

HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

The Principles

Humanity Prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect human life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all people.

Impartiality Humanitarian action should be based solely based on need, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress without making any distinction between nationalities, race, gender, religion, beliefs, class, or political opinions.

Neutrality Humanitarian workers should not take sides in hostile situations or get involved in political, racial, religious, or ideological controversies.

Independence Humanitarian action should be independent of any political, economic, military, or other objectives that any actor may hold regarding areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

Voluntary Service, Unity, Universality, are additional humanitarian principles applicable to the Red Cross movement.

The humanitarian principles, which are supported by the Red Cross movement, co-exist with all forms of humanitarian action, including historical actions. While their meaning is broad (**nearly 500 international humanitarian NGOs** adhere to the "Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief") their proper application requires both commitment and agility on the part of humanitarian workers.

Although the definitions are normative and widely adopted, **the practical application of the principles is a daily challenge for all humanitarian workers**. Humanitarian workers must be creative in implementing their charters in the face of political, legal, security, geographical or moral challenges.

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- Every humanitarian worker should respect these principles, be able to explain them and demand that they be respected.
 - Humanitarian principles guide aid workers' decisions.
 - Every humanitarian worker applies and embodies these principles.
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