# Module 4: Refugee Protection: Actors & Roles

## **Objectives**

- Map the actors that can and do provide protection to refugees;
- Describe the mandated roles of some of the international, national, and non-governmental actors working with refugees;
- List the current protection activities of the actors;
- Describe how working in a complementary fashion improves protection for refugees.

# Responsibilities

- International law defines legal obligations on states and warring parties to provide protection and assistance and refrain from behaviour that violates fundamental human rights;
- It is the primary role of the state to provide assistance and protection when people's capacity to cope has been exceeded.

#### **Mandates**

- Express mandates given by states;
- Express mandate to deal with particular situations;
- Express mandate for either a specific group of people or specific task.

### **Mandate of the UNHCR**

- $^{\circ}$ ... providing international protection... to refugees...  $^{\circ}$
- "... and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees by assisting Governments"
- "... to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of such refugees, or their assimilation"

#### **Mandate of the ICRC**

- "The ICRC acts in time of war, civil war or internal disturbances or tension, protecting and assisting civil and military victims"
- Promoter of the Geneva Conventions
- Neutral intermediary

# **Humanitarian agencies**

- Humanitarian agencies define their role in relation to the primary roles and responsibilities;
- This role reflects the reality that those responsible are not always willing or able;
- NGOs must also recognise and support the protection and assistance mandates of the ICRC and UNHCR under international law.

#### **Formal** Informal **STATES Obligations** UN Mandated for protection Delivery of ICRC . duties by **NGOs** Mandated for protection and assistance in agents of **Principles** assistance the state & Codes times of conflict **Communities** & Individuals **Rights**

#### **Task instructions**

- Try to put yourselves in the position of a refugee in this context;
- Make a list of all the actors who play a role, positive or negative, in your protection (one actor per post-it note);
- Arrange the actors on a flip chart to make an actor map that shows the respective roles of actors and links between them. Use markers to add text and connecting lines if necessary;
- How would you like the map to look? Use a different colour to indicate those potential protection providers that are not currently activated.

