

Humanitarian Evidence and Discourse Summary

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Monthly Humanitarian Evidence and Discourse Summaries aim to signpost FCDO and others to the latest relevant evidence and discourse on humanitarian action. It is structured around [FCDO humanitarian framework](#) themes:

- **Protect:** Protect civilians, IDPs, refugees, marginalised groups including women and girls, and humanitarian access.
- **Prioritise:** Prioritise effective humanitarian assistance to people in greatest need
- **Prevent:** Prevent and anticipate future shocks and rebuild resilience in protracted and recurring crises

Further detail on methodology and scope at the end. Click on the hyperlinks to bring you to the relevant literature.

We hope this is a useful resource and you can read all the articles produced by brilliant authors and organisations(!), but each month we also invite a guest to identify their five “star reads” from the wider HCRI list. This does not represent an organisational position or assessment of rigour, but rather a personal choice of published evidence, guidance or discourse that are of special interest or impact. This month Christina Bennett, Chief Executive of the Start Network, highlights her five star reads.

Protect

Publication date	Title/URL	Author(s)/publication/publication type (evidence, discourse or policy/guidance)	Summary	Top reads
December 2023	No evidence of inflated mortality reporting from the Gaza Ministry of Health	Benjamin Q Huynh et al.; The Lancet Evidence 	Letter discussing the disputed mortality figures from the Gazan Ministry of Health. It uses UNWRA figures on staff deaths as a comparison, which suggests that the MoH are unlikely to be inflated.	 <p>This analysis of mortality figures from the Gaza health ministry highlights the importance of independent facts and dispassionate analysis amidst a sea of misinformation and disinformation permeating political, social media, and - - unfortunately – traditional news sources. It is also a key set of data points for humanitarian diplomacy and advocacy against the targeting of civilians in this conflict.</p>

December 2023	Humanitarian Access SCORE Report: Sudan	Paul Harvey et al.; Humanitarian Outcomes Evidence 	Analysis of the humanitarian response in Sudan, following the onset of conflict. Based on mobile phone survey data and other sources, the report finds that, for a number of reasons, aid is insufficient.	
December 2023	Have attacks on healthcare become the new normal? a public health call to action for armed conflicts before it is too late	Karl Blanchet et al.,; Conflict & Health Discourse 	Comment article highlighting evidence that healthcare has been systematically targeted in some recent conflicts and calling for more research on the problem and measures to mitigate and stop it.	
December 2023	Good Practices, lessons learned, and the unique challenges affecting security risk management in urban humanitarian responses	GISF Evidence 	Outlines how urban environments create particular risks for humanitarian actors, and considerations for humanitarian security risk management (SRM)	
December 2023	Authoritarian practices and humanitarian negotiations [paywall]	Andrew J. Cunningham Evidence 	Edited collection with a range of case studies, including Xinjiang, Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Venezuela, and reflections on the issue.	
December 2023	Rethinking the role of humanitarian principles in armed conflict: a challenge for humanitarian action	Martin Barber and Mark Bowden; Chatham House Evidence 	Calls for a thorough reassessment of humanitarian accountability, including the 'establishment of an independent international panel to commission audits of UN humanitarian assistance programmes in specific countries' and a 'structured ethical decision-making process' for humanitarian dilemmas. The implementation of such changes would require more co-ordination across the humanitarian sector, between humanitarians and other sectors, between donors, among others.	
December 2023	The centrality of protection in humanitarian action 2022	IASC Evidence 	Report on the implementation of the centrality of protection (CoP) approach in the cluster system.	

December 2023	Not child's play: protecting children's data in humanitarian AI ecosystems	Roxana Radu and Eugenia Olliaro; ICRC Law & Policy Discourse 	Considerations on the risks to children arising from the use of Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in humanitarian action.	
December 2023	Compendium of good practices in enabling access to legal identity for undocumented migrants	IOM Policy/guidance 	Highlights good practice and challenges, based on case studies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Moldova, Niger, Peru and Thailand.	
December 2023	Deploying OSINT in armed conflict settings: law, ethics, and the need for a new theory of harm	Ed Millett; ICRC Law & Policy Discourse 	Outlines the risks that open-source intelligence can pose to civilians in conflict settings, and potential legal regulations.	

Prioritise

Publication date	Title/URL	Author(s)/Publication/Publication type (evidence, discourse or policy/guidance)	Summary	Top reads
December 2023	Global Humanitarian Overview 2024	UN OCHA Evidence 	Assessment of humanitarian needs, with analysis of key trends, principles, and response plans, for 2024.	
December 2023	Let's talk about aid diversion: what's left unsaid	Ashley Jackson and Irwin Loy; The New Humanitarian Discourse 	Discussion of the potential benefits of talking about aid diversion, given its ubiquity.	 <p>I will read or listen to anything by Ashley Jackson, having worked with her and followed her work on Afghanistan, the Taliban and other armed groups for years. Here, she explores the pervasiveness of aid diversion, not necessarily as a sign of increased corruption of aid, but as a signal of deeper systemic problems in the political economy of humanitarian action: its in-built biases, uneven power dynamics, perverse incentives and lack</p>

				of functional accountability. Ashley's overall message: tackle these issues head on, honestly and without fear.
December 2023	Tap for aid: digital wallets in a humanitarian world	Rory Crew; LinkedIn Discourse 	Outlines broad questions on the use of digital wallets, which are being piloted by humanitarian organisations.	
December 2023	What is stopping cash from transforming humanitarian aid?	Karen Peachey et al.; CaLP Discourse 	A six-part series on issues related to cash transfers, including localisation, technology, accountability, people-centred aid, barriers to implementation, and its role in the humanitarian system.	
December 2023	The challenge of coordination and inclusion: use of social registries and broader social protection information systems for capturing multiple vulnerabilities in West Africa	Valentina Barca et al.; World Food Programme Evidence 	Analysis of the social registries and supporting digital information systems for social protection in 19 countries in the region, including the role of and implications for humanitarian actors.	
December 2023	STAAR Evidence Digest: issue 12	STAAR Evidence 	Summaries of recent publications on social protection and humanitarian action.	
December 2023	Common principles for linking humanitarian assistance and social protection	Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board (SPIAC-B) Policy/guidance 	A set of principles for linking humanitarian assistance to social protection.	
December 2023	Mobile phones for participation: building responsible public-private humanitarian partnerships	Susanna Acland and Barnaby Willitts-King; ICRC Law & Policy blog Discourse 	Outlines how mobile phones can foster participation in humanitarian action, and how the private sector can help.	

December 2023	Field Exchange: issue 71	Field Exchange Evidence 	Articles and summaries of recent research on nutrition.	
December 2023	Respectful recruitment in humanitarian response: Why we need it and how to do it	Jesse McCommon and Kate Sutton; Humanitarian Horizons: Power, People and Local Leadership Policy/guidance 	Discusses the issue of respectful recruitment, to mitigate problems such as loss of staff for local organisations, in several scenarios.	
December 2023	Unfulfilled promises: Addressing the gap between commitments and practice in locally led humanitarian action	Goda Milasiute; CHA Berlin and Caritas Evidence 	Assesses the implementation of localisation by 20 humanitarian actors, including a ranking.	
December 2023	Framework for greening humanitarian action In the Pacific	Alick Haruhiru et al.; Humanitarian Horizons Policy/guidance 	Sets out a framework for humanitarian actors to be more environmentally friendly in the Pacific region.	 <p>I've become interested in the links between the active greening of humanitarian operations and strengthening climate resilience in communities. This useful, framework provides humanitarian practitioners, policymakers and donors with practical approaches advice for adopting green approaches. Importantly, it focuses on local leadership and local action as a means for reducing humanitarians' environmental footprint, while ensuring community climate resilience and environmental sustainability in the process. While this framework focuses on the Pacific, it should act as a starting point for other regions.</p>

Prevent

Publication date	Title/URL	Author(s)/Publication/Publication type (evidence, discourse or policy/guidance)	Summary	Top reads
December 2023	Global status of multi-hazard early warning systems 2023	UNDRR Evidence 	Report on the implementation of the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative globally.	
December 2023	Anticipatory action in complex crises: lessons from Ethiopia	Evan Easton-Calabria; Feinstein International Center Evidence 	Using the case study of Ethiopia, the research looks at how anticipatory action works in places where there are protracted and overlapping crises. Based on interviews with recipients of UN OCHA co-ordinated anticipatory assistance.	 We need to continue to build the evidence base around the strengths and limitations of anticipatory action to improve our own practices and inform donors and others when AA is appropriate and where. This interesting case study looks at an AA intervention for communities living with drought/conflict in Ethiopia in 2022 with some important insights as to the type, timing, impact and unintended consequences this early set of actions.
December 2023	Artificial Intelligence, disasters & marginalised groups: Early Warning Systems	Kevin Blanchard; DRR Dynamics Evidence 	Addendum to a September report on the effects of using AI in DRR on the inclusion and recognition of marginalised and hyper-marginalised groups.	
December 2023	Inclusive early warning early action: checklist and implementation guide	UNDRR Policy/guidance 	Checklist to ensure that early warning systems are gender-responsive and disability-inclusive.	
December 2023	The state of pre-arranged financing for disasters 2023	Michèle Plichta and Lydia Poole; Centre for Disaster Protection Evidence 	Outlines the best-available data on the sources and quantities of pre-arranged disaster financing, key trends, and implications for responding to climate change.	 This important flagship report from the Centre for Disaster Protection collates the best available data to start to assess and monitor annually both the levels and the quality of pre-arranged financing. With a focus on approaches and

				tools for affordable financial protection to low-income countries and the climate-affected communities within them, this thoughtful analysis is a must-read for policy makers, practitioners and aid analysts working on climate resilience and initiatives such as the Loss and Damage Fund and the Global Shield, all of which must continue to be focused on the poorest.
December 2023	Risk sharing for Loss and Damage: Scaling up protection for the Global South	Ana Gonzalez Pelaez; Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership Evidence 	Report modelling the potential for Loss and Damage architecture, using risk capital markets.	 The use of insurance for protection against climate shocks in low income countries is a nascent but promising development in humanitarian finance. This report discusses the potential for public-private risk sharing systems through parametric insurance and the benefits to recipient countries and donors. It looks at climate risks across 11 Small Island Developing States and models how risk sharing and risk pooling can protect those economies against major loss and damage with only moderate investment. NB: the lead author is married to an insurance executive active in this space. However, the proposals and insights here are worth a read and a think.
December 2023	Counting people exposed to, vulnerable to, or at high risk from climate shocks	Miki Khanh Doan; World Bank working papers Evidence 	Outlines a methodology to assess those at high risk from climate shocks, using proxy indicators. Gives estimates for 75 countries.	
December 2023	Faced with floods: Shifting livelihood strategies among South Sudan's pastoralists	Alex Humphrey et al.; SPARC Evidence 	Report on the adjustments pastoralists and agro-pastoralists are making in the face of climate and conflict shocks.	
December 2023	Rethinking humanitarian assistance: climate and crisis in the Horn of Africa	Beza Tesfaye et al.; CSIS Evidence 	Analysis of vulnerability and climate change in the Horn of Africa to provide a 'reconceptualization of the intersections between	

			climate change and conflict', and ways to reconfigure humanitarian, peacebuilding and development links.	
December 2023	Building climate resilience in conflict zones requires less emergency aid, not more	Mauricio Vasquez; The New Humanitarian Discourse 	Argues that climate finance unlocked by the UN's Climate, Relief, Recovery and Peace Declaration is not channelled to humanitarian disaster management at the expense of more thoroughgoing climate resilience efforts.	
December 2023	Working across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus: what can we learn from evaluations?	Lezlie Morinière and Susanna Morrison-Métois; ALNAP Evidence 	Maps the findings from evaluations of the nexus approach to show how it has been operationalised.	
December 2023	Exploring Karen refugee youths' aspirations and wellbeing amidst protracted displacement in Thailand	Charlotte Hill et al.; ODI HPG Evidence 	Study of how Karen youth, living in protracted displacement, perceive and pursue wellbeing, and how humanitarian aid aligns with this.	
December 2023	The nature of social cohesion? Lessons from relations between Afghan refugees and their neighbours in Pakistan	Simon Levine et al.; ODI HPG Evidence 	Study on displaced Afghans' perceptions of social cohesion	
December 2023	Think Change episode 35: is the international community failing on its shared commitment to refugees?	Sara Pantuliano et al.; ODI Discourse 	Discussion featuring experts on refugee policy, with December's Global Refugee Forum in mind.	

Methodology

Given the wide range of topics covered, this monthly summary includes guidelines, blogs, news articles, dashboards, data, and editorials, in addition to policy and academic literature. Resources are selected based on their relevance to the themes of protect, prioritise and prevent. Entries are categorised as **evidence** (academic peer-reviewed articles or reports that have gone through a quality assurance process); **discourse** (opinion and discussion of key issues in the humanitarian sector); and **policies and guidelines** (newly published policies and guidelines on humanitarian response).

The sources included are found through searches of academic literature, humanitarian think tanks, resource hubs and NGO websites. The searches are restricted to articles published in the previous month, in English. This is complemented by email recommendations from FCDO advisors and leading experts. It is the result of 1 day of work per month and is not intended to be a comprehensive summary of available evidence on humanitarian action but aims to make original documents easily accessible to decision-makers. This is trial and error approach, which will be refined over time. If you have literature to include in the weekly summary, please email – luke.kelly@manchester.ac.uk

About this report

The monthly humanitarian evidence and discourse summaries (HEDS) are produced by the Humanitarianism and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) at the University of Manchester. They are a continuation of a series published by the Knowledge for Development (K4D) consortium from 2020 to 2022. The monthly HEDS are not intended to replace professional advice and the researcher or HCRI cannot be held responsible for any decisions made on the basis of the summaries alone.



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The Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute (HCRI) is a leading global centre that is part of the University of Manchester. HCRI combines multiple disciplines from medicine to the humanities for the study and research of humanitarianism and conflict response, global health, international disaster management and peacebuilding.

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