



## Accountability to Affected Populations: Challenges in High-Intensity Conflict Scenarios

---

Darine Atwa  
Enrica Lorusso  
Maria Clara Hijano

3 December, 2018

## **Executive Summary**

Accountability to affected populations (AAP) is strongly compromised in high intensity conflict (HIC) settings. Humanitarian organisations very often have to deal with several contextual factors that heavily affect the accessibility to affected populations. So far, it has been extremely difficult for practitioners to provide an appropriate response that would meet people's needs.

Despite efforts and commitments to transform humanitarian action into a more appropriate and relevant, but also effective and timely response, a practical account of what accountability to affected populations actually involves in practice continue to be rarely addressed. Furthermore, the existence of different guidelines makes it very hard to identify the common challenges for accountability to affected population in HIC and how to tackle them.

Using a contingency approach, this report argues that there are common challenges to AAP across HIC scenarios that should be considered to revise the debates around AAP humanitarian response that occurs in high-intensity conflict situations is greatly hampered by context characteristics. To confirm this claim, the report offers an in-depth analysis of the most pressing challenges faced by humanitarian actors in HIC settings and provides real insights from the humanitarian situation in both Yemen and Central African Republic (CAR) as examples of how these challenges exist on the ground. Then, it provides a list of recommendations for humanitarian organisations to enhance their emergency response capacity. Through this analysis, the report aims to address the following research questions:

- 1- What are the challenges in the application of the concept of accountability to affected populations within the context of armed conflict? How can they be addressed?***
- 2- What can be learned from the experience in Yemen and CAR about AAP?***

The report's **main findings** are:

- 1) Insecurity negatively affects the accessibility, proximity and presence of humanitarian actors on the ground, and thus, AAP is compromised.
- 2) Lack of Infrastructure hinders accessibility and communication, which are cornerstones of accountability and engagement.
- 3) Time, resources and capacity required to implement accountability mechanisms and engage conflict affected populations are quite often not available in HIC.
- 4) Administrative/bureaucratic barriers and control imposed by the Government hamper the implementation of AAP.

Considering these challenges, the report offers a list of **recommendations** to enhance international organisations emergency response and consequently the implementation of AAP:

1. Humanitarian organisations need to reinforce their emergency capacity response to improve preparedness, reactivity and effectiveness.
2. Skills training among staff members in contextual background, proactive leadership and negotiations competences.
3. Humanitarian organisations need to strengthen the coordination between international and national staff to reach people in need.
4. Humanitarian organisations must develop commercial logistic capacities in HIC to overcome blockade, difficulties in importation and any other restrictions related to delivery of goods and materials.
5. Humanitarian organisations, especially those with long-term presence in the country, should provide incentives for staff to stay and deliver.