

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

“... providing international protection... to refugees...”

“... 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

Delivery of duties by agents of the state

Communities & Individuals

Rights

UN

Mandated for protection and assistance

ICRC

Mandated for protection and assistance in times of conflict

NGOs Principles & Codes

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.

Aide memoire


