

# Sphere

## Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response

**The 2018 Sphere Handbook\* sets out what people affected by disaster have a right to expect from humanitarian assistance and provides common terms of reference for humanitarian agencies.** It includes:

- **The Humanitarian Charter** - the cornerstone of the Handbook
- **Protection Principles** - a set of three essential principles
- **The Core Humanitarian Standard** - which applies to all aspects of response. (*see the Core Humanitarian Standard page*)
- **Minimum Standards** - in four key life-saving areas (*see next two pages*)
- **Delivering through Markets** - annex on supply chain and logistics including cash based programming which applies to all standards

\* This page is based on the draft 2018 Handbook – please check the Sphere website for updates

### Humanitarian Charter

- describes the core ethical and legal principles that govern the actions of states, non-state actors and civil society in humanitarian response.
- reaffirms the primacy of the humanitarian imperative (*to provide immediate aid to people whose survival is threatened*) and spells out three overarching rights:
  - **The right to life with dignity**
  - **The right to receive humanitarian assistance**
  - **The right to protection and security.**
- restates the principles of impartiality, proportionality, non-refoulement and 'do no harm' as well as the distinction between civilians and combatants.

### Protection Principles – applicable in all aspects of response

Protection is concerned with the safety, dignity and rights of people affected by disaster or armed conflict. It is central to all humanitarian action because it helps people avoid or recover from violence, coercion and deliberate deprivation.

The three **protection principles** and supporting guidance notes in Sphere outline the manner in which **all humanitarians** should work with those affected.

<b>1. PREVENT:</b>	enhance the safety, dignity and rights of affected people, and avoid exposing people to further harm
<b>2. RESPOND:</b>	ensure people's access to impartial assistance – in proportion to need and without discrimination
<b>3. REMEDY:</b>	assist people to claim their rights and access appropriate remedies

These principles may be inter-dependent and carried out simultaneously. They promote the safety, dignity and rights of people in three ways:

- mainstreaming protection risks, activities and related information across all humanitarian programmes;
- integrating specific protection objectives into humanitarian assistance;
- promoting specific and/or specialised protection activities that address specific protection risks and violations.

### Additional resources on All In Diary website

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### Web links for further information

<http://www.sphereproject.org/> – in several languages  
<http://www.sphereproject.org/learning/e-learning-course/>

### Key messages of the Humanitarian Charter

All people affected by disaster or conflict have the right to receive humanitarian assistance;

All people affected by disaster or conflict - women, men, boys and girls - have the right to life with dignity;

The safety and security of people in situations of disaster or conflict is of particular humanitarian concern;

We acknowledge that our fundamental accountability must be to those we seek to assist;

During armed conflict, protection and assistance shall be given to those not engaged in the conflict;

Attempts to provide humanitarian assistance may sometimes have adverse effects.