



## **CARE International Policy on Interactions with Armed Actors – KEY ELEMENTS**

- As an operational development and humanitarian actor, CARE staff and partners interact with armed actors for a variety of reasons, such as:
  - To negotiate and maintain access to people in need of assistance;
  - To promote the safety of humanitarian personnel and protection of civilians;
  - To advocate for compliance with international law.
- These interactions might take place in various settings, including during complex emergencies, conflicts, peacetime, and response to natural hazards.
- All CARE and partner interactions with armed actors, whether in providing development or humanitarian assistance, should be based on humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence.
  - *Humanity*: interactions with armed actors must be based on humanitarian needs
  - *Impartiality*: engagement must not compromise CARE's impartial provision of humanitarian assistance
  - *Neutrality*: CARE's interaction must not (nor be seen to) favor any side
  - *Independence*: CARE's identity and activities must always be, and perceived to be independent from other actors'
- Interactions with armed actors must comply with applicable laws, including international and national laws, and donor regulations.
- Engagement should never involve providing financial or material assistance to armed actors, with the possible exception of information, education or communication materials for the promotion of the protection of civilians and delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- Under no circumstances, should CARE's interaction with armed actors endanger human lives, compromise the impartiality of CARE, partners, or other development and humanitarian organizations, or violate data protection laws.
- Where possible, CARE and partners may engage in interactions with armed actors in conjunction with the UN or other humanitarian organizations.
- CARE staff should consult with their leadership team and obtain permission before engaging with armed actors.

### General guidance on means of interaction with armed actors

- CARE may engage with armed actors to ensure safe, principled humanitarian access and protection of civilians.
- CARE should not conduct joint operations with armed actors, nor use armed actors' assets.
- CARE should not seek or accept funds or in-kind donations from any armed actor.
- Armed actors or weapons are not allowed on/in CARE property or at project sites.
- CARE staff and programming should ensure clear and visible distinction between themselves and armed actors and uphold humanitarian principles.
- CARE should not use armed guards as protection or security measures for offices or staff except in extreme cases and as a last resort.
- CARE should not use armed escorts to accompany humanitarian movements except in extreme cases and as a last resort.
- CARE should not make payments or exchange relief assets with armed actors.
- All CARE employees and related personnel should be familiar with the CARE International Policy on Interactions with Armed Actors, how it applies to their work and how to uphold it.