COHERENCE

Against a background of decreased respect for IHL and Refugee Law, and with increased pressure to link humanitarian action to activities related to security and migration, humanitarian agencies found it more difficult to align their actions with humanitarian principles, and to build support for IHL.
Increased security concerns have forced difficult choices between staff safety and the provision of assistance to people in need, and security and developmental agendas at policy level have made it more difficult to provide humanitarian aid in an impartial and neutral manner. Humanitarian actors are also concerned that they are becoming more involved in attempts by states to control flows of migrants and refugees.
Coherence

In brief
The criterion of coherence is used in this report to indicate the degree to which humanitarian agencies follow core humanitarian principles, as well as the degree to which their actions encourage support for IHL and refugee law. There is a sense among humanitarian agencies that this has become more difficult over the period: increased security concerns have forced difficult choices between staff safety and the provision of assistance to people in need, and security and developmental agendas at policy level have made it more difficult to provide humanitarian aid in an impartial and neutral manner. Humanitarian actors are also concerned that they are becoming more involved in attempts by states to control flows of migrants and refugees.

Humanitarian advocacy and negotiation has seen a number of successes – particularly at the country level – and has improved in a number of ways since the SOHS 2015 report. Donor states – often supported or lobbied by other humanitarian actors – have combined to create agreements to support IHL. However, these agreements appear to have had limited effect on the ground. The reporting period saw numerous flagrant breaches of IHL and refugee law. While this is not new, there are indications that the situation has got worse since 2015. Interviewees also suggested that states that had previously supported the international legal regime are increasingly taking actions that suggest this support is weakening.

To what degree are humanitarian efforts coherent with core principles and IHL?
The four core principles of humanitarian action are:

- **Humanity**: human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.

- **Impartiality**: humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, making no distinctions by nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinion.

- **Neutrality**: humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

- **Independence**: The autonomy of humanitarian objectives from any actors’ political, economic, military or other objectives.
Practitioners responding to the survey were fairly positive about the degree to which their agencies and operations followed these principles: 82% said that their agencies were good or excellent in following the principle of humanity; 75% responded good or excellent with respect to impartiality, 73% with respect to neutrality and 68% with respect to independence. These results did not differ significantly from one context to another, and were very similar to responses in 2015. Results from people affected by crisis were similar in that they also suggested that agencies uphold the principle of humanity more effectively than the others, although responses were slightly less positive: 68% of respondents in the beneficiary survey said that they felt treated with respect by aid providers, and in recent Ground Truth surveys the mean score for this was higher than for any other criterion (Ground Truth Solutions, 2017). If we use ‘treating crisis-affected people with respect’ as a proxy for following the principle of humanity, then humanitarians appear to be doing fairly well here. Ground Truth also asked affected people about the degree to which they think that aid is fair (a proxy for impartiality). Responses are less positive, but at 2.7/5 were still better than for most other areas (Outcomes; Recipient Independence; Aid Appropriateness; and Recipient Voice).

In the period 2015–17 there were several high-profile attempts to make humanitarian action more principled. In the 2017 self-reporting exercise following the World Humanitarian Summit, 20 organisations noted that they had taken steps to train staff in the principles or to further embed them in their programming (David et al., 2017). In the case studies, many interviewees working in humanitarian operations (in all three contexts) said that they applied – or attempted to apply – the principles, and gave numerous examples of how they did this.

A significant majority of those who discussed the principles felt that they were relevant and important to humanitarian action. As one NGO worker put it: ‘it’s part of our DNA … we aren’t there to make money, we are there to deliver aid according to the principles’. Interviewees working in situations of conflict – as well as a number of key informants – made the point that the principles are not only a value system, but also an important operational tool. In the words of an NGO manager: ‘Losing impartiality, neutrality, would be the worst mistake we humanitarians could make … we have access to places only because we do good work and people know we don’t have a political position’. Interviewees – particularly on the ground – were also under no illusions as to how difficult principled aid work can be. Several discussed the principles as ideals to aim for, recognising that they would seldom, if ever, be fully achieved. Others talked of daily negotiations and attempts to balance principles against concrete constraints, such as denial of access. What emerged was a constant attempt to hold to the principles in the midst of shifting political pressures. This mirrors the findings of other recent research, which suggests that ‘[a]dherence to the core humanitarian principles involves contradictions and compromises’ (Haver and Carter, 2016: 10).
Some interviewees (albeit a relatively small number) specifically questioned the principle of neutrality. These interviewees tended to be involved in explicitly political social justice work advocating for the rights of marginalised ethnic or caste groups. In previous ALNAP research, one local NGO explained: ‘I think we have to be impartial, being neutral paralyses us. Being neutral places you in zero, and that is paralyzing. Being impartial does not paralyse you but you have a position, you have a voice, you have something to say. Some INGOs say they are neutral. Well we are not, we are impartial, we are in favour of the families, the victims, which does not leave me at zero. I have a position, I have a discourse’ (Saavedra, 2016: 40). Discussions around neutrality are not new: it was not included in the 2014 Core Humanitarian Standard because ‘[m]any humanitarian organisations that actively engage in both advocacy related to justice and humanitarian action do not believe that they are able to fully adhere to this principle’ (CHS Alliance et al., 2014: 5). At the same time, experts in this area stress that advocacy – as long as it is even-handed and addresses threats to rights from all parties – is entirely neutral. The growth of citizens’ groups providing assistance to irregular migrants in Europe may have added to this debate, at least in the European context.

Several key informants also suggested that, as national and local organisations gain more influence in the sector, the humanitarian principles may be increasingly questioned, either because they are cultural constructs of a ‘Western’ system, and as such not appropriate to other cultures, or because many national and local NGOs are explicitly political. Interviews for the case studies, however, showed how difficult (and perhaps unhelpful) it is to make this sort of generalisation. A number of interviewees from local authorities and civil society organisations suggested that they fully agreed that humanitarian action should be conducted according to the principles. As one local government official said: ‘they are very close to our own cultural and religious beliefs. What we don’t understand is why, in the name of the principles, the NGOs avoid us’. Research in Afghanistan, Somalia and Syria has found that local actors use a number of ethical frameworks (including Islamic principles and the Hippocratic Oath) to separate humanity from politics (Haver and Carter, 2016). On occasion, people in crisis themselves may question the value of the principles. In at least one evaluation ‘parts of the population … did not see the use of armed escorts as a problem. They preferred to receive secured assistance than see it delayed or cancelled for the sake of “independence”’ (Lawday et al., 2016: 20).

The evidence for this report – and in particular the case studies – show that the humanitarian principles (in practice) are not unerringly applied, nor do they command instant respect. They are better thought of as norms to be considered, argued over and understood in context. From this perspective, localisation does not in itself challenge principled action, but it certainly increases the number of voices in the discussion. Rather, the main challenges to coherence in the period 2015–17 appear to have come from another direction entirely – increased pressure from states (including donors) to align humanitarian action with broader policy objectives.
Humanitarian principles in conflicts

The nature of conflict – the fact that humanitarians are working in a highly contested environment and will generally need to work to some degree with all sides to ensure access to civilians – makes application of the principles a constant challenge (Betts, O’Grady et al., 2016; Magone et al., 2011). In the period covered by this report, humanitarian actors – and particularly the United Nations, which as an intergovernmental body does not have the option of ‘avoiding’ the state – found this a problem in a number of contexts (Drummod et al., 2015; UNICEF, 2017). In Syria, UN agencies were criticised for being too close to the government in Damascus, and government control over aid created significant challenges to impartiality and neutrality (Drummod et al., 2015; Martínez and Eng, 2016).

Humanitarian agencies also attempted – often unsuccessfully – to balance the operational demands of security and principled action. Lack of respect for IHL – including attacks on clearly marked medical facilities in Afghanistan, Yemen and Syria, including by military forces belonging to members of the UN Security Council – compelled agencies either to withdraw or to turn to international forces to provide security (Lawday et al., 2016). Attempts by donors and the UN to use humanitarian action to address developmental and stabilisation concerns also created difficulties, particularly where the Humanitarian Coordinator ‘double-hatted’ as the Resident Coordinator, a position that tends to work closely with government.

Concerns among humanitarians that they are being co-opted to support the strategic interests of major donors are, of course, nothing new, but there was a sense among some key informants that this trend was becoming more pronounced. The head of one NGO considered that ‘openings for an independent humanitarian voice to defend the norms of humanitarian action have definitely constricted over the past few years, and you feel in government that there is just less space for defending those values when they are set against foreign policy objectives and security agendas’.

Humanitarian principles in refugee and migration contexts

In the period 2015–17 long-standing concerns about co-option by donors in situations of conflict extended to humanitarian action to support refugees and irregular migrants. One head of a humanitarian network said: ‘[it has] become more and more difficult to use principled response in relation to a donor when it has migration-related, counter-terrorism related political constraints and priorities’. This was, perhaps, an inevitable consequence of the rise of public and political interest in migration issues in many donor states. While a number of prominent organisations clashed publicly with donor states, criticising policy and taking action – such as maritime activities to save the lives of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean – that put them at odds with European and other governments, there was a concern that, overall, humanitarians were becoming ‘actors in
a containment strategy’. One director of an INGO said: ‘I do feel that aid agencies are depleted as an extension of foreign policy of Western governments. For example: the EU–Turkey compact for refugees and migrants – with humanitarian agencies and EU actors very much deployed to prevent people from moving and to accomplish domestic policy agendas... contravenes humanitarian principles’. At the same time, the large number of civil society groups supporting refugees and migrants in Europe did so without reference to the humanitarian principles, either because they were not aware of them, or because they did not feel they were relevant.

The humanitarian principles in ‘natural’ disasters
While challenges to coherence were more persistent, and perhaps more acute, in armed conflicts and refugee contexts, a number of informants also talked about the challenges that attempts to address the ‘humanitarian–development divide’ (see section on connectedness) were creating, or could potentially create, to working in ‘natural’ disasters. There was a concern that developmental approaches would lead to aid being given on criteria other than immediate need, and a more generalised concern around working with governments to achieve developmental objectives. Governments are political, and political considerations will always be an important priority. As one evaluation reported: ‘as Haiti was in the middle of an election campaign [at the time of Hurricane Matthew], and is a country where political and financial manoeuvres are commonplace, the need for humanitarian space and principled action is obvious’ (Grünewald and Schenkenberg, 2016: 11). One particular challenge to principled humanitarian action noted over the period was the growing use of social safety nets as part of humanitarian response. Research indicated a desire by governments that aid be spread as broadly as possible (the principle of equity), contrasting with the humanitarian principle of impartiality, by which assistance is given only to those who need it most (Grünewald and Schenkenberg, 2016; Obrecht, n.d.).

To what degree are humanitarian actors effective in encouraging support for IHL and International Refugee Law?
Humanitarian evaluations have very little to say on the degree to which agencies have been successful in encouraging states and non-state armed actors to abide by their obligations and providing support to mechanisms to ensure accountability. This is a difficult area to evaluate because, as one donor explained, ‘much of it will remain invisible because it all had to be done very discretely in the background’. It is also difficult to know how much worse a situation might have been without negotiation and advocacy. According to one UN staff member in a country programme: ‘there’s been a tempering at points of stuff that the [government] would have otherwise done on clamping down on the UN’. Even where there are visible effects, it is extremely difficult to know how, and how much, advocacy and negotiation contributed to combatants’ decisions.
Interviewees and key informants pointed to specific local activities that they believed had been successful in influencing state authorities or armed groups in Yemen, Somalia and Greece. A small number of key informants pointed to the importance of negotiating with the governments of affected states in securing access to areas of famine in South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and Nigeria. The ICRC project ‘IHL in Action’ describes successful examples where humanitarian intervention has strengthened adherence to IHL. As the authors note: '[d]espite numerous violations of the law, compliant behaviour shows that existing rules are adequate and can significantly reduce human suffering'. With respect to refugee law, a number of evaluations note UNHCR’s success in advocating for the rights of refugees in the Syria emergency (Darcy, 2016b; Hidalgo et al., 2015). This is particularly notable given the fact that key refugee-hosting countries such as Lebanon and Jordan (and, in another context, Bangladesh) are not signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention.

Key informants also discussed the impact of campaigning and advocacy on donor governments, pointing to work such as Oxfam’s campaign on UK arms sales to Yemen; InterAction’s ‘Civilians Under Fire’ initiative (which contributed to Executive Order (EO) 13732 outlining measures to limit civilian casualties from US airstrikes, and to elements of the 2017 National Defense Authorisation Act (NDAA), adopted in November 2017 to address civilian casualties); and MSF’s public denunciations of attacks on hospitals. Compared to the SOHS 2015, advocacy activities have improved, inasmuch as there appear to be more of them (although this is hard to measure) and their goals are clearer. However, given the multiple elements involved in, say, UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia, interviewees were not sanguine about how much could be expected of this work: ‘[the UK is] lobbying the Saudis very hard ... but in truth, that might be point number nine on an agenda which starts by talking about the London Stock Exchange and then goes all the way through all of the other houses and then eventually ... [there might be] something about humanitarian access’.

Over the period, governments that are donors to the international humanitarian system continued with (and in some cases achieved advances in) efforts to buttress IHL. These include support to Resolution 2 of the 32nd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent on strengthening compliance with international law; continuing support for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2286 (2016) on the protection of medical care in armed conflict; support for the Austrian-led initiative to achieve a UN declaration on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas; continued support to the International Criminal Court (ICC); and discussions with Gambia and South Africa, which may have contributed to these two states remaining within the ICC.

Implementation and enforcement of these and other instruments have proved more difficult. Security Council resolutions on Syria appear to have made very little difference to the situation on the ground: while they may have improved access in some instances, they have had almost no effect on
broader protection issues (Hartberg et al., 2015). The Security Council, in Syria and elsewhere, appears blocked by differences among the five Permanent Members (P5), and attempts by France and Mexico to secure agreement that P5 members will not use their veto in cases of mass atrocities have not succeeded. One possible positive element in an otherwise depressing story of failure is the continued support by many states for UN General Assembly Resolution 71/248 (2016), which established the international, impartial and independent mechanism (IIIM) to assist in the investigation and prosecution under international law of those responsible for the most serious crimes in the Syrian conflict. The IIIM has received the majority of funding requested for its 2018 budget and has begun work on case files.

In general, however, progress on the use of mechanisms to encourage commitment to IHL and refugee law, and particularly on activities to hold people and states to account for breaches of IHL, has been poor over the period. The second core responsibility of the World Humanitarian Summit was to ‘Uphold the norms that safeguard humanity’. In the annual progress report for 2017, the WHS secretariat concluded that this area had been ‘left behind’, and that a ‘global effort to enhance the protection of civilians in conflict should be pursued with urgency. Serious violations of international humanitarian law continue to create unacceptable human suffering in armed conflicts. Obligations to protect civilians and allow humanitarian access are plagued by a failure to respect them and by a culture of impunity around violations’ (David et al., 2017: 9).

Box / Promoting compliance with IHL
International Humanitarian Law (IHL) seeks to ensure that wars are fought within limits, restricting the ‘means and methods’ of warfare, and protecting those who are ‘not or no longer’ participating in hostilities (ICRC, 2004). There can be a variety of reasons why a party to a conflict – a state or non-state armed group – does not stay within those limits, including wilful disregard for, lack of familiarity with or inability to comply with the law (Svoboda and Gillard, 2015). While there are a range of ways to promote compliance with the law, from dissemination and training to naming and shaming violators, pursuing individual criminal and state responsibility, targeted sanctions and helping violating parties to remedy their wrongdoing, in recent years attention has focused on accountability, and in particular individual criminal responsibility.

The primary responsibility for investigating alleged violations of IHL lies with states. States are responsible for incorporating IHL into their criminal and military law, and for prosecuting suspected violations. All states have signed the 1949 Geneva Conventions and are bound by customary IHL (as are non-state actors), and most (there are some significant exceptions, such as the United States, Turkey, Israel, Iran and Pakistan) are party to the 1977 Additional Protocols.
However, the extent to which these obligations have been translated into domestic law differs, and the political will to prosecute suspected violations varies by government and circumstance. That doesn’t mean this never happens: the United Kingdom carried out the Baha Mousa inquiry to examine the conduct of British forces in Iraq, resulting in the dismissal and jailing of a British soldier on the grounds of inhumane treatment of a prisoner. But domestic trials or inquiries are unlikely to be conducted by states that wilfully violate IHL.

At the international level, the ICC prosecutes individuals for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity and aggression, and ad hoc tribunals such as the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda focus on crimes committed within a certain context. But, despite the establishment of the ICC, there is still no international court with compulsory jurisdiction to hear allegations of violations of IHL by states. The UN Security Council has applied targeted sanctions (arms embargoes and travel bans, and freezing assets) against parties and individuals involved in serious IHL violations, but their effectiveness in changing behaviour is less than positive (Targeted Sanctions Consortium, 2013), and when used in isolation they are often insufficient or ineffective (La Rosa, 2008).

Many discussions around IHL focus on obtaining accountability, rather than encouraging compliance to prevent violations (Svoboda and Gillard, 2015). Approaches that encourage compliance include the listing process used by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), which claims to have been instrumental in the release of 115,000 child soldiers since 2000. Parties found to have committed one of five ‘trigger’ violations against children are listed in the annex of the Annual Report on CAAC. The UN Security Council then requests an Action Plan of ‘concrete, time-bound steps’ to bring listed parties into compliance with IHL. As of May 2018, 28 parties have signed Action Plans and 11 Action Plans have been implemented fully, resulting in the parties being delisted (Gamba, 2018). To promote ownership of the law among actors unable to sign treaties, Geneva Call works with non-state armed groups to sign a Deed of Commitment (DoC) to respect humanitarian norms, and be held publicly accountable for doing so. So far, 52 armed groups have signed a DoC banning anti-personnel mines (with at least one destroying its stockpiles), 26 on protecting children in armed conflict and 24 on the prohibition of sexual violence and gender discrimination (Geneva Call, n.d.).

• TIM HARCOURT-POWELL, ALNAP
Factors affecting coherence

Level of ambition

A number of commentators have suggested that it is unrealistic – and even naïve – for humanitarian agencies that are largely funded by donor governments to claim that they act independently and impartially: after all, the availability of funds at a global level (and so the ability to act) is not dependent on need alone, but on a number of other considerations, including foreign policy (De Geoffroy et al., 2015; Obrecht, 2017; Dalrymple and Smith, 2015). As one donor put it during the interviews: ‘if it’s part of a political organisation like we are then you’re not entirely neutral on all of these things ... the choices you make in terms of where you put the money and where you pay the most political and humanitarian attention is not neutral’. Similarly, while agencies may attempt to act in a neutral way, ‘when international assistance is given in the context of a violent conflict, it becomes part of that context and thus also of the conflict’ (Anderson, 1999: 1). This has been repeatedly demonstrated in Syria, where one study concluded that ‘by bringing external resources into life-or-death situations characterized by scarcity, aid agencies inevitably become implicated in war’s inner workings’ (Martínez and Eng, 2016: 171).

Humanitarian agencies also need to be realistic about the influence they can exert over states and non-state armed actors when attempting to increase adherence to IHL. Some interviewees felt that the inclusion of these issues on the agenda of the World Humanitarian Summit had given the impression that the humanitarian system could somehow bring about improvements in the way combatants behaved, and that this had obscured the real problems: one donor suggested that ‘it would just be inappropriate and I don’t know, lying, if we presented it as we could do this through a better humanitarian system’. Advocacy, negotiation and dialogue have achieved both local gains and a number of broader successes, but humanitarian agencies alone are highly unlikely to be able to change geopolitical realities.

An increasingly hostile geopolitical environment

Many of the key informants who discussed this topic felt that some humanitarian donors are becoming more overtly political, making it harder to work in ways consistent with humanitarian principles. Interviewees said that politics had influenced the areas that received funding (comparing Aleppo to Mosul), the degree to which donors were prepared to criticise parties to conflict (particularly in Yemen) and the increase in funding to stabilisation activities in countries such as Mali. Some felt that an alternative system was being established, based around funding streams devoted to securitisation and the prevention of migration, separate from and possibly in competition with the existing system, and untroubled by any requirement to observe humanitarian principles.
Most interviewees who discussed the topic also felt that respect for IHL and refugee law had declined, citing attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure in Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan and Myanmar; the use of rape and alleged use of starvation as a weapon of war; the use of prohibited weapons; and attacks on humanitarian workers. These concerns are echoed in the Secretary-General’s reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (UN Secretary-General, 2017a; 2018), which speak of ‘a broader trend of blatant disregard for international law in armed conflict’ (UN Secretary-General, 2016; see also OHCHR, 2016; Svoboda and Gillard, 2015). Increasingly, humanitarian actors are working in situations where neither government nor non-state armed groups are prepared to follow IHL, and where many non-state armed groups see humanitarians as ‘Western’ and are not prepared to grant them access (Clarke et al., 2015; Darcy, 2016).

Some key informants felt it important to see this issue in perspective. An academic who has studied IHL commented: ‘Whether or not violations of IHL are more severe now than they were, I don’t know. It harkens back to an era that is often mythical where things were great. Civilians have always been targeted. Rape has always been used as a weapon of war’ (Changing the Narrative on International Humanitarian Law, n.d.). A relentless focus on the negative might, in fact, make the situation worse: ‘The perception that IHL is always violated and therefore useless is not only wrong, it is also dangerous. Yes, violations do occur. However, such a negative and dismissive discourse renders violations banal and risks creating an environment where they may become more acceptable’ (Changing the Narrative on International Humanitarian Law, 2017). It may well be the case that, taking the longer view, the story of IHL is one of gradual but significant improvement (Yvette et al., 2015). However, in the shorter timescale of this report there does seem to have been a marked change, not necessarily in the number of contraventions, but in terms of a lack of support for the international, rules-based order among powerful states. As the executive director of one NGO explained: ‘There is increasingly talk in our space about erosion of IHL ... To be honest, I do see that erosion ... because you’ve had sort of pariah abusive governments before, but you increasingly have abusive governments who are backed up by permanent members of the Security Council’. In this, the governments on the Security Council may be echoing the views of their populations. An ICRC survey of citizens of P5 countries (ICRC, 2016) compared results from 2016 and 1999. It showed decreased belief in the utility of the Geneva Conventions; decreased desire for the international community to intervene to help stop violations; and growing acceptance that civilian death is an inevitable part of war and that it is acceptable to torture enemy combatants for information. Key informants suggested that this lack of support for IHL among powerful states led to a belief among other governments that they could act with impunity. One individual who had been involved in negotiations with a
government around the protection of medical facilities during a civil war said: ‘we were desperately trying to get them to do anything to keep them over the line on IHL for all the reasons that are well-known and then the Americans bombed [the Kunduz trauma centre in Afghanistan] and ... they just were like, who are you kidding? ... I guess it’s an exposure of the hypocrisy that’s always been there but it’s never been quite so public and well-known’. One interviewee referred to the seven vetoes Russia had used on draft resolutions related to Syria over the period, and suggested that this had had the effect of making the international order seem impotent.

Key informants, and research, also suggest that respect for refugee law has eroded among many of the countries that had been active and vocal supporters of refugees’ rights in the past: one UN official said: ‘I have watched the international refugee protection system be steadily undermined over the last year ... [I am] horrified really to see that the architects, state architects of the very system who formulated and pushed it and got it accepted were themselves in clear violation of it. And that they have lost any moral high ground’. Informants were particularly critical of the EU–Turkey deal on Syrian refugees. According to research by ODI, the agreement, as well as border control measures introduced by Australia and other states, ‘sent a message to other countries hosting refugees that providing protection to people fleeing persecution is optional and subordinate to domestic priorities’, and had contributed to ‘a clear trend in the erosion of refugee protection on a global scale’ (Hargrave et al., 2016: 22).

**Increased links between humanitarian and development/stabilisation activities**

As noted above, and in the section on connectedness, the period 2015–17 saw a general movement towards increased links between humanitarian and development (and sometimes peacekeeping) work. This trend may well be related to the political and financial concerns of donors, but has also been endorsed by many humanitarian agencies. While it brings a number of potential advantages, key informants and interviewees suggested that it also involves humanitarians more closely in (government-led) development planning, and that this can affect their ability to work in an impartial manner.

**Lack of understanding/commitment on the part of humanitarian staff**

A number of evaluations suggest that humanitarian staff and leadership do not fully understand the humanitarian principles and IHL, and so are unable or unwilling to apply and advocate for them (Lawday et al., 2016; Sida et al., 2016). However, this is by no means the case everywhere: in particular, many interviewees in the case studies showed significant engagement with and understanding of the humanitarian principles. They discussed IHL less often, perhaps reflecting its significantly greater complexity and the specialist legal knowledge required to understand and relate it to humanitarian programming.
Endnotes for this criterion

1. As defined in the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief (which does not specifically cite the four terms humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality) and in UN General Assembly Resolutions A/RES/46/182 and A/RES/58/114.

2. This is a slightly different, narrower definition than that provided in Beck, 2006, which suggests that evaluators ‘focus on the extent to which policies of different actors were complementary or contradictory’ (p. 33).

3. The response did not differ in a statistically significant manner for different types of aid provider.


5. Turkey is a signatory, but there is a geographic limitation to its ratification which means that those fleeing states outside Europe are excluded.