



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Report

Norway's humanitarian policy

Annual report 2013





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Foreword

In 2014, the funding requirements of humanitarian aid organisations are greater than ever. The staggering sum of NOK 82 billion is required to meet the needs of people who have lost their homes and livelihoods through war, conflict and natural disasters. The enormous, growing humanitarian crisis in Syria is making huge demands on the international community, with more persons being displaced than at any time since World War II. The Syrian civil war has created a power vacuum that threatens to destabilise the entire region. This can be seen most clearly in Iraq, where extremist rebel groups have mobilised along ethnic and religious lines.

War is also impacting the civilian population in South Sudan, and at the time of writing the world's youngest state faces a great risk of widespread famine. In the Central African Republic, civil war has brought much suffering to civilians. These new large-scale crises have come on top of the enormous humanitarian crisis in Syria and many protracted, enduring crises such as those in Afghanistan, DR Congo, Palestine, Somalia and Sudan.

Although we could easily lose hope, it is vital that we do not, but continue to work actively to provide better humanitarian assistance.

We need to improve conditions for those providing assistance in demanding humanitarian situations. The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence are crucial for securing humanitarian access to all those in need, irrespective of their real or perceived affiliations. We are seeing increased attacks on aid workers, healthcare institutions and schools. We need to work to ensure that all states meet their responsibilities and obligations in terms of facilitating access, including when national borders have to be crossed.

The most powerful typhoon in history, Haiyan, devastated the Philippines at the beginning of November last year, and the local population and authorities are still in the process of rebuilding. It is notable that where houses and schools were constructed sufficiently robustly to withstand violent weather of this kind, the population coped better than in areas where such building standards were not followed. Being present in countries affected by natural disasters and supporting the authorities in their efforts to reconstruct to a higher standard and build back better, is important.

Robust school buildings are not only important in countries hit by natural disasters. The Norwegian Government has made education in emergencies an integral part of its humanitarian programme. The parties to a conflict must respect the principle that school buildings should be left untouched. This is particularly important for displaced children living in refugee camps. The Norwegian Government aims to reach one million child refugees not presently attending school, and will focus on even closer cooperation with humanitarian actors within the UN and in Norway.

In the Central African Republic, Norway is supporting the reconstruction of a school in the capital, Bangui. Norway is also funding new desks for all pupils and training for teachers on creating a positive learning environment for children in a conflict situation. The result is that more than 90% of the 6 000 pupils in the area are back at school and experiencing a more normal living situation.