

Humanitarian Policy

of

IDPs and Refugees Relief Committee - IRRC

December 4, 2013

1. IRRC definition and content of Humanitarian Action

The IDP and Refugee Relief Committee (IRRC) understands the Humanitarian Action as follows:

Humanitarian Action is an organised set of actions oriented to protect, help and assist people in distress or need, based on certain ethical values and attitudes.

This Humanitarian Action covers the following areas of intervention:

- ✓ Saving human lives;
- ✓ Protecting human dignity;
- ✓ Satisfying basic needs;
- ✓ Alleviating suffering;
- ✓ Protecting human rights; and
- ✓ Prevent and reduce future risks.

2. Ethics, values and codes of conduct

2.1 Ethics and Values of IRRC

Ethics are the centre of our humanitarian response. Therefore, IRRC believes that humanitarian work should be grounded in ethical values. IRRC respects and seeks to implement International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Humanitarian Customs and also the International Codes of Conduct related to humanitarian work¹. This will be complied by all levels of IRRC. IRRC will commit to do good and avoiding any harm or negative consequences in the long run due to our humanitarian interventions

In order to do so, IRRC grounds its ethics in the following values:

- ✓ Dignity;
- ✓ Compassion;
- ✓ Fairness; and
- ✓ Cultural respect.

We will do our humanitarian work:

- ✓ In an impartial manner;
- ✓ Applying peaceful problem solving;
- ✓ With independence from external interferences; and
- ✓ We will work with transparency and take responsibility of our decisions.

¹The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief:

2.2 Codes of Conduct

IRRC is willing to learn and abide to the international humanitarian code of conduct, and related humanitarian standards (such as SPHERE) and implement them appropriately.

3. Commitment and approach

3.1 IRRC is committed to:

- ✓ Put people at the centre of our humanitarian work.
- ✓ Provide its humanitarian assistance with full respect of people's dignity.
- ✓ Consult with people we work with for need assessment, programme design and key decisions affecting them.
- ✓ Have frequent communication with people we work for and be accountable to them.
- ✓ Stand firmly on our humanitarian policy and its principles and keeping IRRC free from inappropriate external pressures like political, religion, donors interests, etc.
- ✓ To protect, promote and learn International Humanitarian Law (IHL).
- ✓ To ensure humanitarian access and delivery through advocacy or humanitarian negotiation as required.
- ✓ Put humanitarian aspects in any peace building process.
- ✓ Be prepared for responding to natural disasters and work on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)
- ✓ Learn from others and from the past experiences.

3.2 IRRC will apply the following approaches in its humanitarian response.

IRRC will combine as appropriate different humanitarian approaches, in order to fulfil all rights and needs of people affected by natural or man-made disasters. These approaches are:

Rights-based Approach - IRRC respects, promote and follow the Rights of people affected by disasters in its humanitarian assistant activities.

Needs-based Approach - IRRC applies a needs based approach. Satisfaction of basic human needs is a priority and a must for IRRC, this will be done while promoting their rights and with adequate judgement of which actions to take according to circumstances.

IRRC will do humanitarian responses with care to prevent and avoid harmful consequential effects, ("Do No Harm").

Combining these approaches will require sound judgement based on an active listening of victims needs, claims, demands and concerns.

4. IRRC Vision, Mission and Mandate

4.1 Vision

IRRC's vision is that all people living in Kachin State and Northern Shan State will have a safe life being their humanitarian rights and needs fully covered.

4.2 Mission and Mandate

IRRC's Mission is to assist people affected by disasters to protect their dignity and fulfil their rights, building in their own capacities and identities. This includes man made and natural disasters in Kachin State and Northern Shan State.

IRRC's humanitarian Mandate is to effectively, efficiently and timely assist and protect people who are affected by disasters, through promoting and enhancing local capacity, community resilience and adhering to international humanitarian principles and standards.

5. Humanitarian Niche

5.1 Humanitarian Cycle

IRRC was formed to assist and protect war affected internally displaced persons and refugees. IRRC is committed to expand its work to those affected by natural disasters; thus, when disaster strikes, IRRC will be on the scene within 48 hours. Its response will cover, as far as possible the whole cycle of humanitarian action (emergency response, rehabilitation and linking with development)².

Therefore, IRRC will link its humanitarian response with rehabilitation and development through relevant and specialised departments and agencies. Disaster resilience strategy will be included in all steps.

5.2 Regional Focus

IRRC geographic priority areas are the Kachin State and Northern Shan State. But, as far as possible IRRC will also assist people across the border areas.

Taking into account that the Kachin State, where IRRC mainly operates has 2 international borders³ its humanitarian work will be affected by this fact in terms of

²IRRC defines the humanitarian cycle as follows:

- Step-1: Emergency response
- Step-2: Rehabilitation
- Step-3: Linking development

³China and India

displacement and refuge, international law, economy and international diplomacy. Therefore, IRRIC Humanitarian policy is sensitive to all these aspects.

5.3 Priority Populations

IRRC will respond to the needs of most vulnerable and needed populations in humanitarian emergency situations, giving higher priority to women, elderly and children⁴.

In addition, the following vulnerability criteria will serve as further guiding principle to select priority population:

- Higher percentage of vulnerable groups (e.g. children, women and disable);
- Complete destruction of livelihood;
- Major loss of basic infrastructure;
- Remote and least accessible area; and
- Limited access to other humanitarian agencies.

5.4 Clusters' Work

IRRC will coordinate in all the humanitarian clusters and will do direct work in the following sectors where IRRC has enough capacity:

- ✓ Camp management;
- ✓ Food and nutrition;
- ✓ Shelter;
- ✓ WASH; and
- ✓ Protection.

Additionally if IRRC has capacity the following sectors will be covered.

- ✓ Education.
- ✓ Health.

Cash grant will also be used as a specific tool to reinforce sectoral interventions, such as livelihoods, health.

6. Partnership & Coordination

6.1 Partnership

IRRC accepts that a partnership is a relationship of mutual respect between two or more autonomous organisations that is founded upon a common purpose with defined expectations and responsibilities. Quality partnerships are based upon trust and mutual respect. IRRC puts value on equitable partnership.

- IRRC will work with all partners that observe and share IRRC's humanitarian values and principles, including that of accountability and transparency to all stakeholders;

⁴As usually they are the most vulnerable groups.

- IRRC emphasises equality in terms of responsibility with partners;
- IRRC will work with its partners to agree on the programme to put in practice.

6.2 Coordination

IRRC is committed to provide effective coordination in Kachin and Northern Shan State. IRRC will be transparent with its plans, activities with its partners and local authorities. IRRC will take a humanitarian policy guiding role to partner organisations.

Coordination Purpose: The purpose of coordination with all relevant humanitarian actors is to increase efficiency and impact of IRRC work. Therefore, IRRC will be selective in choosing different fora in which it will participate and coordinate.

- ✓ With communities (getting human resources – volunteers, getting information, communities' needs, participating and ownership);
- ✓ With Local NGOs, CSOs, faith based organisations, UN agencies, International NGOs and donors,. (information sharing, identified communities' needs, collaboration in order to avoid overlap activities); and
- ✓ Local authorities and related departments (getting approval and support).

7. Human Resource policy

7.1 Staffing:

In order to fulfil its humanitarian policy, the IRRC has its own staff plus those seconded from other departments (eg. Health, Education, etc...) plus volunteers coming from communities and other organisations. IRRC will seek for ad hoc advisors as required. All these staff should have the right professional competence to perform the humanitarian work. Therefore, specialised technical support teams will be in place (Water Engineers, Nutrition Specialists, etc...).

IRRC commits to involve more women and young people as part of its staffing and recruitment policy, seeking for gender balance and broader participation of new generations in the humanitarian affairs.

7.2 Safety and Security:

IRRC takes care of the wellbeing of its staff. IRRC will implement its security protocols in risky areas. These protocols include safety travelling, risk assessment, etc...

7.3 Staff Development and Retention

IRRC promotes professional development of its staff as far as possible. Ensuring that staff of all levels have the knowledge, skills and capacity to work and lead in a

humanitarian environment. IRRC is committed to developing humanitarian capacity in the geographical areas where it operates.

IRRC is open to consider how to invest collectively with other local partners to build this human resource capacity. This may include working with experienced humanitarian organisations to have staff seconded and/or to mentor and coach local staff.

The ability to maintain and retain experienced personnel is vital for IRRC's humanitarian activities. Therefore, IRRC will ensure that these experienced personnel will be available at all levels. IRRC will seek for the staff stability; for seconded staff, assignment should be at least for a 2 years period.

IRRC uses incentive criteria for volunteers, this includes training opportunities, exposure to other organisations, recognition and certification of work done as well as cash incentives if appropriate.

8. Accountability: Communications, M&E, complaint mechanisms

IRRC is committed to:

- Establish accountability and transparency mechanisms⁵;
- ensuring the provision of key information, communication and participation of communities and other relevant stakeholders;
- Enable beneficiaries and their representatives to participate in programme decisions and give their informed consent;
- Establish and implement a complaints-handling procedure;
- Financial transparency, as this is an important aspect of an organisation's accountability; and
- Monitor and evaluate IRRC's programmes internally and independently.

9. Finance Policy

9.1 Income

In order to fulfil its mandate, IRRC seeks resources from different sources to cover programme activities and running costs. Among all those sources IRRC counts on:

- (1) KIO.
- (2) Kachin Diaspora.
- (3) Civil Society Organisations.
- (4) Private Sector (Individual donors, enterprises, etc...)
- (5) INGOs and NGOs

IRRC will apply ethical criteria on acceptance of donations and grants, and will follow best practices for income generation.

⁵ Inspired on the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) standards and principles.

9.2 Availability of Resources

In order to be able to respond in a speedy manner, IRRC adopts a flexible mechanism to make resources available. In consequence an Emergency Fund is constituted from different sources. The available Fund to meet emerging humanitarian needs is kept at a significant amount of money per year. This emergency fund is constantly replenished to sustain it. Main decisions will be made by the Head of the Committee.

9.3 Financial Transparency

IRRC is committed to accountability and transparency through professional financial management. IRRC ensures financial transparency and accountability in all its budget planning, (income and expenditure), to its partners and communities.

In addition to internal auditing mechanism, an annual external independent financial audit will be conducted. If the partners require a specific external audit there must be prior agreement between IRRC and the partner.

9.4 Administration Costs

IRRC will budget 5% for all humanitarian programmes for its efficient and effective administration. This administration costs⁶ stand as a principle of good management and professional dignity. However, special consideration could be made upon negotiation with partners if specific circumstances concur.

9.5 Conditionality of Aid

IRRC recognises that some donors have specific requirements and conditions. IRRC may accept conditions that are feasible and do not affect quality of the programme implementation or its impact.

If the conditions agreed between IRRC and donor change due to various circumstances, IRRC Secretary (Coordinator) will be responsible for immediate communication and negotiation with the donor.

10. Logistics

IRRC counts on professional logistical capacity to implement its humanitarian work, this includes:

- ✓ Specialised staff (logisticians);
- ✓ Storage capacity and management (warehouse management);
- ✓ Transport capacities (owned and hired);
- ✓ Specialised equipments and materials according to IRRC's cluster priorities;
- ✓ Procurement and chain supply management policy; and
- ✓ Criteria for maintenance and rotation of equipments.

Procurement procedures and logistics, will be in line with IRRC's finance policy.

⁶ Administration cost as defined in IRRC's Finance Policy.

11. Advocacy

11.1 Focus

IRRC's humanitarian advocacy focuses on the following priorities/issues:

- ✓ Humanitarian needs;
- ✓ Rights of those affected by disasters;
- ✓ Humanitarian access;
- ✓ Role and humanitarian space for IRRC; and
- ✓ Humanitarian funding.

11.2 Audience

IRRC targets the following audiences:

- ✓ Donors;
- ✓ UN Agencies;
- ✓ INGOs;
- ✓ Partners (Local NGOs and others); and
- ✓ International and national governments.

11.3 Approach

- IRRC is committed to advocate evidences, its experience and know-how of the humanitarian situations in Kachin and Northern Shan States.
- Best practices, case studies will be collected and disseminated.
- Participation in State and National and International level advocacy work, and related fora.

12. Knowledge Management

- ✓ IRRC will document lessons learnt through evaluations and by producing and disseminating the visual materials.
- ✓ IRRC will ensure a learning environment as well as evidence base and research seminars.
- ✓ IRRC will share its learnings and knowledge with relevant stakeholders. However, IRRC will be sensitive to the context and use of the knowledge that can have negative impact on the communities, or IRRC's staff, work or reputation.
- ✓ IRRC will retain staff knowledge by ensuring adequate handing over, debriefing and induction processes with outgoing and incoming staff.