

# Protection

**Protection is central to humanitarian action. Humanitarian actors risk becoming part of the problem unless they assess and understand how their actions can affect people's safety.**

Factoring protection in from the outset can reduce risk and avoid perpetuating threats and doing further harm.

**This is the responsibility of all humanitarian actors.**



## Common risks and threats

### Personal violence

- Killing, wounding, torture, or disappearance
- Rape, sexual gender-based violence (SGBV)

### Deprivation

- Theft or destruction of assets; seizure or violation of land or water access rights.
- Deprivation of rights to education, property, economic opportunity, health

### Limited movement & restricted access

- Forced conscription, prostitution, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, slavery or abduction
- Forced relocation, family separation
- Restrictions on movement or access for services or livelihoods
- Restrictions on political or religious participation and association
- Loss or theft of personal identity, ownership and citizen's rights

## What is protection mainstreaming?

**Protection mainstreaming** incorporates protection principles, meaningful access, safety and dignity in all aspects of humanitarian aid.

<b>1. Avoid causing harm</b>	Prevent and minimise as much as possible any unintended negative effects of your intervention (or non-intervention) which can increase people's vulnerability to both physical and psychosocial risks. Prioritise safety and dignity.
<b>2. Enable access</b>	Arrange for people's access to assistance and services - in proportion to need and without any barriers (e.g. discrimination). Pay special attention to individuals and groups who may be particularly vulnerable or have difficulty accessing assistance and services.
<b>3. Be accountable</b>	Set up appropriate mechanisms through which affected populations can measure the adequacy of interventions, and address concerns and complaints.
<b>4. Empower and participate</b>	Support community capacity to protect themselves (see <i>Forced Displacement and IDPs</i> page) and claim their rights, including - not exclusively - the rights to shelter, food, water and sanitation, health and education.

Extract from the [Global Protection Cluster – Projection Mainstreaming Brief](#) © 2012.

Also see the ['The Sphere Project – Protection Principles'](#)

## How do we mainstream protection?

- Understand people's rights and determine who is at risk, and why.
- Consider consequences of action or inaction in relation to any threats.
- Facilitate representation and participation by all groups, especially the most marginalised and vulnerable.
- Identify and mitigate protection risks in all areas of activity (sectors) and at all stages of the project cycle.
- Prioritise Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and minimise risk of abuse by humanitarian staff or partners.
- Ensure staff and partners know how and where to refer people for support.
- Advocate for action on specific threats e.g. dialogue with parties to a conflict to improve people's access to assistance or safety.
- Collaborate and coordinate with other agencies to enhance protection in practice e.g. through sector or cluster coordination.

### Additional resources on the All In Diary website

Protection Mainstreaming Toolkit, © GPC, 2017  
 Professional Standards for Protection Work, © ICRC, 2013  
 Minimum Inter-Agency Standards for Protection Mainstreaming,  
 © World Vision, 2012

### Web links for further information

Global Protection Cluster <http://www.globalprotectioncluster.org>  
 ICRC [http://www.icrc.org/protecting\\_civilians](http://www.icrc.org/protecting_civilians)  
 ProCap: [www.humanitarianresponse.info/procap](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/procap)  
 PSEA Task force: <http://www.pseatastaskforce.org/>