



How Should Business Operate in Conflict Zones?

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Mercy Corps' mission



Mercy Corps exists to alleviate suffering, poverty, and oppression by helping people build secure, productive, and just communities.

Human rights at risk



- Right to own property
- Right against forced displacement or plunder
- Right to a minimum adequate standard of living
- Right to life
- Right against torture and inhumane or degrading treatment
- Right against arbitrary arrest and detention

Human rights flashpoints

- Security arrangements
- Labor practices
- Community relations
- Resettlement
- Access to land
- Compensation
- Corruption
- Complicity



Should business operate in conflict zones?



- Private sector investment is necessary for development and poverty reduction.
- Development and poverty reduction is necessary for peace and stability.
- Private sector investment can be a mechanism for the promotion of peace and human rights.

Guiding Principles on Business & Human Rights



To meet their responsibility to respect human rights, business enterprises should have:

1. A **policy commitment** to meet their responsibility to respect human rights.
2. A **human rights due-diligence process** to identify, prevent, mitigate and account for how they address their impacts on human rights.
3. **Remediation processes** to enable the remediation of any adverse human rights impacts they cause or to which they contribute.

How should business operate in conflict zones?

- Be conflict sensitive
- Know the context
- Cultivate relationships with the community
- Set up grievance procedures
- Mainstream best practices into daily operations of all departments



How can business proactively contribute to peace?

Peacebuilding

Socio-economic foundations:

- physical reconstruction
- economic infrastructure/job creation
- infrastructure of health and education
- repatriation and return of refugees and IDPs
- food security

Security:

- humanitarian mine action
- disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of combatants
- disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of child combatants
- security sector reform
- small arms and light weapons

Political framework:

- democratisation (parties, media, NGO, democratic culture)
- good governance (accountability, rule of law, justice system)
- institution building
- human rights (monitoring law, justice system)

Reconciliation and justice:

- dialogue between leaders of antagonist groups
- grass roots dialogue
- other bridge-building activities
- truth and reconciliation commissions
- trauma therapy and healing

Thank you

