



Our Shared Commitment to Principled Humanitarian Action

Major donors are simultaneously decreasing their funding and increasing pressure to align humanitarian actions with political agendas. The shockingly sudden withdrawal of aid by the United States has halved the global humanitarian budget, and other donors including Germany, Switzerland, the UK, France, Netherlands and Belgium are also reducing their commitments, redirecting funds to military spending or domestic priorities.

These are not simple policy adjustments; they are choices that have had an immediate and devastating impact on people facing already crippling humanitarian crises. From the raging conflicts in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to the makeshift shelters of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, impossible choices are being made to ration food, medicine, and services. These are not mere efficiencies, they are brutal decisions on which mother receives assistance and protection and which does not, which child lives or dies.

As local, national and international NGOs working to serve these people we acknowledge we must react swiftly and with principle. The world has changed, and we must adapt where possible and stand firm where necessary, even while impossible choices are being taken.

To ensure we can effectively serve those most in need now and in the future, we must resist the politicisation of aid and rely on our humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence that enable us to strive to reach whoever is most in need, wherever they are, with vital assistance and protection.

We must reaffirm our commitment to principles and standards as outlined in the [Humanitarian Charter](#), which expresses our shared conviction as humanitarian agencies that all people affected by disaster or conflict have a right to receive protection and assistance to ensure the basic conditions for life with dignity.

We must become even more steadfastly needs-based, to ensure we do not serve those easier to reach above those who we know we must. This will require sharing data and resources to maintain a credible evidence base of need and using this to collectively advocate to donors and partners.

We must ensure local actors and communities are fully engaged in the decisions about the assistance they receive and prioritize local and community-led response that is properly supported by national and international partners and donors.

We must cede space where necessary, either because the need is greatest elsewhere or to ensure the best-placed actors can sustain their presence, so that a scarcity of resources does not drive competition.

We must recognize that when NGOs become too dependent on any one major donor it gives political actors unprecedented control over humanitarian decisions. To ensure our independence, we must diversify funding and partnerships.

We must resist the arguments for blind pragmatism and the promises that funding can be restored if we go where we're directed, turn away from our commitments to gender, diversity and inclusion, or quiet our voices.

We must take the decisions that are necessary within our own organization, and do this in consultation with our local, national and international partners to ensure that, as best possible, we can maintain a protection-centred response that is prioritized to meet the greatest needs.

We must continue to stand together in solidarity with those most affected by conflict and crisis and to condemn all attacks on humanitarian workers and civilians.

Together, we must defend the principles and values that define us!