EVIDENCE, NOT ASSURANCES

EiGHT

The Evidence and Integrity (E&I) Framework

Independent scrutiny of claims and research in the human rights and humanitarian sectors

EiGHT | SUMMARY | NOVEMBER 2026

Human rights and humanitarian organizations operate in distinct but overlapping sectors, wielding considerable influence over policy, courts, funding, media and public debate. Yet the evidence, methods and claims underpinning their influence are not subject to a consistent system of independent scrutiny.

Repeated controversies expose a longstanding anomaly: despite established professional standards and some external oversight, organizations largely assess their own research practices and claims, and investigate their own failures. No consistent system independently verifies their application.

The E&I Framework proposes four connected mechanisms for independently scrutinizing organizations' research, public claims and the institutional practices underpinning them. It would help organizations demonstrate the quality of their work and strengthen the confidence of those who rely on it.

HUMANITARIAN SECTOR

Sphere & CHS: operational standards and accountability; limited scrutiny of research and public claims.

HUMAN RIGHTS SECTOR

Lund–London, OHCHR & Berkeley: evidence guidance, without systematic verification of implementation.

THE REMAINING GAP

No consistent independent system for verification, misconduct review, public corrections or whistleblower safeguards.

PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Professional duties to evidence, accuracy and methodological integrity must take precedence over institutional interests and personal convictions alike. Researchers' first obligation is to the evidence and to shared professional standards, not to the institution that employs them.

01 The E&I Pact

SETS THE STANDARDS

Eight public standards would turn professional commitments into demonstrable, independently assessable requirements for organizations' claims, work and responses to failures.

1 Evidence & Sourcing	2 Methodology
3 Review, Verification & Investigation	4 Research Conditions
5 Consistency, Context & Fairness	6 Transparency & Public Communications
7 Corrections & Remedial Action	8 Safe Reporting

02 The E&I Check

MAKES THE COMMITMENT VISIBLE

A recognizable public mark on organizational outputs would link to a standardized checklist declaring which quality controls the organization completed before publication, from source verification and fact-checking to right of reply.

It would be an auditable self-declaration, not independent certification. Completion of a control does not establish its adequacy.

03 The E&I Council

PROVIDES INDEPENDENT OVERSIGHT

The proposed independent Council would safeguard standards, oversee methodology and issue findings. It would offer a confidential channel for professionals to report research concerns and abusive practices, including retaliation and misuse of NDAs, breaking the closed loop of organizational self-investigation. Professional staff would examine records, test outputs, investigate concerns and assess compliance, including specific claims and practices of nonparticipating organizations.

04 The E&I Index

MAKES ACCOUNTABILITY VISIBLE

A public record would track independently assessed findings — compliant, deficient or unverified — alongside corrections, remedial action, verified improvements and non-cooperation. Findings would be limited to the scope assessed, distinguishing specific outputs and practices from broader institutional assessments. Each entry would state the scope assessed, and organizations could respond before publication.

Evidence, Not Assurances

Read the full proposal at www.eightrights.org

The E&I Framework offers human rights and humanitarian organizations a means to demonstrate, rather than merely profess, their commitments to evidentiary rigor, transparency and accountability. Independent verification would allow those who rely on their work to distinguish demonstrated compliance from institutional assurances.

Independent scrutiny cannot depend on voluntary participation. Subject to strict safeguards, consequential claims, serious failures and related institutional misconduct must remain open to independent scrutiny whether or not an organization participates.

An organization's mission or the strength of its reputation should not exempt it from independent scrutiny.