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## **UN relief chief urges clear rules on civil-military coordination in disaster response**



Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos

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The United Nations relief chief has urged humanitarian organizations and national armed forces to jointly formulate regulations to guide their relationship during response to natural disasters and other emergencies to ensure that their respective competences complement each other.

“We recognize there are many valuable things that militaries can do quickly, on a large scale, and in the most difficult of conditions during humanitarian emergencies,” said Valerie Amos, the

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, addressing a meeting of Qatar's HOPEFOR Initiative, which promotes effective use of military assets in disaster relief operations.

“At the same time, the presence of military organizations can often make the work of humanitarian organizations more difficult, especially in highly politicized environments. Humanitarian organizations must maintain their core values of impartiality, neutrality and operational independence at all times,” Ms. Amos told yesterday's meeting in the Qatari capital, Doha.

She stressed the need for humanitarian organizations and armed forces to reach a “common understanding of our respective roles and responsibilities, as well as our rules of engagement.”

Relief agencies should only request the use of military assets after all other options have been exhausted, she added.

“Humanitarian organizations within and outside the United Nations are faced with larger and more complex crises every year. Effective partnership is essential if we are going to rise to that challenge, and create a genuinely global humanitarian order – to meet the needs of an increasing number of people coping with emergencies around the world,” said Ms. Amos.

She met with Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Hamad bin-Jasim bin-Jabr Al-Thani, as well as the country's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Khalid Bin-Muhammad al-Atiyah, and discussed with them HOPEFOR activities, ways to strengthen partnership with Qatar, as well as the humanitarian situation in Syria, Yemen and Somalia.

Visiting Saudi Arabia today, Ms. Amos welcomed the opportunity for the UN to work more closely with the country on regional and international humanitarian affairs.

“Saudi Arabia plays an important role in humanitarian affairs,” she said in the capital, Riyadh. “In addition to contributing generously to crises in Somalia, Pakistan and Haiti, the kingdom also engages actively in other key humanitarian response mechanisms such as the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG).”

She conferred with Prince Abdul Aziz Bin Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, Princess Adelah Bint Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz and Finance Minister Ibrahim Bin-Abd-Al-Aziz Al-Assaf.

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