructure Support:** General services that facilitate humanitarian activities but are not necessarily visible to, or exclusively intended for the benefit of, the affected people, such as re-establishing infrastructure, providing communications networks, operating airfields, or providing weather information.
- **Indirect Assistance:** Military personnel are at least one step removed from the relief activity. Only civilian personnel have direct interface with affected people, while military units or personnel assist the activity by e.g. transporting relief items, building camps and shelters, or clearing mines or ordnance.
- **Direct Assistance:** Face-to-face distribution of goods and services, such as handing out relief items, providing medical assistance, transporting people, interviewing refugees, or locating families.

To maintain **distinction between military and humanitarian actors**, direct assistance should only be delivered by military personnel in peacetime and then only if there is no civilian alternative available ('last resort'). Military troops or assets engaged in combat will, as a general rule, not be used at all, except for infrastructure support where absolutely necessary. Table 1 helps to decide whether it is appropriate to request or use foreign military assets, or not. "Maybe" indicates situations where a judgment call has to be made by the humanitarian community on the ground, looking at the need, the life-saving aspects of the specific activity, and its possible negative implications.

Mission of Military / Humanitarian Tasks	Peaceful	Peace & Security Activities		Combat
		Peacekeeping	Peace Enforcement	
Direct Assistance	Maybe	Maybe	No	No
Indirect Assistance	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	No
Infrastructure Support	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe

Figure 6: What type of assistance is appropriate in which context?

V.3 Security and Humanitarian Access

Security and humanitarian access are main areas of civil-military interaction and dialogue. This includes military activities that may both restrict or be carried out in support of humanitarian access and security.

Humanitarian Access - *humanitarian actors' ability to reach people affected by crisis, as well as an affected population's ability to access humanitarian services* - is not only a civil-military coordination issue, it also may require political support to create conditions conducive to humanitarian action and depends on the overall security situation (see also chapter IV).

In high risk environments, necessary security measures, such as controls at airports or on-route checkpoints, slow down humanitarian convoys and impedes the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Restrictions and impediments to humanitarian access can be minimised or avoided without compromising the security efforts. While being mindful of adherence to humanitarian principles, this may include:

- Establishing a system for humanitarians to notify security forces of their intended movements, to allow quick passage.
- Security forces informing humanitarians on procedures and expected waiting times.
- Establishing de-confliction mechanisms.

De-confliction arrangements: Liaison between humanitarian actors and parties to the conflict necessary to communicate the time and location of relief activities and humanitarian convoys in order to ensure that military operations do not jeopardise the lives of humanitarian personnel, impede the passage of relief supplies or implementation of humanitarian activities, or put recipients of humanitarian assistance at risk.

If security risk management measures as described in chapter IV are not creating an acceptable level of safety and security for aid workers, the **provision of security conditions conducive to humanitarian activities** is one of the main expectations from humanitarian actors towards military components in peacekeeping operations. However, humanitarian actors see deterrent measures and armed protection as a **last resort** before having to cease life-saving assistance. As a general rule, humanitarian convoys will **not use armed escorts**. The minimum requirements to deviate from this general rule are laid out in the IASC non-binding guidelines for the use of armed escorts (see also chapter VI.2).

An alternative and good practice to deterrence measures and armed protection is to request **area security**. This may involve 'clearing' and patrolling roads, maintaining a presence in the area but not being visible or accompanying the convoy, or providing aerial flyovers.

What is 'last resort'?

The various guidelines of the humanitarian community on civil-military interaction consider the **use of foreign military assets and armed protection** a 'last resort'. That means that military assets and escorts should only be used if they are the only option to respond to a critical life-threatening situation, i.e. the need cannot be met with available civilian assets, and there are no alternatives to the activity.

Foreign military assets can provide unique advantages in terms of capability, availability, and timeliness; in this case they should complement (not replace) civilian capabilities on a temporary and time-limited basis.

Whether there are alternatives or not is different in each country and operation and may change over time. Another aspect for context-specific consideration is whether being associated with the military is thought to shrink the humanitarian space so considerably that it has unacceptable effects on the whole humanitarian operation.

Foreign military and civil defence assets in support of humanitarian emergency operations: WHAT IS LAST RESORT?

V.4 Military Civic Action and Military Aid Projects

Military forces and units do provide assistance to local communities and carry out stabilisation and reconstruction activities, in support of the mission, as part of a stabilisation mandate or counter insurgency strategy.

Military **civic action** is conducted based on the needs of the force and the mission (acceptance, security, intelligence, etc.), which is clearly different from humanitarian assistance, which follows the sole purpose to save lives. Military civic action is often conditional and may cease when the mission changes or the unit moves. The selection of recipients is based on military considerations in one and on humanitarian needs in the other case. Humanitarian assistance is provided to families and supporters of all parties, including those that a military actor may see as affiliated to enemy belligerents or as collaborators.

Depending on the mission and mandate, military motives to provide aid may be very close or similar to the humanitarian ultimate goal to alleviate suffering and save lives. Still, this is a very sensitive issue for humanitarian actors: If military and humanitarian actors carry out similar activities, **distinction** becomes very difficult to maintain, even if humanitarians are not cooperating directly with the military.

From the perspective of the local population, the differences between military and humanitarian operations might not be obvious and the distinction between military and humanitarian actors blurs. An operation in one region or country can very well affect the perception in another. Blurring of lines may have positive impacts from the military point of view, as it enhances acceptance – but it is clearly undesirable for humanitarians, as it can put in danger the people assisted, critically shrink humanitarian space or lead to suspensions of humanitarian operations due to security reasons.

It is the responsibility of both communities to maintain clear distinction between military and humanitarian actors, in particular between combatants and non-combatants who are granted immunity from attack under IHL. Military personnel must refrain from presenting themselves as humanitarian workers, and vice versa.

Where the military carries out assistance or reconstruction activities, these should not be referred to as "humanitarian" activities. However, close dialogue and coordination with humanitarian and development actors is recommended, to ensure complementarity and to avoid duplication.

V.5 Protection of Civilians

Protection is fundamental to humanitarian action. Whether a humanitarian crisis stems from armed conflict, natural disaster or civil unrest, peoples' vulnerability to violence, coercion and deprivation directly impacts on their survival and well-being. Humanitarian actors seek to minimize the risks faced by affected people. They also work closely with national authorities (or, in situations of armed conflict, parties to the conflict) that have the primary responsibility for the protection and well-being of those affected.

In armed conflict, **Protection of Civilians** refers to the structures and policies developed by the UN, States and other humanitarian actors, based on IHL, Human Rights and Refugee Law, to *protect vulnerable populations from the effects of armed conflict*. In natural disasters or complex emergencies, humanitarian agencies will address **protection** issues, which will generally focus on the most vulnerable people, often women, children, the elderly and disabled.

Military and humanitarian concepts of protection of civilians share the same basis in law, in particular IHL, but humanitarian actors use a much broader definition:

> *Protection encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the relevant bodies of IHL, Human Rights and Refugee Law (IASC).*

Protection can be seen as a legal responsibility, objective or activity. Humanitarian activities in support of protection fall into three phases:

- **Responsive** activities to prevent, stop or alleviate the effects of a threat to peoples' rights or safety, e.g. sexual or gender-based violence (SGBV), by advocating with parties to a conflict to refrain from such abuse or by providing basic medical care.

- **Remedial** responses to restore peoples' dignity and ensure adequate living conditions after an abuse, for example legal assistance if a victim of SGBV decides to take legal action.
- **Environment building** aims to build a social, cultural, institutional and legal environment conducive to respect for individual rights. This could include strengthening legislation against SGBV or training police on how to handle SGBV cases appropriately.

Certain UN agencies have specific protection mandates, including the UNHCR, UNICEF and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The majority of UN peacekeeping missions also have the specifically mandated task to protect civilians under the threat of physical violence.

The ICRC, as an independent organization, provides humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and promotes respect for IHL and its implementation in national law. Many NGOs also undertake protection activities. In humanitarian emergency situations, the work of the UN and NGOs in this area is coordinated through the **Protection Cluster**.

Humanitarian actors may engage with the military to promote adherence to IHL or to reduce risks faced by affected people, through information sharing, advocacy and training. This includes awareness-raising and measures to reduce the civilian impact of combat, as well as the promotion of the 'do no harm' concept and related methods.

In situations that are characterised by high risks for civilians, and in particular where military actors have a protection mandate, humanitarian and military actors may share information on threats against civilians. Humanitarian actors will advocate with the military to enhance security for civilians in those areas and respond to requests for information on population movements and humanitarian needs.

LEARN MORE!

OCHA on Message: Protection of Civilians
Aide Memoire on the Protection of Civilians 2014
IASC Statement on the Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action

Key points to remember: Operational Civil-Military Interaction

- Humanitarian - military dialogue is essential in all operational contexts – whether humanitarian and military actors closely cooperate or just co-exist in the same operational space.
- The kind of shared information depends on the context. Humanitarians will under no circumstances share information that gives one party to a conflict a tactical advantage or endangers civilians.
- Military forces have unique capabilities that can be crucial for life-saving humanitarian assistance – however, the potentially negative impact of being associated with military forces in the humanitarian operation must be balanced with immediate results.
- Military support to a humanitarian operation should be limited to infrastructure support and indirect assistance, in that order. Direct assistance by military personnel is an exception.
- The main humanitarian requests for military support are related to the protection of civilians and their own security in complex emergencies, and to logistics support in natural disasters.
- The humanitarian and military concepts for the protection of civilians have a common basis in International Humanitarian Law. The humanitarian definition of protection is broader and not limited to situations of armed conflict.
- In humanitarian emergency situations, the work of UN and NGO protection actors is coordinated through the Protection Cluster.
- Where the military has a protection mandate, liaison may take place to share critical information and to ensure complementarity between military and humanitarian protection activities.

VI Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination

United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) *is the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training.*

OCHA's **Civil-Military Coordination Section (CMCS)**, within the Emergency Services Branch, was established by the IASC to act as the focal point in the UN system for humanitarian civil-military coordination, to ensure the effective and efficient use of foreign military assets in humanitarian emergencies and to ensure the appropriate interface between civilian and military actors. With this mandate, CMCS deploys to and supports field operations and conducts civil-military coordination activities at headquarters level to enhance the preparedness and response capacities of national and international partners. This includes the development and oversight of guidelines, provision of training, as well as participation in workshops, conferences and simulation exercises to prepare operational partners for humanitarian crises.

UN-CMCoord should not be confused with CIMIC or UN-CIMIC concepts of military actors:

- CIMIC activities are conducted in support of political or military objectives (e.g. NATO CIMIC).
- UN-CMCoord aims to protect and promote humanitarian principles.
- UN-CIMIC in the context of a UN peacekeeping operation is conducted in support of the wider peace process and not solely in support of the military commander's intent or humanitarian objectives.

UN-CMCoord is a civilian and humanitarian function while UN-CIMIC is a military staff function in a UN Peacekeeping Mission.

LEARN MORE!

OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination
www.unocha.org/uncmcoord

VI.1 Aim of UN-CMCoord

There is no 'one size fits all' approach. UN-CMCoord aims to dynamically lead the interaction between humanitarian and military actors in an often rapidly changing environment. Its main goals are to:

- Improve collective dialogue, communication and interaction.
- Help preserve humanitarian freedom to operate, by maintaining a clear distinction of the identities, functions and roles of humanitarian and military actors.
- Ensure that the relationship between humanitarian and military/armed actors is appropriate to the operational context.
- Facilitate a coherent and consistent humanitarian approach across UN agencies and the wider humanitarian community.
- Ensure appropriate and timely use of foreign military assets as a last resort to support humanitarian operations when civilian capacities are not readily available to meet a critical humanitarian need.
- Ensure coherence of relief efforts to avoid duplication of military and humanitarian activities.

The primary tasks associated with the **UN-CMCoord function** are to:

- Establish and sustain dialogue with military forces.
- Establish a mechanism for information exchange and humanitarian interaction with military forces and other armed actors.
- Support the development and dissemination of context-specific guidelines for interaction of the humanitarian community with military and armed actors.
- Monitor activities by military forces and ensure they have no negative impact on affected people or the humanitarian community.
- Assist in negotiating issues in critical areas of coordination.

At the operational level, the UN-CMCoord function will be carried out by an OCHA Humanitarian Affairs Officer / UN-CMCoord Officer. UN-CMCoord is a shared responsibility, and essential dialogue to protect and promote humanitarian principles will be conducted at different levels between various organizations. For example, UNHCR and WFP civil-military staff may be present, focussing respectively on protection and logistics issues.

VI.2 UN-CMCoord Guidelines

A number of generic guidelines have been developed to provide direction to the humanitarian community in its interaction with the military, looking at appropriate levels in different scenarios. They were also written to encourage Member States and other actors to carefully consider the appropriate use of MCDA, in close consultation with OCHA and the ERC. These guidelines were drafted and agreed through the inter-governmental/organizational Consultative Group on the Use of MCDA (today Consultative Group on Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination) and the IASC.

The **Oslo Guidelines** address principles and standards for the use of military and civil defence assets (MCDA) in natural, technological and environmental emergencies in peacetime. They establish the basic framework for formalising and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the use of military assets and expertise in international disaster relief. The key concepts are:

- **Last resort:** Foreign MCDA should be utilised where there is no comparable civilian alternative to meet a critical humanitarian need.
- **Complementarity:** MCDA should complement existing relief mechanisms in response to an acknowledged gap between the needs of affected people and the resources available to meet those needs.
- **At no cost:** Foreign MCDA assistance should be provided at no cost.
- **Distinction:** MCDA supporting humanitarian action should be clearly distinguished from those engaged in other military missions.
- **Avoiding dependence on MCDA:** Humanitarian agencies must avoid becoming dependent on military resources and Member States are encouraged to invest in increased civilian capabilities.
- **Time-limited:** The use of MCDA should be clearly limited in time and scale and present an exit strategy.

In complex emergencies and high-risk environments, the use of foreign military assets to support humanitarian operations could have negative impacts on the impartiality, neutrality and operational independence of humanitarian action, particularly when the military forces involved are

party to the conflict. Additional guidelines and papers address these issues to guide the humanitarian community, but also the military.

The **IASC Reference Paper** on 'Civil-Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies' lay out key considerations for civil-military relations.

The **MCDA Guidelines** provide guidance "on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets to Support UN Humanitarian Activities in Complex Emergencies", to ensure that the dialogue and interaction with the military preserves the safety of humanitarians, and better assures their access to affected people. The key concepts are similar to those in the Oslo Guidelines, but contain some additional considerations:

- **Hierarchy of tasks:** Military support should focus on indirect assistance and infrastructure support. Direct assistance should only be provided as a last resort, not to compromise the distinction between military and humanitarian actors.
- **Information sharing:** In any emergency, regardless of the military forces' mandate, a mechanism should be put in place for mutual sharing of appropriate information, as far as possible.
- **Requirement for liaison:** Irrespective of the level of interaction between humanitarian and military actors, a minimum level of liaison is required.

The IASC 'Non-Binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys' (**Armed Escorts Guidelines**) underline the general rule that humanitarian actors will **not use armed escorts**. They lay out the minimum requirements for the exceptional deviation from this general rule, together with the process to request and prepare for their exceptional use.

At the country level, the generic guidelines serve as a basis for the drafting of **context-specific guidance or position papers** on the humanitarian relationship with military forces and the appropriate use of foreign military assets and armed escorts. These documents are agreed and endorsed by the HCT to better ensure a coherent and consistent approach to interaction with the military. On some occasions, relevant military actors subscribe to such documents.

VI.3 Liaison and Coordination Structures

Depending on the UN-CMCoord strategy, different liaison approaches can be used to facilitate the interface between humanitarian and military actors. The appropriate, acceptable and feasible approach depends on the nature of the emergency. The space for coordination is smaller in environments in which being seen as associated with or perceived as working with the military impedes humanitarian access and puts aid workers at risk. In these cases, liaison officers maintain a low profile and meet in a "neutral" place.

- **Co-location:** The default interface in natural disasters in peacetime.
- **Liaison Exchange:** The exchange of liaison officers, either two-way or one-way, based on need and at different levels (strategic and operational).
- **Liaison Visits:** Regular visits of liaison officers to the other party to share, update and validate information to create a common situational awareness.
- **Interlocutor:** In the most severe complex emergency situations, the default interface is to use a UN-CMCoord or third party liaison officer as conduit or interlocutor. This significantly reduces the chance of humanitarians being perceived as working with the military.

In addition, a number of coordination platforms can assist these approaches, such as:

- **Cluster Coordination**, e.g. in health, protection or logistics areas. In some natural disasters military liaison officers may be invited to cluster meetings, but most coordination is done between military officers and (inter-)cluster coordinators.
- **Liaison** between military representatives and the security cell.
- **Bilateral communication** between individual humanitarian agencies and the military.

The UN-CMCoord function helps determine, establish and maintain the most appropriate coordination structure between the humanitarian and military actors. UN-CMCoord officers can act as a **one-entry point** for military actors to the humanitarian community, to prioritize and validate requests for assistance and ensure their alignment with country-specific

guidelines. Where requests for assistance are mostly security-related, there is a strong link to security functions beyond the UN-CMCoord function.

Figure 7 shows an example from Mali in 2013, where a civil-military coordination cell was established for coordination between the different military and humanitarian actors. This cell included entry points for security and logistics coordination.

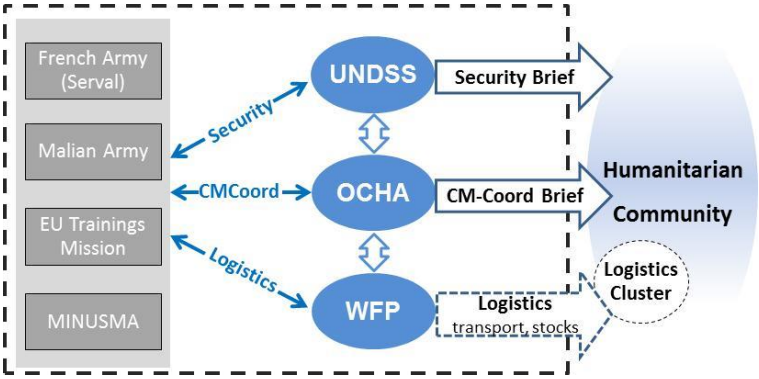

Figure 7: Example of a "Civil-Military Coordination Cell" in Mali, 2013

Key points to remember: UN-CMcoord

- UN-CMCoord is the humanitarian civil-military coordination function and mechanism, not to be confused with UN-CIMIC.
- It is a continuing process of dialogue guided by humanitarian principles. Basic strategies range from cooperation to co-existence.
- Key elements of UN-CMCoord are information sharing, task division and joint planning, to the extent possible.
- The request for and use of military assets to support humanitarian action should be considered as 'last resort'.
- The Oslo and MCDA Guidelines provide guidance on the use of military assets in natural disasters and complex emergencies. Country-specific guidelines are agreed by the HCT and the HC.
- As a general rule, humanitarian actors do not use armed escorts. The Armed Escorts Guidelines define exceptions from this general rule, promote alternatives and regulate the process to request and organise armed protection, if required.
- Liaison and coordination structures are tailored to the operational context – they take into account the feasible civil-military coordination, ranging from cooperation to co-existence, and the associated risks of perception.

Top Tips for Effective Civil-Military Coordination

DIALOGUE WITH HUMANITARIAN ACTORS:

- Remember that all humanitarian action is guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and operational independence.
- OCHA has the mandate to coordinate the humanitarian response and humanitarian - military interaction. There may be more than one entry-point to the humanitarian community.
- Take some time to understand the humanitarian coordination and leadership structure and how they are related to a peacekeeping operation.
- Humanitarian leadership and coordination are not command and control structures, but consensus-based. A humanitarian representative may not be in a position to make immediate commitments or talk for other humanitarian actors. Some NGOs may not always coordinate with the rest of the humanitarian community.
- Ranks and hierarchies are less important in humanitarian organizations. Liaison officers may be of a different corresponding level than their military counterparts.
- Do not assume western personnel are in charge.
- Distinction from the military is crucial for humanitarian actors and their security. They may prefer to meet at a neutral venue; make an appointment. Weapons are not allowed in humanitarian premises, facilities and vehicles.
- Most humanitarian actors share information about their activities and locations. Respect the fact that they cannot share information that places their staff or recipients of humanitarian assistance at risk.

Top Tips for Effective Civil-Military Coordination

SUPPORTING HUMANITARIAN OPERATIONS:

- Help provide a safe and secure environment for humanitarian action, especially by providing broad area or route security.
- Share information that may be relevant to the security of civilians and humanitarian staff, including the presence of mines and mine action activities.
- If de-confliction is necessary, establish such mechanisms at an early stage.
- As a general rule, humanitarian actors will not use military escorts or armed protection for humanitarian activities. They may request armed escorts or protection in exceptional circumstances, as a 'last resort'.
- Check the country-specific guidelines on the use of military assets and armed escorts.
- In general, all requests for military assistance should be in line with existing guidelines and approved by the HC. Some humanitarian actors may by-pass established coordination mechanisms. In case of doubt, you can refer these requests back to the UN-CMCoord officer or coordination cell.
- Do not attempt to carry out humanitarian needs assessments on your own, but report any observed relief needs to OCHA. All humanitarian assessment data are available online.
- Avoid duplicating activities of humanitarians and share information about your own.
- Share information on major civilian population movements and issues relevant to the Protection of Civilians.

Top Tips for Effective Civil-Military Coordination

VIS-À-VIS THE POPULATION AND COMMUNITIES

- ➔ Avoid raising expectations by making any promises about assistance to local authorities or populations.
- ➔ Avoid creating confusion between the roles of the military and the humanitarian agencies.
- ➔ Do not get involved in direct assistance; carefully consider indirect assistance or infrastructure support.
- ➔ Do not refer to activities carried out in support of the military mission as "humanitarian".
- ➔ When conducting relief activities, remember the 'Do No Harm' concept!
- ➔ Avoid harming or humiliating affected people, e.g. by asking inappropriate questions.

ANNEX A: Humanitarian Actors

The **Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO)** is the UN Agency with the mandate to raise levels of nutrition, improve agricultural productivity, better the lives of rural populations and contribute to the growth of the world economy. In the context of natural disasters, specifically drought, they are active with WFP in setting up drought and famine early warning systems. FAO is the co-lead of the Food Security Cluster.

The **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** helps countries build and share solutions with regard to democratic governance, poverty reduction, crisis prevention and recovery, environment and energy, and HIV/AIDS. The UNDP funds and manages the **Resident Coordinator System**. UNDP is the Early Recovery Cluster Lead.

The Office of the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** leads and co-ordinates international action to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees and to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country. UNHCR is the Protection Cluster Lead and the Co-lead of the Shelter and Camp Coordination/Camp Management Cluster. In refugee situations, UNHCR leads the humanitarian coordination through a **Refugee Coordinator**.

The **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** upholds the Convention on the Rights of the Child; acting so that all children are immunized against common childhood diseases and are well nourished; and working to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among young people. UNICEF is the Nutrition and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Cluster Lead. UNICEF co-leads the Education Cluster with the NGO Save the Children.

The **World Food Programme (WFP)** uses food aid to support economic and social development; meet refugee and other emergency food needs, and the associated logistics support; and promote world food security. Being the main provider for humanitarian logistics, WFP is likely to have a close relationship with the military in-country. WFP leads the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunication Clusters and co-leads the

Food Security Cluster with FAO. WFP also manages the **United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS).**

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** is the UN agency for public health. It works towards the eradication of communicable diseases (small pox, polio). The WHO works in development and humanitarian assistance. In emergencies, it provides basic and emergency health care, conducts vaccination campaigns in IDP and refugee situations, and promotes the protection of health facilities. WHO leads the Health Cluster and often supports the Government of an affected state to manage incoming foreign medical teams.

The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** is not a UN entity, but an **International Organization**. It works to ensure the orderly and humane management of migration. IOM also provides humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, be they refugees, displaced persons or other uprooted people. IOM is the co-lead of the Camp Coordination/Camp Management Cluster.

Some of the largest **Non-Governmental Organizations** that respond to emergencies can have dual mandates working in both emergency aid and development. Some of them also engage in advocacy, and many of them have a core philosophy or expertise such as focussing on the needs of children (Save the Children), concentrating on the elderly (Help Age), mine clearance (HALO Trust), nutrition (Action against Hunger), medical aid (Doctors without Borders). Some of the largest international NGO networks are CARE International, Caritas Internationalis, International Save the Children Alliance, Lutheran World Federation, Oxfam, World Council of Churches, and World Vision International**. Not all NGOs participate in humanitarian coordination mechanisms.** Some work very closely with the UN system (e.g. Norwegian Refugee Council), while others distance themselves to maintain independence (Doctors without Borders). They have different policies and philosophies on interaction with military actors.

Most NGOs are members of **national NGO consortia** in a country. **Global NGO consortia** are the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), Interaction (an alliance of U.S.-based NGOs), and VOICE (the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union).

ANNEX B: Key Terms and Definitions

Armed Group: An armed non-state actor engaged in conflict and distinct from a governmental force, whose structure may range from that of a militia to rebel bandits. (OCHA)

Complex Emergency: A humanitarian crisis in a country, region, or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme. (IASC)

Humanitarian Access: concerns humanitarian actors' ability to reach people affected by crisis, as well as an affected population's ability to access humanitarian services.

Humanitarian Action: Assistance, protection and advocacy actions undertaken on an impartial basis in response to human needs resulting from complex political emergencies and natural hazards. (ALNAP)

Humanitarian Actor: Humanitarian actors are civilians, whether national or international, UN or non-UN, governmental or non-governmental, which have a commitment to humanitarian principles and are engaged in humanitarian activities. (IASC)

Humanitarian Advocacy: Advocacy refers in a broad sense to efforts to promote, in the domain of humanitarian aid, respect for humanitarian principles and law with a view to influencing the relevant political authorities, whether recognized Governments, insurgent groups or other non-state actors. One could add 'international, national and local assistance agencies'. (ALNAP)

Humanitarian Assistance: Aid provided to address the physical, material and legal needs of persons of concern. This may include food items, medical supplies, clothing, shelter, seeds and tools, as well as the provision of infrastructure, such as schools and roads. "Humanitarian assistance" refers to assistance provided by humanitarian organizations for humanitarian purposes (i.e. non-political, non-commercial, and non-military purposes). (UNHCR)

Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord): The essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency, and when appropriate pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training (IASC / Consultative Group on UN-CMCoord).

Humanitarian Space: A conducive environment, where the receipt of humanitarian assistance is not conditional upon the allegiance to or support to parties involved in a conflict but is a right, independent of military and political action. (IASC)

Military Actor: Military actors refer to official military forces, i.e., military forces of a state or regional-/inter-governmental organizations that are subject to a hierarchical chain of command, be they armed or unarmed, governmental or inter-governmental. This may include a wide spectrum of actors such as the local or national military, multi-national forces, UN peacekeeping troops, international military observers, foreign occupying forces, regional troops or other officially organized troops. (IASC)

Natural Disaster: Natural disasters are events brought about by natural hazards that seriously affect the society, economy and/or infrastructure of a region. Depending on population vulnerability and local response capacity, natural disasters will pose challenges and problems of a humanitarian nature. The term "natural disaster" is used for ease. It is important to understand, however, that the magnitude of the consequences of sudden natural hazards is a direct result of the way individuals and societies relate to threats originating from natural hazards. The magnitude of the consequences is, thus, determined by human action, or the lack thereof. (IASC)

Protection: encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the relevant bodies of IHL, Human Rights and Refugee Law. (IASC)

ANNEX C: Overview of the Logistics Cluster

The **Logistics Cluster** may be activated in response to sudden-onset disasters and complex emergencies depending on the scale of the disaster, the logistics capacity of responding organizations, and the urgency of delivering relief items to affected people. The Logistics Cluster is **led by WFP**. When activated, the Logistics Cluster will deploy to the scene of an emergency, a **Cluster Coordinator** who is responsible for assessing logistics needs and identifying gaps in capacity, developing a **Concept of Operations (ConOps)** to fill identified gaps, and implementing logistics activities to ensure a coordinated response operation takes place. The Logistics Cluster Coordinator reports to the senior representative of WFP in the area of operation, who is ultimately responsible to ensure that WFP fulfils its Cluster responsibilities as assigned by the IASC.

As a part of the Concept of Operations the Logistics Cluster may offer services including coordination and information management, consolidated mapping or GIS services, and common logistics services (air/marine/ground transport, warehousing, fuel provision, etc.) to the humanitarian community as required. WFP, in its role as Logistics Cluster lead agency has committed to serving as a **provider of last resort** where logistics services are vital to an operation, yet are unavailable. Services implemented are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of other organizations, nor are they meant to compete with the commercial transport market; they are intended solely to fill identified gaps for a specific period of time.

At the global level the Logistics Cluster constantly works to further develop useful tools and initiatives to improve the performance of national-level Logistics Clusters and the overall humanitarian logistics community. These activities include: supporting operations (providing personnel to augment local capacity as required); engaging in preparedness activities; conducting trainings; strategic planning; information management and the dissemination of all information related to global operations through the Logistics Cluster website (www.logcluster.org).

ANNEX D: Bibliography

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- The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols
- The Humanitarian Programme Cycle and the Cluster Coordination Reference Modules (IASC)
- Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response – SPHERE Handbook (2011)
- Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief
- General Assembly resolution 46/182
- General Assembly resolution 58/114

An extensive list of publications is available at:
http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination-tools/UN-CMCoord/publications

Abbreviations

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CBO	Community-based organization
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation (NATO)
CMCS	Civil-Military Coordination Section (OCHA)
CON-OPS	Concept of Operations
CSO	Civil society organization
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DO	Designated Official
DPKO	Department for Peacekeeping Operations (UN Secretariat)
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
DSS	Department of Safety and Security (UN Secretariat)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
GDACS	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HPC	Humanitarian Programme Cycle
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDRL	International disaster response laws, rules and principles
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
INGO	International Non-governmental organization
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
IO	International organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
LOGIK	Logistics Information About In-Kind Relief Aid
MCDA	Military and Civil Defence Assets
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NEO	Non-combatant Evacuation Operations
NGO	Non-governmental organization

OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN Secretariat)
OFDA	Office of the United States Foreign Disaster Assistance
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
POW	Prisoner of War
RC	Resident Coordinator
RCRC	Red Cross / Red Crescent (Movement)
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SLT	Saving Lives Together framework
SMT	Security Management Team
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
THW	German Federal Agency for Technical Relief
UN	United Nations
UN-CIMIC	United Nations Civil-Military Coordination (UN peace operations)
UN-CMCOORD	Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN humanitarian)
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Services
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WCO	World Customs Organisation
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Web Resources

OCHA's Civil-Military Coordination Section maintains a virtual dialogue platform for humanitarian - military issues, with up-to-date information, training material and events: https://sites.google.com/a/dialoguing.org/humanitarian-military-dialogue/home
OCHA information on UN-CMCoord, including links to global, and country and organization-specific guidelines: http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination-tools/UN-CMCoord/overview
The ICRC provides comprehensive information about IHL on: http://www.icrc.org
Information about the RCRC Movement, links to national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, RCRC disaster information and the Disaster Law Database: https://www.ifrc.org and https://ifrc.org/en/publications/disaster-law-database/
UN OCHA website: http://www.unocha.org
OCHA Humanitarian Reports (regular country SitReps): http://www.unocha.org/about-us/publications/humanitarian-reports
OCHA on Message (2-pagers to explain important concepts such as Humanitarian Principles, Protection, UN-CMCoord, etc.): http://www.unocha.org/about-us/publications/OOM
Reliefweb, the leading information database for humanitarian response, contains situation reports, analyses, maps and info-graphics on crises and natural disasters, and information by country: http://reliefweb.int
Financial Tracking System: http://fts.unocha.org/
Logistics Information about in-kind relief aid: http://logik.unocha.org/
Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre V-OSOCC: http://vosocc.unocha.org/
Further information about the cluster approach and humanitarian programme cycle, and country-specific platform for coordination / information sharing: https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/
Website of the IASC with all IASC guidelines on humanitarian coordination and different topics: www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc
Overseas Development Institute research project "Civil-military coordination: The search for common ground": http://www.odi.org.uk/projects/2581-civil-military-coordination-humanitarian