



Norway's Humanitarian Policy

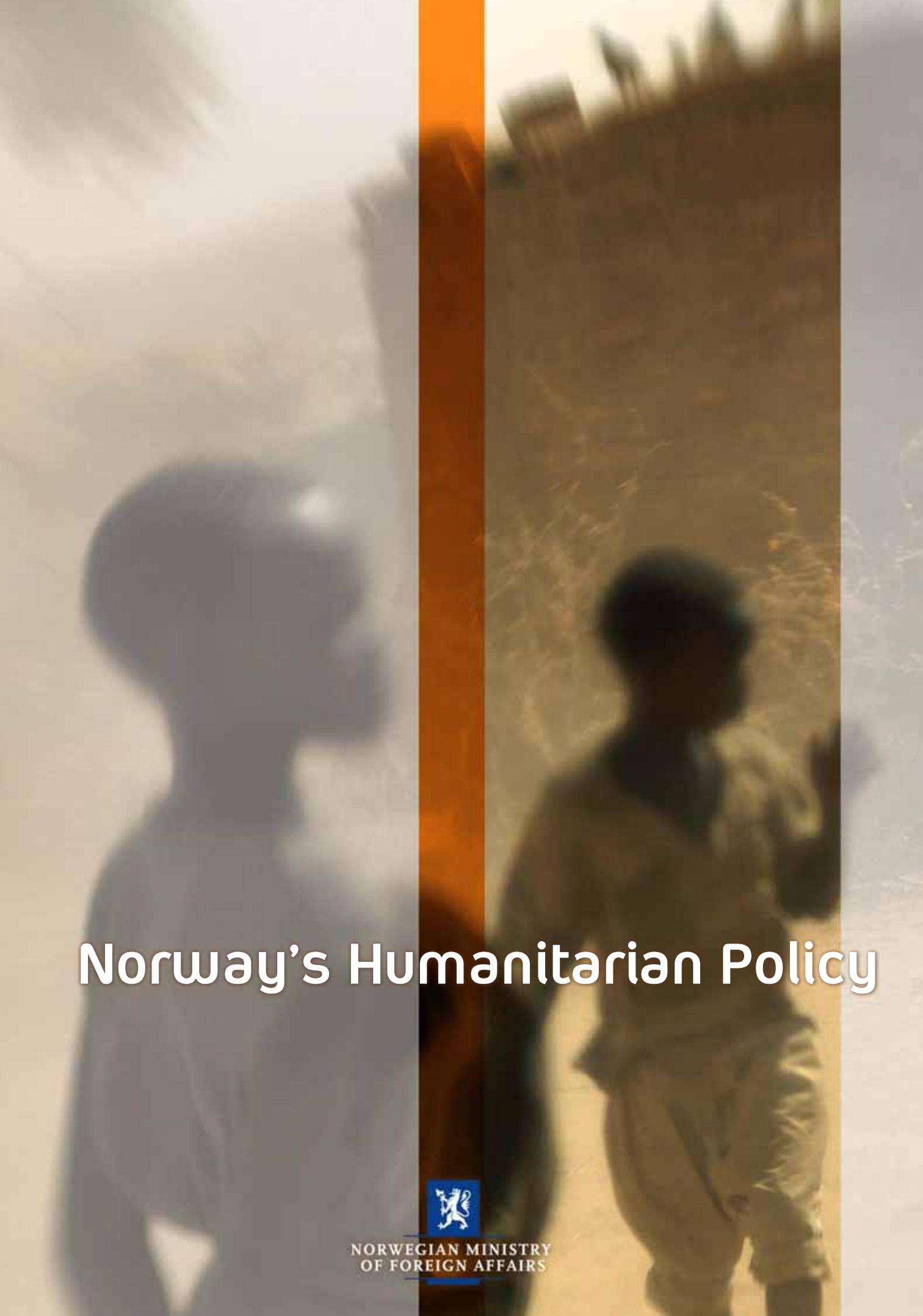


NORWEGIAN MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Front page photo:

Sandstorm in the Hamadiya camp, West Darfur. More than two million people have been forced to leave their homes in Darfur since the beginning of the war. Several hundred thousand people have been killed.

Photo: Lynsey Addario/Corbis/Scanpix



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Foreword

*One of more than 40,000
Cambodian mine victims learning
to walk again. Approximately six
million landmines were laid in
Cambodia between 1970 and
2000.*

Photo: EPA/Scanpix



This strategy concerns Norway's international humanitarian policy to protect and assist individuals in distress, whether due to war, conflict or natural disaster.

Between the time when the first two Red Cross representatives were sent to the Battle of Dybbøl between Prussia/Austria-Hungary and Denmark in April 1864 and the war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008, humanitarian assistance has gradually become a central issue in international affairs.

In addition to conflicts, climate change and global warming are having a critical impact on people's lives and livelihoods in many parts of the world. Climatic and environmental change is now one of the main causes of the growing number of humanitarian disasters.

New food crises and health challenges arise in areas where political, demographic, economic and other factors provide fertile ground for social unrest, political radicalisation and instability.

There are many possible answers to the question of how the world community is to deal with these challenges and how Norway can best contribute. Many Norwegians are engaged in these issues and possess a great deal of knowledge in this area. We must ask where and how Norway, in collaboration with humanitarian organisations and through international cooperation, can make a difference in efforts to save lives and alleviate distress.

Humanitarian action is about helping people in need, regardless of political or other factors. Humanitarian efforts are founded on respect for universal human rights. Everyone in need is entitled to necessary help and assistance.

Humanitarian action also influences political processes in the countries concerned. While humanitarian assistance can promote political dialogue and reduce conflicts, the situation in Aceh after the tsunami in 2004 and the lessons learned from relief efforts in Burma in May this year are examples of how international humanitarian assistance may be regarded as a