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# TO STAY AND DELIVER

Good practice for humanitarians  
in complex security environments

OCHA

Office for the  
Coordination of  
Humanitarian Affairs

Policy Development  
and Studies Branch

# To Stay and Deliver

Good practice for humanitarians in  
complex security environments

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Independent study commissioned by the Office for the Coordination of  
Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)



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# Foreword

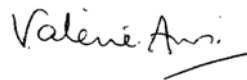
Today, humanitarians work in some of the most volatile and insecure environments in the world. Even as they come under increasing attack, humanitarian workers find ways to continue delivering life-saving services to populations in need.

This study documents, across different types of security environments and risk patterns, a variety of practices humanitarian workers have used in their efforts to maintain an operational presence and continue their activities.

I hope that this compendium of innovative strategies and practices will be useful to our partners on the ground as they work to gain greater acceptance for their activities and improve their access to affected populations.

The report offers an analysis of the broader challenges to securing humanitarian action and recommends areas for improvement. This study will contribute to improving the way humanitarians 'do business' in complex security environments.

I would like to thank all those who contributed to this study, the sponsors of the project, the research team under the stewardship of Mr. Jan Egeland, former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs; Dr. Abby Stoddard and Ms. Adele Harmer, the senior researchers from Humanitarian Outcomes; and the Advisory Group members for their valuable guidance.



Valerie Amos  
Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs  
and Emergency Relief Coordinator

February 2011

## Preface

The last ten years represent one of the worst decades ever in terms of attacks on humanitarian workers and lack of humanitarian access. When people in need are deprived assistance because relief workers are attacked or blocked, we are not faced with a political or diplomatic ‘problem’—we are faced with an outrage and a criminal act under international and national laws. And it must be treated as such by governments and inter-governmental organisations.

Courageous humanitarian workers struggle every day to reach, against all odds, civilians in some thirty armed conflicts and the affected in the numerous natural disasters that occur each year. Much has been done to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and security of humanitarian operations. In many desperate situations inadequate political and security measures fail to address the root causes of the crisis and life-saving relief is often the only expression of compassion with those who suffer at humanity’s frontlines.

Because humanitarian work has become so widespread and so visible, peoples all over the world now expect that the needy should get immediate relief when conflict or disasters strike. All major religions, ideologies, and humanistic philosophies prescribe that the sick, the suffering, and the starved should be helped irrespective of race, creed or culture.

But this expectation, shared by heads of state and the public at large, that humanitarians will rush to the neediest irrespective of circumstances, is not supported by a corresponding unconditional political and military support for the basic humanitarian principles that are a precondition for secure and unrestricted access by our impartial humanitarian workers.

Humanitarian action is under attack, but neither governments, parties to armed conflicts, nor other influential actors are doing enough to come to its relief. On the contrary, those who control territory, funding, or simply the closest guns are too often allowed to harass, politicise, militarise and undermine humanitarian action with impunity.

As this report details, much can be done to break the vicious cycle in which humanitarians are attacked and blocked and victims in wars and disasters suffer unassisted. Those who attack or hinder the right to assist needy people must be held accountable for their breaches of international law. Humanitarian organisations must become more professional, more disciplined and more principled in how they act and how they enforce principles and standards in high risk circumstances. More resources for security measures are needed, especially among local non-governmental groups and national staff members. The UN and all non-UN humanitarian leadership must more vigorously defend their rights of humanitarian initiative and access as well as the security of their front-line staff. And humanitarian organisations that are willing to become tools for political agendas and compromise fundamental and inherited humanitarian principles for easy money must face greater peer pressure.

Again and again, as Emergency Relief Coordinator I saw how unhindered humanitarian action, or lack of such, is measured in human lives. I also saw



that much can be done if humanitarian groups learn from each other, from their good practices and their hard won lessons.

This report, with its truly unique documentation and world-wide input, is an invaluable tool to protect and promote humanitarian action in the most difficult of circumstances. We are indebted to Abby Stoddard and Adele Harmer, with their extensive expertise on humanitarian security challenges, for working so hard in preparing this important report. Seldom, if ever, have so many humanitarian workers been consulted to give their views on how life-saving humanitarianism under attack can be better protected.

We hope for follow up. Still, in this new millennium, men, women, and children in desperate need are denied assistance and relief workers who wish to help are attacked and denied access. This trend must be stopped. Governments must be reminded that they have obligations under international law.

Jan Egeland

Director, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

UN Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator, 2003–06

## Acknowledgements

This study was conceived and made possible by the OCHA Policy Development and Studies Branch, for which thanks are due to Hansjoerg Strohmeyer and Allegra Baiocchi for their intellectual leadership and oversight of the exercise, and to Christina Alfrev for the considerable management task. The project also benefited by key contributions and information inputs from Jennifer McAvoy.

The research was guided and supported in numerous ways by the members of the expert Advisory Group listed below. The authors owe these individuals thanks for their valuable consultations, sharing of materials, interview referrals, and dissemination of the national aid workers' survey throughout their own organisations and networks.

The OCHA offices in the case study countries went to considerable effort to host the field visits and schedule productive programmes for the researchers, despite their enormous workloads and critical demands on their time. For this we relay our deep appreciation to Nicola Bennett, Manuel Bessler, Mark Bowden, Mark Cutts, Kiki Gbeho, Max Hadorn, Cindy Issac, Timothy Pitt, Ramesh Rajasingham, Esteban Sacco, Suhad Sakalla, and their colleagues in the OCHA country offices.

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Finally, we would like to thank the 255 individuals who gave their time to be interviewed and who shared their experiences and insights with the research team. Their support for the objectives of the study and their fundamental commitment to the humanitarian endeavour under the most difficult of circumstances, is clearly evident—and very gratefully acknowledged by the team.

# Advisory Group Members

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| Dan Toole             | Regional Director for South Asia, UNICEF; Special Representative for Pakistan Flood Response   |

# Acronyms

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| ANSO  | Afghanistan NGO Security Office                                      |
| AWSD  | Aid Worker Security Database   |
| DFID  | UK Department for International Development                          |
| DRC   | Democratic Republic of Congo   |
| DRC   | Danish Refugee Council   |
| ECHO  | European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office                          |
| EISF  | European Inter-agency Security Forum                                 |
| FAO   | Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN                          |
| FTS   | Financial Tracking Service   |
| GHD   | Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative                               |
| IASC  | Inter-Agency Standing Committee on humanitarian affairs              |
| IASMN | Inter-Agency Security Management Network                             |
| ICRC  | International Committee of the Red Cross                             |
| ICVA  | International Council of Voluntary Agencies                          |
| IDP   | Internally displaced person  |
| IED   | Improvised explosive device  |
| IFRC  | International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies |
| IHL   | International humanitarian law                                       |
| INGO  | International non-governmental organisation                          |
| IOM   | International Organization for Migration                             |
| IRC   | International Rescue Committee                                       |
| IRIN  | UN Integrated Regional Information Networks                          |
| LNGO  | Local non-governmental organisation                                  |
| LTTE  | Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam                                     |
| MOSS  | Minimum Operating Security Standards                                 |
| MSF   | Médecins Sans Frontières   |
| NCCI  | NGO Coordination Committee for Iraq                                  |
| NGO   | Non-governmental organisation  |
| OCHA  | UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs               |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| OECD   | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development              |
| OFDA   | Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance                |
| oPt    | occupied Palestinian territories                                   |
| SACB   | Somalia Aid Coordination Body                                      |
| SAG    | Security Advisory Group of InterAction                             |
| SCHR   | Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response                       |
| SIRS   | UN Security Incident Reporting Service                             |
| SLS    | Security Level System  |
| SLT    | Saving Lives Together  |
| SMI    | Security Management Initiative                                     |
| SRA    | Security Risk Assessment   |
| SRM    | Security Risk Management   |
| UN     | United Nations   |
| UNDP   | UN Development Programme   |
| UNDSS  | UN Department of Safety and Security                               |
| UNFPA  | UN Population Fund   |
| UNHCR  | UN High Commissioner for Refugees                                  |
| UNICEF | UN Children's Fund   |
| UNRWA  | UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| UNSMS  | UN Security Management System                                      |
| USAID  | United States Agency for International Development                 |
| WFP    | World Food Programme   |
| WHO    | World Health Organisation  |
| WVI    | World Vision International   |

# Glossary

This builds on the glossary in the Good Practice Review on Operational Security Management in Violent Environments (HIPN, 2010).

**Acceptance approach:** Actively building and cultivating good relations and consent as part of a security management strategy with local communities, parties to the conflict, and other relevant stakeholders and obtaining their acceptance and consent for the humanitarian organisation's presence and its work.

**Civil-military coordination:** The interface between military actors (including peace operations) and civilian actors deployed in the field, particularly those from the humanitarian and development community.

**Deconfliction:** The exchange of information and planning advisories by humanitarian actors with military actors in order to prevent or resolve conflicts between the two sets objectives, remove obstacles to humanitarian action, and avoid potential hazards for humanitarian personnel. This may include the negotiation of military pauses, temporary cessation of hostilities or ceasefires, or safe corridors for aid delivery.

**Deterrence approach:** Attempting to deter a threat by posing a counter-threat, in its most extreme form through the use of armed protection, as part of a security management strategy.

**Duty of care:** The legal concept of duty of care presumes that organisations 'are responsible for their employees' well-being and must take practical steps to mitigate foreseeable workplace dangers'—a responsibility that takes on additional implications when the employees are working overseas (Claus 2010).

**Enabling approach:** A security risk management approach and mindset that focuses foremost on programming objectives and seeks to identify and apply such measures that are required to enable the programme to go forward securely, even in increasingly dangerous environments.

**Private security provider/contractor/company:** A private entity providing remunerated security services, ranging from consultation and training to armed protection, to individuals or organisations.

**Programme criticality:** An approach that involves determining which programmes are the most critical in a given part of a country (in terms of saving lives or requiring immediate delivery) and therefore warrant accepting a greater level of risk or a greater allocation of resources to mitigate these risks.

**Protection:** All activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e. with human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law).<sup>1</sup> As distinct from 'safety' and 'security' to refer to the protection of civilians and non-combatants who are not aid agency staff.

1 This definition was developed by the ICRC and has since been used by the IASC. See ICRC, Third Workshop on Protection for Human Rights and Humanitarian Organizations: Doing Something about It and Doing It Well, 18–20 January 1999, Report, Geneva, 1999.

**Protection approach:** The use of protective procedures, physical structures, materials and devices as part of a security management strategy in order to reduce vulnerability to existing threats.

**Remote management programming (or limited access programming):** As an adaptation to insecurity, the practice of withdrawing international (or other at-risk staff) while transferring increased programming responsibilities to local staff or local partner organisations.

**Risk:** The likelihood and potential impact of encountering a threat.

**Risk assessment/analysis:** An attempt to consider risk more systematically in terms of the threats in an organisation's environment, an organisation's particular vulnerabilities, and its existing security measures.

**Risk management:** The attempt to reduce exposure to the most serious risks (including contextual, programmatic and institutional risks) by identifying, monitoring and tackling key risk factors. It also involves balancing risk and opportunity, or one set of risks against another. Risk management should be seen as an enabling process, not simply a precautionary one (INCAF, 2009).

**Residual risk:** The inevitable risk remaining after all appropriate risk-reduction and mitigation measures are taken (as no security approach can remove all risk).

**Security risk management (SRM):** A sub-set of risk management, involving a structure to better understand the nature and level of risks to the organisation or programme. This risk should be weighed against the benefits of the programme to the affected population, and the means to effectively manage and mitigate these risks should be considered.

**Security strategy:** The overarching philosophy, application of approaches, and use of resources that frame organisational security management.

**Threat:** A danger in the operating environment.

**Threshold of acceptable risk:** The point beyond which the risk is deemed too high to continue operating; influenced by the probability that an incident will occur and the seriousness of the impact if it occurs.

**Triangulation:** Cross-checking information or details by comparing the opinion or version from different sources.

## Executive summary

Providing humanitarian assistance amid conflict has always been a dangerous and difficult endeavour; however, over the last decade aid worker casualties tripled, reaching over 100 deaths per year. From 2005 onwards the largest numbers of violent attacks on humanitarian personnel have been concentrated in a small number of countries representing the most difficult and volatile operating environments. Attacks in some of these settings have also grown more lethal and sophisticated and the number of kidnappings has risen dramatically.

As a result, the humanitarian footprint has shrunk in some conflict areas where violence has surged in recent years, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Somalia. Access can diminish both as a direct result of violence and as a consequence of the obstacles and conditions created by militaries, governments, and non-state actors that hinder the impartial provision of aid. In an effort to maintain their presence and continue to deliver on their humanitarian commitments, a number of humanitarian organisations have strengthened their risk management capabilities, and they have explored innovative strategies and operational practices aimed at creating greater acceptance for their activities and increasing their access to affected populations.

In response to growing concerns regarding the insecurity of aid operations and the resulting decline in humanitarian access, the present study, commissioned by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), set out to identify and document those strategies and practices that have enabled humanitarian organisations to maintain effective operations in contexts characterised by high security risks.

In the second half of 2010 an independent research team, led by former Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland, undertook six field studies in complex security environments, conducted interviews with 255 humanitarian practitioners and policymakers, surveyed over 1,100 national staff members, and carried out a desk-based review of organisational literature and case-based evidence. This report synthesises the findings as well as specific inputs and guidance received from the study's Advisory Group.

Much of the report is practical: What's working, and why, and what lessons can be drawn across contexts and between agencies? The resulting compilation of practices offers an opportunity for peer learning and knowledge sharing among humanitarian practitioners across complex security settings. In addition, the study examines the wider, political constraints to humanitarian action in complex security environments, factors over which humanitarian actors have less control, but which they could more effectively approach through increased coordination and advocacy. What follows is a broad summary of the key issues and messages emerging from the research.



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## Maintaining effective presence through risk management

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Presence and proximity to affected populations is the prerequisite of effective humanitarian action. The objective for humanitarian actors in complex security environments, as it is now widely recognised, is not to avoid risk, but to manage risk in a way that allows them to remain present and effective in their work. This shift from risk aversion (or, on the other extreme, recklessness) to risk management represents the culmination of the past decade's evolution in thinking and methodology for programming in insecure conditions. Key to this shift is the concept of the enabling security approach—an approach that focuses on 'how to stay' as opposed to 'when to leave'—which has been adopted in the UN system and by many organisations. This mindset in turn depends on organisations and individuals accepting a certain amount of risk—the risk that inevitably remains after appropriate analysis and all reasonable mitigation measures have been carried out. The more critical the humanitarian programme is to people's survival and well-being, the greater amount of risk may be accepted. This is a conscious and calculated assessment, intended to prevent both recklessness and risk aversion. It is designed to ensure effective accountability within organisations, and also to preclude any scapegoating in the aftermath of a security incident. To date, more evidence of these concepts has been seen in theory and policy than in operations, where they are just beginning to take hold. However, the risk management paradigm has also reinforced—and been reinforced by—certain innovations in the field.

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## Alternatives to bunkerisation

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There is little point in an aid agency being present in a country if its staff remain behind compound walls or cloistered in safe areas and capital cities, unable to work with the people in need. The study recognises that heavier protection is often necessary when a clear and present threat of direct targeting exists, which cannot be immediately mitigated through greater investment in dialogue and acceptance, or in cases where violence is perpetrated by economically-motivated criminal groups. In such scenarios good practice points to the development of 'smart' protection measures, which add a layer of security to the organisation but minimise negative appearances. In particular, humanitarian organisations need to do more to avoid 'bunkerisation' which distances them from the local community, thereby increasing vulnerability and perpetuating a negative cycle.

Another alternative to bunkerisation is remote management programming. It is a common adaptation in extreme circumstances of insecurity, and while it poses many challenges for effective and accountable programming, some areas of good practice are emerging. These include investing in highly localised staff structures for field offices, recruiting staff members in consultation with their communities, and appointing nationals from the diaspora as international staff.

The study also identifies a number of promising practical innovations in monitoring programming quality and impact.

While there were some exceptions, the study found that the few aid organisations that have maintained or expanded operations in the most dangerous environments have employed a combination of highly localised programming that enables local acceptance with a low-profile stance and low visibility at the national level.

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### **Duty of care and responsible partnership**

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Fewer examples of good practice were found in the area of strengthening duty of care for national staff and local partner organisations. International humanitarian organisations have significant room for improvement in tackling the inequities between international and national aid workers in terms of providing adequate security resources, support, and capacities. The study found that most national aid workers believe that overall security management and the balance between nationals and internationals was improving, but most also feel that they are still more exposed and under a greater burden of risk than their international counterparts. While their perceptions on risk and threat differs from internationals, national aid workers strongly agreed on the effectiveness of humanitarian principles as operational tools to enhance their own security.

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### **Secure access requires sustained humanitarian dialogue**

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Even as the danger and difficulty of a humanitarian mission increases, governments and the public have heightened expectations that international humanitarian organisations will be on the scene and operational in the very first days of a crisis—sometimes before they have become known and accepted in the area and consequently when security risks may be highest. In today's volatile operating environments, acceptance of humanitarian action by local authorities and communities needs to be approached as a process rather than as an event, requiring presence, time, and sustained engagement with all relevant parties, including non-state actors as well as influential political, military, or religious leaders.

A headline finding of this study is that the greater an organisation's demonstrated capacity to communicate and negotiate with all relevant actors, the better access and security is achieved for humanitarian operations. The ICRC has demonstrated the most active, effective, and sustained acceptance and humanitarian negotiation strategies. It focuses resources on strategically and continuously engaging with all parties to the conflict as well with local communities. To build this capacity requires significant organisational investment, and so far only a few other humanitarian organisations were found to have made major strides in this direction.

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## Humanitarian principles matter

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The core humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, and impartiality underpin acceptance and provide the basis for warring parties to accept humanitarian action in situations of armed conflict. States have at times created unfavourable conditions and overt obstructions which impede secure humanitarian access. In particular, the study found that the stated or implied policy of some governments and inter-governmental organisations to ban all contact with entities designated as ‘terrorist’ has severely undermined opportunities for humanitarian actors to negotiate access for aid to civilians. Other political constraints include states insisting on the provision of armed escorts or expecting humanitarian actors to be part of political and military strategies. Such policies severely undermine humanitarian negotiations with all parties to the conflict for timely, secure, and unimpeded access.

While simultaneously calling for respect for humanitarian principles, in the recent past many humanitarian organisations have also willingly compromised a principled approach in their own conduct through close alignment with political and military activities and actors.

A set of targeted recommendations concludes the study. The recommendations are intentionally broader than the numerous examples of good practice cited throughout the report, which are in themselves recommended options for the aid community to consider. The recommendations address the means by which humanitarian agencies might increase their capability to manage the risks they face in high-risk environments, and to invest in long-term and effective means to maintain access to affected populations, including by increasing their duty of care and partnership with national aid workers. The recommendations also target the actors that have a responsibility to support humanitarian operations in complex security environments, including a recommendation to all states to renew and strengthen their commitment to uphold international humanitarian law and common principles.

# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 Background and aims of the study: Why humanitarian security, and why now?

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Violent attacks against humanitarian operations and personnel have risen significantly over the past decade; the yearly casualty tolls are kept high by a small number of extremely insecure country contexts. Amid growing concern and momentum for action on declining humanitarian security and access, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) identified the need for an analytical study on humanitarian operations in complex security environments, for the benefit of practitioners both within the United Nations system and across the humanitarian community more broadly. Coordinated by OCHA's Policy Development and Studies Branch, former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland led a research team consisting of Adele Harmer and Abby Stoddard, two analysts from the Humanitarian Outcomes group with several years of research experience in the field of humanitarian security.

This study is designed for aid practitioners and their organisations seeking practical solutions to gain, maintain, and increase secure access to assist populations in a range of complex security environments. It aims to enhance the ability of humanitarian actors to provide aid to people in need, even in areas of heightened risk, in a way that is consistent with the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence, and neutrality (see Annex 4 for documents providing the international legal and normative basis for principled humanitarian action). It is reasonable to question why—when after all it is the local civilians who suffer most from conflict and violence—a study should focus on the security of aid personnel and operations. Simply stated, where aid workers are attacked, the quality and quantity of aid is reduced, and beneficiaries suffer. It is useful, therefore, to think of 'secure humanitarian access' both as enabling affected civilians to access the aid they need in the way they need it, as well as giving humanitarian actors the means to gain access to people and territories. It is a dual process which must ensure that aid does not bring increased risk to beneficiaries.<sup>1</sup> The ultimate aim of the exercise is to support the survival and well-being of people in need.

The research team set out to answer the following questions: What are the salient features of the most insecure contexts for aid operations, and what is the nature of the main threats and challenges to humanitarian access? Are there commonalities in the diverse operational settings and threat environments? What adaptations, innovations, or improvements in current operations have proven useful in the field for gaining or maintaining secure access? Can lessons be drawn and applied by different actors and in different environments? What roles are played by political, military, and non-state actors in facilitating or hindering secure humanitarian access? What are the distinct issues and challenges faced by national aid workers in high-risk settings, independently and in relation to the international community?

The findings in regard to each of these questions are presented in the following sections: Section 2 analyses the trends in aid worker security and the threat

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<sup>1</sup> The wider responsibilities regarding protection of civilians in conflict is a critical—and linked—issue but is outside the scope of this study.

environment; Section 3 presents a comprehensive compilation of operational good practice used to facilitate aid operations amid insecurity; Section 4 examines the wider political constraints to effective action; Section 5 analyses the critical role and special challenges of national staff; and Section 6 concludes the report and makes recommendations towards enhancing the capacities and capabilities of humanitarian actors to deliver on their primary mandates while operating in complex security environments.

It is important to underline what this study is not: It is not an evaluation of the specific security management systems and policies of any organisation involved in humanitarian aid, nor is it a critical review of past performance by any actor or institution. The study aims to present the current state of the art on practical operational measures in response to insecurity, augmented by synthesis of past research and analysis on the subject. As such, it is hoped it can serve as one practical tool in the onward development of good policy and practice around enhanced security for humanitarian access.

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## 1.2 Methodology

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Twelve complex security environments were examined for the study. Field research was undertaken in six of these: Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the occupied Palestinian territories, Pakistan, Somalia, and Darfur, Sudan. The team undertook desk-based analysis of Chad, Colombia, Haiti, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and Yemen. The cases were chosen on the basis of incidence of violence against aid workers, and for the diversity of threats and challenges they represented for aid operations. Interlocutors included UN leadership and UN humanitarian agencies, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, national and international non-government organisations (NGOs), local authorities, donor governments, and, where possible, beneficiaries. The researchers interviewed 255 individuals in the field as well as headquarters in New York, Geneva, and Rome. All interviews were conducted on a not-for-attribution basis, and individuals gave permission for their names to be listed in this report as interview subjects (Annex 2).

Country analysis was complemented by a desk review of existing analysis, approaches, decisions, and experiences relating to humanitarian operations in complex security environments from a variety of agencies, inter-agency consortia, and research centres. The review included an examination of current agency operational and security practices, including policy documents, resolutions, guidelines, manuals, and training materials, as well as recent and ongoing commissioned studies on key policy questions, including humanitarian access, protection of civilians, the role of integrated missions and the drawdown of peacekeeping operations. Desk-based research included statistical analysis on the state of the operational security situation and access trends. These were drawn from the global Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB) <sup>2</sup> and other relevant sources, including OCHA reports on the most severe and prevalent constraints

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<sup>2</sup> [www.aidworkersecurity.org](http://www.aidworkersecurity.org)

on humanitarian access for the Secretary General's Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.

The research team also designed a multi-language, online survey instrument targeting national and local staff of aid organisations including local partners. In collaboration with OCHA, the survey was translated into Arabic, French, and Spanish. The survey was designed to elicit the perspectives of national actors on operational conditions, security management strategies for humanitarian activities, and the relationship between international and national actors in this regard. As far as the research team is aware, it is the first comprehensive examination of national staffing security issues. The survey captured 1,148<sup>3</sup> responses, exceeding the number of international staff interviewees by close to a factor of five. This allowed the research team to capture a greater range of informants and lend weight to the national or local perspectives, which very often receive less attention in this type of exercise.

The research was guided and facilitated by an expert Advisory Group. The Advisory Group was composed of professionals with various backgrounds and affiliations with particular personal expertise in operating in complex security environments. Acting as a sounding board for the study's development, the group provided guidance on the scope of the research, commented on the findings, and advised on the dissemination and follow-up to the study.

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### 1.3 Key concepts and recent developments in humanitarian operational security

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Operational security management practices have considerably advanced in recent years. The conceptual approaches as well as the systems that guide humanitarian decision-making in complex security environments have significantly evolved, and both professionalism and resources dedicated to security needs have grown. These changes have developed both within the UN (through the UN's Security Management System or UNSMS, and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network or IASMN) and through independent and collaborative initiatives in the NGO realm (such as InterAction's Security Advisory Group and the European Interagency Security Forum), as well as independently within the Red Cross and Red Crescent movements and individual organisations. Changes have often come about as a result of hard lessons and have suffered significant setbacks; some initiatives remain highly dependent on adequate future resourcing as well as significant organisational cultural change management.

One of the most important conceptual shifts in humanitarian operational security thinking in recent years, particularly affecting the UN agencies, is the *enabling approach*. This approach inverts the previous model—that identified risks and limited activities accordingly—and instead focuses on programme goals—aiming to identify all possible measures to allow for secure delivery against those goals. The approach requires a significant change in mindset for some security managers and officers

<sup>3</sup> As of 11 November 2010. The survey remains open and gathering responses, which may be used for additional research by the authors at a later date.



who must begin to think in terms of ‘how to stay’ as opposed to ‘when to leave,’ in the words of Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, Gregory Starr. This concept underpins the new security management framework and Security Level System (SLS) being rolled out in the UN system as of January 2011. The SLS replaces the old security phases, and is designed to be more objective and contextually specific, allowing for more flexible decision making by doing away with the automatic security measures of the old system.

As part of a systematic process to assessing risk, most agencies have introduced a *security risk management*<sup>4</sup> framework, which provides a structure to better understand the nature and levels of risk to the organisation or programme, weigh these risks against the benefits of the programme to the affected population, and consider the means to effectively manage and mitigate these risks. Within this, a number of risk assessment methodologies have been developed, including the UN’s Security Risk Assessment (SRA) which in turn has been adopted (and adapted) by major operational NGOs and NGO consortia (InterAction, 2010; HPN, 2010). Assessing risk includes assessing those for different staff. National, local, and international staff face different threats and have different vulnerabilities, as do men and women. Intended as ‘living’ documents, security risk assessments are designed to occur not just at the point of embarking on an operation in a new location, but also in response to any major security changes in the environment.

Some organisations have sought to develop guidelines on determining their threshold of acceptable risk. The UN, for example, developed Guidelines for Acceptable Risk in 2009. This guidance is evidence of important recognition on the part of the organisation that not all risks can be totally eliminated and that senior management, as well as informed and consenting staff, must be willing to accept whatever risk remains after they apply their risk management strategies (the residual risk). Conscious risk acceptance means taking seriously the possibility of a major security incident, but at the same time understanding that such an incident will not be an institution-shaking, career-ending event.<sup>5</sup> A few UN agencies, including WFP, UNICEF, and UNHCR are re-examining their operations in complex security environments in relation to their corporate responsibilities (and those of donors) and duty of care.<sup>6</sup> This includes developing policy guidance for headquarters on issues such as human resources and procurement, as well as standard operating procedures for complex security environments—covering the full spectrum of programme cycle activities from needs assessment to monitoring.

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4 Security risk management is in fact just one component of a broader, holistic approach to risk management, which includes programmatic, financial, and other types of organisational risk. Most humanitarian organisations have not yet adopted this framework, and those that have are for the most part still in the very early stages of ‘breaking down the silos’ between the different risk-management areas.

5 This change of mindset was seen in the after-action response to two recent major attacks on UN facilities in Pakistan and Afghanistan, which was more measured in comparison to the Iraq and Algeria bombings.

6 The legal concept of duty of care presumes that organisations ‘are responsible for their employees’ well-being and must take practical steps to mitigate foreseeable workplace dangers’—a responsibility that takes on additional implications when the employees are working overseas (Claus, 2010).

The UN's programme criticality exercise has been introduced as a means to support this decision-making process. It involves determining which programmes are the most critical (either in terms of saving lives or immediate utility), and hence warrant accepting a greater level of risk or a greater allocation of resources to mitigate the risks. The pilot exercises have been controversial in some settings (as different agencies naturally tend to view their own activities as critical), and less well received by headquarters staff and development actors within the UN Country Teams. However, the overall goals of the exercise, and the onus of accountability at the most senior levels of agency management, signal an important recognition within the UN of a new era in security risk management. Organisations with demonstrated effective security management have decentralised their decision-making regarding security and risk management. This means that security decisions are taken at the most proximate level, while advised and supported at higher levels. The impending reforms in the security management system of the UN promise to create more such decentralisation and attendant flexibility in decision-making.

Security approaches and specific strategies for agencies operating in complex security environments can be broadly characterised by the concepts of acceptance, protection, and deterrence. The concept of *acceptance*—cultivating good relations and consent for humanitarian activities among local populations and key actors—has long been the cornerstone of the humanitarian security approach. However, many agencies in the past have made the mistake of assuming acceptance without proactively cultivating it. In recent years some agencies operating in both highly violent urban and deep field contexts have increased their efforts to pursue an active acceptance approach. Good practice in this area is discussed in Section 3.1.

In high risk environments, however, acceptance alone is often not enough to mitigate the risk, and most agencies will also adopt some *protection* measures in these settings. While acceptance seeks to reduce the potential threat, a protection-centred approach focuses on reducing the organisation's vulnerability through physical assets and procedures. The UN tends to rely more heavily on the protection approach, akin to embassies and other diplomatic facilities and in contrast with non-governmental humanitarian organisations.

The disadvantages of a security approach that emphasises heavy protection is that the high walls and reduced movement effectively distance the agency from the local population, sending the wrong signals for a humanitarian entity and creating a 'bunker mentality' among staff. As both programming and security personnel acknowledge, there is a difference between access and effective access, and aid workers serve no practical purpose if they remain barricaded in compounds, unable or unwilling to get out to the field. *Deterrence* means posing a counter-threat: essentially discouraging would-be attackers by instilling fear of the consequences they may face. For humanitarians, the term has for many become synonymous with the use of armed protection; although there are other potential deterrents and more strategic ways of using armed protection. These are discussed in Section 3.5.

Although sizeable advancements have occurred in the conceptual development of security management for humanitarian operations, it remains represented better in



theory than in practice. This is partly because the UNSMS, for example, is in the process of instituting security reforms that are being implemented over the course of 2010 and 2011, but also because changes at the field level depend on ongoing recruitment, training, and skills development that could take some years to fully realise.

Additional challenges exist, such as to implement the *enabling approach* in integrated mission structures. In some contexts, the mission objectives emphasise military and security priorities and may have less risk tolerance when it comes to civilian activities. In such contexts, operating with an armed escort, for instance, has become more common for UN agencies. As discussed in Section 5, more needs to be done to address the phenomenon of risk transfer to national staff and local partners, and the ethical and moral responsibilities (alongside the practical ones) to ensure that the operational and security needs of national actors are better and more consistently addressed so that their vital role in complex security environments can continue.

## 2 The threat environment: Challenges to secure and effective humanitarian access

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### 2.1 Trends in security for humanitarian workers

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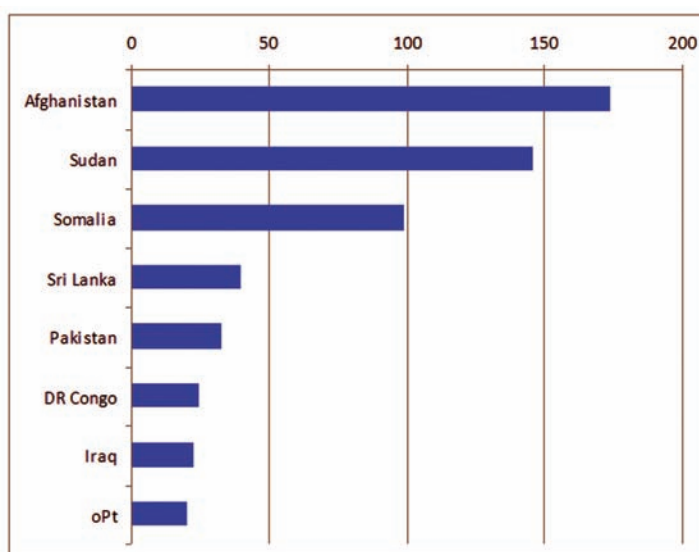
By nature, humanitarian action is undertaken in insecure, complex, and rapidly changing environments. As such, operating in the face of various forms of violence is not new to humanitarian organisations. The types of threats faced, however, have continued to evolve. In the past five years since the data first began to be systematically collected,<sup>7</sup> certain trends in global violence against aid workers have come into focus. The incident statistics show that major attacks against civilian aid operations (resulting in death, kidnapping, or serious injury), which were on an upward trajectory since the late 1990s, have begun to level off in most aid settings around the world. This can be attributed in large part to hard-won improvements by aid organisations in security awareness and management systems, allowing for more effective risk assessment and mitigation by staff in the field. At the same time, however, since 2005 or 2006, a small number of extremely violent operational settings—Afghanistan, Somalia, and Sudan top the list—have driven up total aid worker casualties globally. This includes a rising incidence of attacks, more sophisticated and lethal tactics and weapons, and a particularly pronounced upswing in kidnappings (Stoddard, Harmer, & DiDomenico, 2009).

Kidnappings—including incidents where the victims were killed, in addition to the more common outcome of victims being released alive—remained the fastest growing type of attack affecting aid workers, even as other tactics such as armed break-ins and violent road banditry dropped off as organisations instituted tighter and more protective security measures and restricted movement in some areas. In addition, kidnappings have proven a lucrative activity for criminal gangs who can demand ransom for the victims from their families and organisations, or sell them on to armed militant groups. These armed groups in turn use the victims for political leverage, as a propaganda tool, or to demonstrate power over a certain territory or in relation to the authorities. Aid workers are of course not the only target for kidnapers, but they tend to be a visible and soft one.

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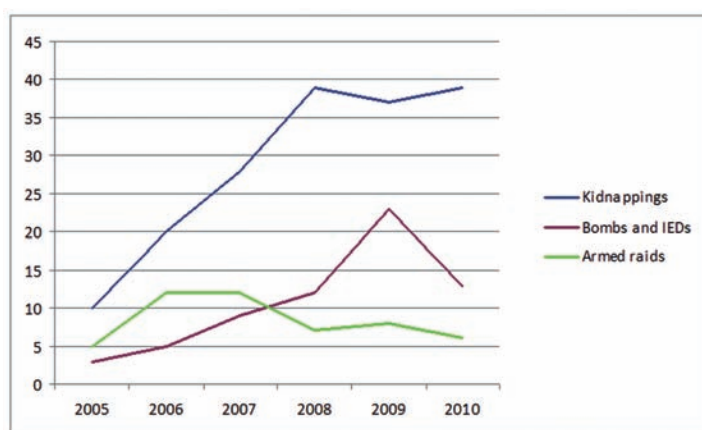
<sup>7</sup> The incident statistics cited in this section are drawn from the Aid Worker Security Database ([www.aidworkersecurity.org](http://www.aidworkersecurity.org)), a project of Humanitarian Outcomes.

**Figure 1 Major attacks on aid workers, 2005–2010**



\* Sri Lanka is an exceptional case, in that the bulk of aid worker casualties were in the form of collateral violence caused by heavy shelling of the northeast during combat operations in 2008–09. (The numbers represent separate acts of violence, not individual victims.)

**Figure 2 An increase in kidnappings and use of explosives in attacks on aid workers**



The use of heavy explosives (including by suicide bombers) and IEDs (static, vehicle-, and body-borne) to attack aid operations, as well as other international and political entities, is the other notable trend. Attacks have become more complex, using a combination of suicide bombers and armed attackers for example. As a result, agencies are introducing armed personnel inside compounds to act as a deterrent. To date these methods have been mostly limited to a small number of contexts (e.g. Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia) that have certain conflict features in common, as discussed below.

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## 2.2 Differentiating threat contexts

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The countries with the highest incidence of major attacks on aid workers, depicted in Figure 1, all have longstanding internal conflicts involving armed insurgencies with varying degrees of fragmentation; some also face significant levels of criminality and banditry. They are each, of course, unique in their specific political and security dynamics, actors, and histories. More broadly, however, they share some important common features, for some a post-9/11 global security dynamic of international terror and counter-terror operations have affected international humanitarian action in ways the aid community has not fully come to grips with.

### 2.2.1 *Internationalised insurgencies and counterinsurgency campaigns: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, and Somalia*

Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq are the primary theatres in which the US-led counter-terror operations are taking place, with Somalia and Yemen representing areas of secondary but increasing concern.

In the countries where the US and its allies have troops on the ground (Afghanistan and Iraq), the challenge for humanitarians has become one of providing aid in an impartial manner, and being perceived as neutral and independent amid military-led stabilisation campaigns utilising counter-insurgency tactics. Counter-insurgency doctrine focuses on populations rather than enemy forces (the latter being able to dissipate and regroup to strike elsewhere) and therefore values providing services and assistance to win the hearts and minds of local populations and ‘stabilise’ surrounding areas. When the military delivers assistance, however, the aid operation becomes a military activity and hence may become a legitimate military target according to belligerents. Traditionally independent aid providers are by extension more vulnerable to similar targeting—either because they directly collaborate with the counter-insurgency campaign or simply because they are perceived to be in association with it.

On the insurgency side of the equation, global insurgent elements (i.e. Al Qaeda) in these countries present a different type of threat to humanitarian action than do their local or national counterparts (e.g. Taliban, TTP, Al-Shabaab). Having broader political objectives, they are inclined to paint all Western international entities as the enemy, and present themselves as less interested in negotiating with individual humanitarian actors over access. This explains why in some instances in Afghanistan and Somalia, as local opposition forces gain ground and start to consolidate control over certain areas, paradoxically the humanitarians’ prospect for negotiating secure access in these areas becomes increasingly possible. As fighting ceases, a semblance of law and order is restored, and the opposition group has an interest to be seen to bring services into the population. The more local the group in control, the more likely it is to have this motivation. International jihad tends to be far more ideologically motivated and less oriented to the needs of local populations.

Local insurgencies also increase their legitimacy and leverage vis-à-vis the government by being open to negotiate access with international aid providers. Drone attacks in Afghanistan and Pakistan that have killed some of the more senior, experienced

leaders of the opposition, have in some ways further complicated the security context for future humanitarian aid operations. Those taking the place of the previous leaders often tend to be younger, less seasoned and more radical individuals, making negotiation difficult and increasing fragmentation among the opposition.

In Iraq, attacks on aid workers dropped off sharply after the major bombings of the UN and the ICRC in 2003 and multiple other incidents led to a major withdrawal of international aid workers, with many agencies setting up in Jordan in order to manage programmes remotely. (There has been some redeployment of aid personnel over the past year, but international aid operations continue to be extremely low-profile and circumscribed.) A similar reduction in the total numbers of violent incidents affecting aid workers is now being seen in Somalia starting in 2010, as fewer international aid operations are present on the ground to attack (and consequently fewer humanitarian needs are being met.)

### *2.2.2 Host government impediments to access and the threat of collateral violence: oPt, Sri Lanka*

The conflict over the status of the occupied Palestinian territories, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, is a central point in world relations, with far-reaching political implications. In oPt the direct threats to aid workers are currently relatively low, but due to the periods of active hostilities between Israeli forces and Hamas, at times risks were considerable. Most major casualties in the past were sustained in collateral violence—crossfire and shelling—for example during Israel’s Cast Lead combat operation in Gaza in December-January 2008–09.

The bigger challenges to humanitarian action in oPt are the political impediments to humanitarian access, which is discussed in Section 4. Sri Lanka likewise has a strong government that continues to restrict the movements and access of humanitarian actors, who were particularly vulnerable to collateral harm during the Sri Lankan military’s pivotal offensive against the LTTE in 2008–09 (as well as to kidnapping and forced conscription by rebel forces).

### *2.2.3 Lawless environments, diffuse threats: DRC, Chad*

On the lesser end of the scale of violence against aid workers, DRC and Chad represent more ‘traditional’ challenges to humanitarian action. The foreign troop presence in these cases is (or was until recently, in the case of Chad) UN peacekeeping missions, which provide area security and protection that many in the humanitarian community have accepted, sometimes reluctantly, but in so doing have grown dependent on. Dependence on these forces inevitably limits access to only those areas where these forces can themselves travel—whether limited by their capacity to provide accompaniment or by the level of acceptance or threats they experience in a given area. The threats against humanitarian actors derive from a multiplicity of armed groups and criminal elements with complex linkages between them; in addition, large geographical areas lack any effective law enforcement or meaningful government control. In addition, planned drawdowns or withdrawals of

the peacekeeping forces, in particular the drawdown of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), present aid workers with the challenge of providing security to staff, operations, and civilian aid recipients once the troops are gone. This same issue confronts the UN agencies and a few INGOs in Iraq, that have been relying heavily on US troops there. Community Based Policing Mechanisms, introduced in Chad as an attempt to address criminal and banditry threats, are discussed in Section 3.

Sudan (Darfur) presents a special case in that it shares some of the characteristics found in each of the above categories, but not others. The authorities in Sudan restrict populations' access to international aid in some areas and carry out politically-driven expulsions of aid organisations and individuals. The government's fraught relationship with the West<sup>8</sup> and its suspicions of international humanitarian actors speak both to its concerns for sovereignty and to the geo-strategic and politico-cultural dynamics of the post 9/11 international landscape. In addition, Darfur hosts numerous and fragmented armed non-state actors and criminal bands that operate with impunity in parts of the vast region beyond the reach of any official or security presence.

Finally, wherever international political or military interests are at stake, as is the case in many of the contexts examined in the study, a perennial experience of humanitarian actors is that their operational imperatives, including claiming shares of material and logistical resources, continually take a backseat to political and military or strategic objectives.

#### *2.2.4 Other complex security environments and emerging threats*

Other threats exist, of course, that could potentially pose equal or greater challenges for humanitarian access and security in the future. Transnational criminal enterprises such as narco-trafficking (as in Colombia, which also contends with armed political opposition), or urban violence and criminal activity (as in Haiti and Papua New Guinea), have no political objectives or clear chain of command on which to base a dialogue, only diffuse power and profit motives. These threats may yet prove even more severe and intractable than the ones currently preoccupying the humanitarian community, but to date they have not exacted a comparable toll in lives.

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### **2.3 Intrinsic vulnerabilities of the humanitarian community**

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In addition to the external threats in their operating environments, humanitarians acknowledge they must contend with certain weaknesses inherent in the nature of humanitarian actors, or what some have called 'self-generated risks'. Although any individual aid agency or staffer can behave in a way that compromises security, other attributes of the aid community writ large can create challenges.

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<sup>8</sup> Particularly after the president's indictment for war crimes by the International Criminal Court, in which non-governmental humanitarian and human rights groups were seen to have colluded.

### *2.3.1 The identity problem: The Western face of international humanitarian aid*

If the international humanitarian actors in some of these settings are caught up in a larger geopolitical contest between Western powers against a global jihadist insurgent movement, then they are arguably compromised from the outset by virtue of their mostly Western origins and orientations. The concept of *inter-arma* humanitarian action by impartial actors enshrined in the Geneva Conventions remains the underpinning normative framework for humanitarian operations on behalf of civilian populations during times of war—and a potent and useful tool. In fact, its universal relevance is evidenced in the responses of national aid workers across a wide range of settings (Section 5). In addition, many non-Western cultures have a strong tradition of charitable giving, particularly Islam. Nonetheless, the predominant international humanitarian community in these settings is perceived as primarily Western in origin. As a result it requires active and conscientious effort to demonstrate in locally appropriate ways the practical relevance and concrete benefits of the humanitarian endeavour, so that it may not be misunderstood as a tool or extension of Western political and cultural power. In some environments this is not easy. As one aid practitioner interviewed in Sudan noted, ‘For governments like Khartoum, it is not just an issue of perception, it is a conviction of what humanitarian work has come to be about. In Darfur, the government sees humanitarian action and human rights as Western constructs being imposed upon them.’

### *2.3.2 Political and religious identities of some aid actors*

Due to the dual nature of the UN as both a political actor and a humanitarian actor, UN aid agencies have more difficulty projecting a neutral image than many other humanitarians. The UN’s political role in many of the most-contested environments has placed it squarely in the Western camp, where it is viewed as a legitimate and prominent target (Al Qaeda along with national-level jihadist elements in different countries have named the UN as an enemy target on more than one occasion). Partly for this reason, UN humanitarian agencies have been required by UN policy to shift to a heavily protected stance, which some other humanitarian aid organisations have been able to avoid. Religious affiliations can also create an extra layer of risk, particularly when national-level jihadist elements or the local populations are sensitive to the prospects of proselytising. Al-Shabaab, for example, recently ordered several faith-based organisations to close their operations in south-central Somalia, accusing them of spreading Christian propaganda, and charges of proselytising were cited by perpetrators of a number of security incidents affecting aid workers in Afghanistan.

### *2.3.3 Development versus humanitarian stances and skill profiles*

Another recurrent theme cited by interviewees was the difficulties international aid agencies experience shifting from a reconstruction or developmental orientation to a more emergency humanitarian or conflict footing as a situation deteriorates. For UN agencies and others this can mean starting off with weak field presence outside the capital city, and lacking the right skills and experience, including security analysis, for



humanitarian contexts. Addressing these deficits by instituting a major turnover of staff brings its own set of challenges.

#### *2.3.4 Integrating security management in UN peacekeeping and political missions*

A specific concern cited by UN agency staff in Sudan and DRC was the impact of the UN's integration of field-security-management capacity into the mission structure. Interviewees noted that the UN's peacekeeping approach to security issues does not reflect the 'enabling' approach to support life-saving humanitarian operations. As a result, mission security personnel tend to prioritise military and political activities and tolerated little risk for the work of the UN outside of the mission. UN humanitarian agencies argue that the restrictions imposed on their movement by the mission limits their ability to carry out their mandates. In eastern DRC, interviewees highlighted that due to its limited field presence, UNDSS has comparatively limited capacity to undertake assessments to lower a security phase or to open up a previously designated 'no go' (red marked) road.<sup>9</sup> The requirement that UN agencies move with armed escorts, and the reliance on missions to provide air lifts and road patrols has short- and long-term implications. In the short term, access for UN staff is severely limited and where it does occur, missions having armed escorts increase the perception that aid agencies operate in alignment with the priorities of the mission, rather than based on independent and impartial assessment of humanitarian need. In the long term, aid agencies' increased reliance on peacekeeping assets risks increasing access problems when missions scale down and withdraw.

This section has sought to paint a broad picture of the current level of risk and complexity facing civilian humanitarian operations in the least secure settings. While gauging precisely how far the humanitarian presence has contracted as a result of violence is difficult, clearly in these high risk settings the scope of humanitarian access had decreased, movements have been greatly hindered, results and the quality of aid has been harder to monitor, and the aid operations that can continue have become more difficult and more expensive. Against this background of challenges and threats, humanitarian actors have tried to develop new practices and operational adaptations to maintain or regain secure access to conflict-affected populations. Operational security management guidance can now be found in several publications and grey literature in the humanitarian sphere.<sup>10</sup> This work has informed the research for this study. The more immediate objective of this report, however, is to give an account of the current developments and innovations that can be found in field settings and, where possible, to synthesise the operational lessons, as is the substance of Section 3.

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<sup>9</sup> Eastern DRC, for example, is marked by 'red', 'yellow', and 'green' roads as determined by the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and UNDSS. For UN agencies, red roads require armed escort by MONUSCO; yellow roads require a security clearance, two-car convoy, and MOSS-compliant communications. Single vehicles are permissible only on green roads. In North Kivu, OCHA maintains that approximately 95 per cent of the roads are marked red at any given time.

<sup>10</sup> For example, InterAction's Security Risk Management: NGO Approach (Schafer, 2010); HPN's Good Practice Review on Operational Security Management in Violent Environments (HPN, 2010); ICRC's Staying Alive: Safety and Security Guidelines for Volunteers in Conflict Areas (ICRC, 2006); IFRC's Stay Safe: The International Federation's Guide for Security Managers (IFRC, 2007); ECHO's NGO security collaboration guide (2006); and numerous others.



### 3 Good practice for gaining and maintaining access in high-risk environments

This section describes practices currently employed by aid providers that have demonstrated usefulness for operating in the most challenging security conditions. The purpose is to highlight examples of good practice and innovative operational solutions, without elaborating specific details—for reasons of security—about the individual actors and locations.

The practices described are divided into

- acceptance-based approaches;
- negotiated access;
- localised or devolved management strategies;
- low-profile approaches;
- protective measures
- deterrent measures; and
- other operational measures related to security management, coordination, and preparedness.

The categories and practices are not mutually exclusive, and in fact are typically used in combination, with varying degrees of emphasis depending on the type of aid actor and the operational setting. The study found that the majority of aid organisations operating in the most dangerous environments have increasingly relied on two specific measures in combination: (1) highly localised operations staffed exclusively with inhabitants from the immediate area, and (2) a low-profile stance. The first measure enhances acceptance and familiarity within the local community, and the second protects against opportunistic targeting by national-level belligerents and by would-be attackers on the road and in unfamiliar areas. The notable exception to this practice is the ICRC (and, increasingly, one or two INGOs), which has made significant investments in building capacity and putting in the staff hours for negotiating security guarantees and, as a function of that negotiated access, maintains a visibly identifiable presence.

#### ACCEPTANCE APPROACH

Actively building and cultivating good relations and consent as part of a security management strategy with local communities, parties to conflict, and other relevant stakeholders; and obtaining their acceptance and consent for the humanitarian organisation's presence and its work.

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#### 3.1 Active acceptance-based approaches

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Aid organisations can seek acceptance-based security for their staff and activities in a variety of ways along a spectrum that ranges from a default mode of passive acceptance (i.e. eschewing any association with political or military actors or other international entities), to an active acceptance posture involving proactive outreach strategies, to direct humanitarian negotiation for access and security guarantees. Because humanitarian negotiation requires greater skills and capacities than are currently found among many agencies operating in the field, this is discussed below in its own subsection (3.2).

An important finding of the research was that generally the more active and diligent the organisation was in its acceptance efforts, and the greater its capacity to communicate and negotiate with all parties, the better access and security it was able to obtain. Of course where dominant restrictions to access exist, such as host-state-imposed restrictions or active ongoing conflict, access was still be far from optimal,

but overall this observation held true across settings. Two additional critical caveats regarding acceptance need to be considered:

- (1) in the most dangerous environments (including highly criminalised environments) it is unlikely that any organisation can ever rely on acceptance-based security alone; and
- (2) the fundamental prerequisite to acceptance is competence in humanitarian delivery and the capacity to fulfil commitments and demonstrate tangible results for beneficiaries.

**‘EARNING’ HUMANITARIAN  
SPACE THROUGH GOOD  
PROGRAMMING**

‘You don’t come in and pronounce a humanitarian space; you deliver and earn the space. It cannot be based on rhetorical principles; it has to be based on consistent delivery.’

—humanitarian practitioner  
in Colombia

**Institutional investments in communications and outreach strategies and structures.** Typically, an international aid organisation devotes more time and effort to crafting its messages and public image for its donors, the international media, and the general public at home than for the communities and key actors in the places it is serving. The organisations that have gained acceptance in complex security environments generally credit this achievement to tangible efforts; acceptance as a function of the amount of work they have put in on a consistent basis to actively seek out local audiences and communicate the key messages, as well as listen and absorb feedback.

**Outreach teams.** In the most advanced form of institutional capacity for outreach and communications seen by the field researchers, the organisation employed an outreach or liaison team of specialised, expert staff members. Each had terms of reference devoted exclusively to liaising with a particular party: government officials, military officers, religious leaders, community elders, and other non-state actors. This outreach function—‘to travel and talk’—comprised the entire scope of work for these professionals. Their background and experience within their areas of specialty allowed them to serve an analytical function as well as a practical liaison role.

**Ongoing, local consultations.** Regular, frequent meetings or bilateral conversations are held with key actors members of the public to communicate the organisation’s mission, values, past and current work, and objectives—as well as to receive feedback and consult on priorities. The ICRC in Afghanistan was able to reach over 10,000 individuals with their message in the course of one year, through 500 separate meetings. A great many other aid entities held few or no such meetings. Points that are useful to stress in these consultations are an organisation’s longevity of presence in and commitment to the area, past achievements, and demonstrated principled (independent, neutral, and impartial) programming. For its part, the UN might need to increase its focus on local-level dialogue (particularly with local groups, politicians, and alternate leaders) for issues of access and to ensure effective coverage of the affected population. However, given the UN’s structure and general approach, which often prioritises dialogue at national and international levels, this is potentially challenging.

**Measuring the success of acceptance.** Many organisations claim to practice acceptance, yet have no tangible measure of whether their efforts have any effect. In addition to concrete examples of communities protecting the organisation by intervening with belligerents on its behalf or by warning it of potential threats, the

use of perception surveys can serve as a useful practical indicator. These surveys have been initiated by a handful of INGOs in DRC, Afghanistan, and Pakistan to monitor how they are being seen by and accepted in each community where they are working. Such surveys can be a tool to learn more about the local population as well as to assess success of acceptance strategies, identify shortfalls, and correct misperceptions before they lead to security risks.

**Positive associations and strategic partnerships.** In seeking acceptance, international humanitarians tend to stress their non-association with certain parties, such as political or military groups, but pay far less attention to possibilities for positive associations with other entities that are known and trusted by the local community. A few field experiences demonstrate that acceptance was enhanced by an organisation's endorsement by or affiliation with trusted entities—including a local NGO, or an international NGO with a longer history in the area and well-established credibility. Respondents suggested that acceptance could also be achieved through similar arrangements with an accepted religious organisation. In some places regional intergovernmental organisations such as the African Union (AU) (and African sub-regional organisations), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), or the Arab League might be able to play a useful interlocutor role. However, given the political nature of these organisations, decisions to engage on issues of humanitarian concern should be done on a case-by-case basis. (In several other instances willing intermediaries were not fully utilised and potentially very useful partnerships were not explored.)

**Community co-ownership.** A UN agency in Afghanistan has reported success in terms of acceptance by using a formula for projects whereby the community brings one third of the resources, the government ministry another third, and the agency the last third. This can test the commitment of a community to protect the project, yet may only be appropriate for more development-type programming: the approach of working directly with the government in highly contested contexts needs to be managed carefully in terms of perceptions of a lack of independence.

**Community MOUs.** One INGO, also in Afghanistan, uses an outreach team in new places where it wishes to start work to lay the groundwork for a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that it will sign with every community as a precondition of programming. The MOU stipulates the roles and responsibilities for both sides (for the INGO it is to 'programme well and behave.' For the community it is to 'warn us when there is danger, and when to lay low or when to leave.')

**Aiding the host community in a camp-based response.** A good practice measure identified in Chad, and also used in other contexts, is to assess and support the host community as well as the directly affected refugee and IDP population. This is both because the surrounding host population might also have critical needs and as a means to increase acceptance within that same group, which could act as a source of protection.

**Local broadcasting and published materials.** Acceptance measures by some aid actors in DRC include distributing flyers in Swahili and French, broadcasting radio messages, and disseminating comic strips and photos. Messages are written simply

and clearly, explaining what the agency does. One INGO in another setting reported good results in promoting a positive image among the local population when it purchased local TV time and ran a documentary or ‘infomercial’ about the INGO and its programmes.

**Non-association measures.** Despite the need for active acceptance measures, the benefits of non-association are nonetheless evident in several contested environments. The few INGOs operating in south-central Somalia with some degree of acceptance share some features: they don’t receive US funding, and most would be defined as secular. Some INGOs in DRC have benefited from increasing their visibility and identifying their vehicles as distinct from the UN peacekeeping mission’s white cars by painting their cars in other distinguishable colours.

**De-Westernising, diversifying.** In an attempt to counter the Western associations of assistance some host states, including Sudan and Chad, have embarked on a nationalisation policy to increase the representation of national organisations and national staff managing or taking part in the aid effort. In policy terms, aid agencies support efforts (irrespective of pressure from the host state) to increase the responsibilities, capacity building, and training of local partners and national staff. Aid agencies note that national staff often has greater ‘acceptability’ to government officials (including at times, improved access). However, agencies also note that in the initial stages of a nationalisation process the risk of slower and lower-quality service exists because of the time involved in building the technical capacity of national staff and local partners. It also, at times, poses challenges in maintaining the principles of impartiality and neutrality. In response to the nationalisation agenda, an NGO in Darfur developed a series of principles to guide its commitment to this policy (Tearfund, 2009):

- Prioritise the personal and professional development of national staff.
- Only recruit international staff when the skills and experience needed are not available in North Sudan, and be willing and able to justify the need of all international staff if challenged by authorities.
- Where feasible and appropriate, seek to work with or through government ministries and local civil society organisations to increase local and national capacity and ownership of assistance. If possible, balance this with building understanding and ensuring adherence to principles of neutrality and impartiality.
- Have a pre-agreed exit plan for all activities in all locations, which includes capacity building, with clear benchmarks and performance indicators, of individuals, community groups, local organisations and line ministries and, where necessary, hand over activities to the most appropriate body for long-term sustainability on departure.
- Work according to the principle that delivery of needs-based assistance to disaster-affected populations will precede in priority to development of local capacity to deliver assistance, including local-government capacity to deliver services.

- Coordinate humanitarian action and concerns closely with the INGO Forum, OCHA, UN agencies, sector coordination groups, and the Humanitarian Aid Commission.

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### 3.2 Negotiating access

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Even if an organisation is well accepted by a local community, immunity from attack is not ensured, especially in fluid situations where non-local actors may be able to exercise force. Effectively negotiating secure access in violent conflicts requires, in the words of one interviewee, ‘talking to everyone with a gun.’ To do this effectively entails advanced skills, experience, and capacities, but has proven to be the primary tool for those organisations, notably the ICRC, that have obtained and sustained secure access in high risk locations.<sup>11</sup> It also helps for headquarters leadership to foster contacts among diaspora groups that have links with actors inside the countries in question.

#### **Identifying an appropriate interlocutor or intermediary to open negotiations.**

One INGO successfully re-entered a country it had withdrawn from after a lethal attack by following a series of deliberate steps: First it consulted prior in-country national staff members, other trusted local contacts, and a trusted international organisation to identify and arrange with a suitably connected individual to relay to the insurgency leaders its wishes to return, its mission and objectives, and the activities it sought to undertake. The next step was to meet in person with the designated representatives of the opposition leadership to discuss the proposed programme in practical terms. At the same time the organisation was in touch with the host government and was very transparent with both sides about everyone it was talking to. Once the leadership at national level gave the green light, the organisation began making contacts with interlocutors at the local level in the areas they were seeking to re-establish their presence.

Conversely, another organisation that was already present on the ground when the security environment shifted went about its access negotiations the other way around: cementing contacts and negotiating agreements for the existing presence with local interlocutors, and following up by talking to higher levels.

**Negotiating with host authorities on security.** As will be examined in more detail in Section 4, access can often be restricted or complicated by host governments or military authorities. Negotiated access is an important tool in this regard; very often UN agencies and INGOs do not strategically engage with these actors or ‘push back’ on issues where there may in fact be flexibility and room for dialogue.

As an example of strategic access negotiations, the UN has developed a ‘Humanitarian Access Framework’ with the Government of National Unity and the Government of Southern Sudan. This is considered to be particularly important in

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<sup>11</sup> A good deal of focused research and guidance has been produced in the field of humanitarian negotiation, including such recent documents as the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Handbook on Humanitarian Access and Humanitarian Access Field Manual (forthcoming). This report takes that body of work into account, while emphasizing in these pages what was found in the field research for this study in terms of practical applications by aid providers on the ground.

the lead-up and aftermath of the referendum for independence. Another example of seeking a more flexible approach to the imposition of state armed escorts was seen in Pakistan, where some agencies were able to arrange for police to provide an armed escort unseen, sitting inside an unmarked vehicle accompanying the organisations' own unmarked vehicles. This 'low profile armed escort' ceases to be a deterrent measure, and rather becomes a protective one (in the eyes of the authorities), and from the point of view of the aid organisations is a way to satisfy the authorities without presenting themselves as more of a visible target.

In a further-reaching example, to avoid having armed guards and mobile escorts, INGOs in North Darfur negotiated with the local authorities and local police to enhance area security measures from the villages and towns into the whole community.<sup>12</sup> It involved

- installing observation points;
- increasing patrols (day and night) in the villages and towns;
- improving reaction time to incidents (Quick Reaction Force or QRF), that is, improved communication between check-points, mobility, etc.;
- establishing check points at the main entry and exit points of the villages and towns;
- expanding 'arms free areas';
- having a focal point for regular contact, information exchange, and monitoring between the authorities and the aid community;
- having regular meetings with the security committee of the Government of Sudan and the Humanitarian Assistance Commission; and
- having mobile patrols, as opposed to armed escorts, on roads.

#### **Increasing regular communications with authorities at the local level.**

Consistent contact and communications with authorities are important not only for effectively negotiating relationships, but because security conditions can change daily, and the authorities have more opportunities to be flexible if dialogue is ongoing.

**'Access teams'.** The OCHA-managed access team in the West Bank was established to provide on-call assistance to UN agencies and INGOs experiencing problems and blocks on the movements of staff and goods across checkpoints (a daily occurrence). While some of the larger INGOs have their own access interlocutors, most of the 137 registered INGOs rely on OCHA's access team for its knowledge and contacts at central government and checkpoint levels. The UN imprimatur and the fact that it is a unified central point for 'low level advocacy' has made the access team a very useful innovation to facilitate humanitarian operations. (However, when there are requests from non-registered INGOs or NGOs, the team's position is much weaker.)

#### **Identifying and exploiting opportunities and temporary windows for access.**

This could allow more flexibility, innovation, and variation of strategies from one locality to another. This includes rapid response mechanisms that are prepared for quick in-and-out operations, making use of temporary lulls, or identifying areas

<sup>12</sup> Unpublished INGO proposal to the Wali of North Darfur for enhanced area security, 2009.



within a larger region designated as high risk that could qualify for downgrading. This, in turn, might be one way of facilitating humanitarian access to vulnerable populations without the use of armed escorts.

**Making individuals with contextualised security expertise part of advance teams and assessments.** In the early response to the earthquake in Haiti, UNDAC included a member with a security background as well as recent Haiti experience and a useful network of contacts, which proved highly valuable for quick and effective action for assessing risks and incorporating this analysis into UNDAC's overall recommendations.

**Red lines and ground rules.** In some contexts coordinated 'ground rules' seek to ensure that negotiations on access and other issues related to engaging in a local context, such as paying registration fees and taxes, can be done consistently and decisions made collectively. The Somalia NGO Consortium, for example, developed a position paper *Operating Principles and Red Lines* (2009).<sup>13</sup> The guiding principle is that agencies should act in a collective manner in response to staff being threatened, kidnapped, or killed. This includes sharing information regarding security threats and incidents and sharing full details regarding access negotiations.

In Somalia, three 'red lines' were identified as unacceptable:

- direct payment (material or cash) for access to people in need
- payment of taxes, registration fees, or other forms of payment to armed groups
- transfer of humanitarian goods to any party to the conflict for distribution

Any threat or compulsion to cross a 'red line' would (in theory) result in the suspension or closure of a programme. Good practice in implementing red lines and ground rules is maintaining a collective position in line with the stated measures and avoid operating unilaterally. Evidence of good practice in implementing red lines exists, for example, in Beledweyne in Hiraaan province, south-central Somalia: this year agencies collectively refused cash requests from Al Shabaab to rebuild a bridge. However, many more examples exist in Somalia and Sudan where red lines have been drawn and redrawn time and again to accommodate the increasing threats agencies face on the ground.

**Practical civil-military engagement with national and foreign forces, and peacekeeping missions.** Negotiating written guidelines with military actors, which is often pursued by humanitarian actors as a first priority with military counterparts, is a worthwhile, but time consuming and often not immediately rewarding endeavour as far as humanitarian access is concerned. Lessons from the field, particularly Afghanistan, suggest that what is really needed is practical action with a direct communications link into the operational and planning cells of the military command structure at a decision-making level. Civil-military coordination (CMIC) bodies generally possess less influence and access. Debating guidelines

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<sup>13</sup> Other examples include IASC Somalia, *Ground Rules: Advisory Note on Practical Considerations for Negotiations* (IASC, 2009) and UNCT Somalia *Policy on Humanitarian Engagement* (UNCT, 2009). Also, a long history of ground rules exists in other contexts, including South Sudan *Ground Rules*, Liberia *Codes of Conduct*, and the *Basic Operating Guidelines* in Nepal.

and principles in civilian-military fora as a rule will not be as helpful as pushing on specific practical issues for actual access on the basis of the Geneva Conventions.

'Deconfliction' is a term that has been applied to the practice of systematic coordination between humanitarian actors and military actors to avoid potential hazards and obstacles and to sustain humanitarian delivery over the long run. Arguably, deconfliction is being practiced in every instance of successful civil-military coordination, even where practitioners do not use the term, such as when humanitarian actors in oPt and Pakistan provide daily advisories to local military and police forces of their movements and schedules. One notable example cited from the past (although not directly observed in the research for this study) is the 'days of tranquillity' organised by UNICEF and WHO in Afghanistan in 2007 and 2008 to carry out immunisation campaigns, and continuing on an annual basis. While it may not be possible or appropriate in all cases, positive examples of deconfliction were also seen during combat operations in Lebanon in 2006, where OCHA assigned a liaison official full-time to the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), and the Gaza Strip in December-January 2008–09, which ultimately ended the IDF strikes that had affected UN facilities and programme assets.

In natural disaster contexts, the development of practical guidance for military actors in providing area security for beneficiaries and aid agency staff at distributions sites is a new and emerging area of good practice.

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### 3.3 Remote programming: Strategic localisation of operations, not risk transfer

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**Remote management arrangements for programming in insecure environments.** Reducing or restricting movement or withdrawing internationals (or non-local nationals) while shifting responsibilities for programme delivery to local staff or local partners is one of the most common programming adaptations to insecurity, and is practiced in many different permutations in challenging environments around the world (Stoddard, Harmer, & Renouf, 2010).<sup>14</sup>

Despite its commonplace and often protracted usage, however, very few agencies have systematically or strategically planned for when, whether, and how to employ this practice as an effective programmatic adaptation, as opposed to an ad hoc response (ibid.) As a result, the outcome was sometimes an unethical transfer of risk to national staffers and local partners, who were wrongly assumed to be at less risk than internationals simply by virtue of their nationality. In reality national staffers hired from a different part of the country may be seen as outsiders by the local community in some cases, and resented or distrusted as much or more than expatriates. The problems and perils of remote management have been detailed in other studies; what is presented below pinpoints the more promising aspects of the practice as seen in the field research and recent innovations in its application.

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<sup>14</sup> This study focused on remote management as a response to insecurity. It did not study agencies that have longstanding relationships with local partners as their normal way of operating.



**Highly localised, and static, staffing.** A few interviewees observed that in times of increasing insecurity and restrictions on movement, an aid agency should increase, not decrease, hiring of national staffers. More people will be needed in more places, because staff are less mobile and work from their own local environment where they are accepted and have connections. Of course this assumes the organisation can manage the rising numbers of staff effectively, otherwise scaling up would not be useful. One national NGO in Iraq reports a policy of always hiring local workers from the project area—even technical specialists, for security or acceptance reasons (this is easier in a country like Iraq, with a highly educated population, than it would be, for example, in Afghanistan or Somalia). The idea is that the locals are familiar with the area, known to inhabitants, and can help facilitate working relations with the local community.

**The use of diaspora nationals as international staff.** An INGO operating in Somalia achieved a measure of secure access by appointing expatriate Somalis to manage and monitor their programme in Somalia. These individuals often have organisational experience in other complex emergencies and can apply this knowledge. In addition, they have local networks and knowledge that allows them to regularly visit the operations in south-central Somalia, as well to increase the INGOs operational presence. So although the INGO operates remotely from Nairobi, decision-making is informed by a more proximate and longer-term understanding of the operational and security dynamics on the ground.

**UNMACCA's community-based de-mining model.** The UN Mine Coordination Center of Afghanistan (UNMACCA) is recruiting young adults from geographic areas that need mine clearance. Community members nominate the recruits and guarantee their reliability. These local staffers then receive over two months of training and are to work in their own community. According to UNMACCA, other agencies and NGO programmes could certainly make use of this programming model, particularly if it involves a defined skill set that people can be trained in.

**'Soft' remote management.** In some remote arrangements senior international staff can have a regular but not full-time presence, by visiting the field sites at least twice a week to train, monitor, and engage with staff. This is a preferable way of remote programming, but remains contextually driven—currently it works in parts of Iraq, Darfur, and some parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan for example, but not in Somalia.

**Methods to enhance accountability and mitigate quality deficits for remote programming.** With less on-site monitoring, programmes naturally run the risk of poorer performance, less accountability, and potential corruption or diversion of funds. Measures and innovations to address this include the following:

- **Web-based remote project monitoring.** As a response to the prohibitive security environment, UNHCR has developed the Project Tracking Database—a computer system to monitor their project activities in Iraq undertaken by local partners. Rather than sending staff out to see that houses are being built, for instance, the local partners take pictures that are uploaded with GPS info. Evidence-based monitoring of construction, costs, and

deliveries take place before, during, and after construction, and payments are tied to the photographic evidence. There are 10,000 projects in Iraq currently on the database. A similar system potentially could be used for distributions or other types of projects.

- **Quality assurance team for remote management accountability.** One INGO in Afghanistan has established a team composed of national staff who are able to have normal access, complemented by senior national staff travelling to monitor programme activities. The team members are highly skilled national staffers from different technical sectors who are not part of the programme line management and who travel and monitor to assess. The team's work is structured on an indicator-based terms of referenceto ensure an objective means of monitoring and assessment.
- **Third party monitoring.** WFP, UNHCR, and some other agencies have been using third party monitoring in a number of contexts, including Afghanistan, Yemen, and Somalia. In Afghanistan, WFP uses three outsourced monitoring firms (two Afghan companies and one based in Dubai). These companies provide non-UN personnel who work on what WFP calls Program Assistance Teams (PATs) that can go into UN 'no-go' areas and monitor the distribution outcomes.
- **Triangulated local monitoring.** In areas where access is impossible for its national and international staff alike, one INGO has used a combination of vendors, local government officials, and community members for programme quality and accountability assurance, wherein all parties have to sign off on each project activity.

Security issues for national staff and local partners both in remote management situations and more generally are discussed in Section 5.

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### 3.4 Low-profile approaches

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As with acceptance approaches, an organisation can choose from a spectrum of low-profile measures from low to virtually no visibility:

- **Simple de-branding measures.** All logos, signs, flags, and other identifying markings are removed from the organisation's vehicles, offices, residences, staff clothing, and programme materials.
- **More comprehensive blending strategies.** Locally rented vehicles and taxis are used for transport rather than the white four-wheel-drive vehicles. Cars have no visible radio antennas, and agencies use local residences as office space.
- **Extreme low profile or no visibility approach.** Local staffers work out of their own homes and do not gather (and sometimes do not even know of each other), and information on the organisation's presence in the area is removed from all publications and websites. In such scenarios the aid recipients may not know the aid provider.

As discussed elsewhere, drawbacks to the low profile approach exist. For example, it can distance an agency from sources of information that might otherwise enhance

its security, and it might lead to suspicions and misperceptions of what an agency is doing, undermining acceptance. It is also a difficult approach to maintain if an agency is seeking wider recognition of its work from the public or from donors. For most organisations it is considered a suboptimal and temporary resort. However, it is commonly used in high-risk contexts, and some practices warrant highlighting as useful. It may, for example, be adopted at the start of a programme, then gradually moderated as operations increase. This approach has been used in tribal areas in Pakistan, for instance. Other examples include the following:

- **Co-location with local or accepted organisations.** An example would be sub-leasing office space in a local NGO's offices.
- **Avoiding the white four-wheel-drive vehicles.** In Darfur and Chad, the use of minibuses and vans rather than four-wheel-drives has significantly reduced car-jackings. Many INGOs in Afghanistan and Pakistan report feeling safer when using locally rented vehicles.
- **'Business continuity from home' contingencies.** UNHCR equipped their national staff in Kandahar with laptops and modems. When going to work is too dangerous, staff remain at home. This is done in Kabul as well as for 'white city' (no movement) days.
- **Mobile communications.** No comprehensive approach exists on how best to provide security communications for staff in the field. A low-profile approach precludes the use of Codan radios with the large antennas, and some organisations have adopted the use of Thuraya satellite phones in vehicles (using auto adapter docking stations). However GPS and satellite phones have been known to raise the suspicions of local armed groups. The organisation is making a judgment call as to whether it feels it is safer for staff to have communications on the road (and risk confiscation, detention, or worse) or to have no means of communication in remote areas. One INGO reported using the satellite phones, and having a few of them confiscated, but said that 'overall we feel it is safer for them to have it on the road than to not have it.'
- **Mitigating measures for banditry and other incidents on the road.** When possible, avoiding road travel and routes with high numbers of incidents is a frequent adaptation—requiring increased financial resources for air travel. When this is not possible, some organisations have trained staff on how to behave in these scenarios, such as to not resist, and to give up cash and phones if necessary. In DRC, a few agencies reported issuing a small amount of cash (approximately \$50) to staff required travel by road outside the capital, to hand over if pressured.

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### 3.5 Protective measures: 'Smart protection', not bunkerisation

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A protection approach uses protective devices and procedures to reduce vulnerability to a threat, but does not affect the threat itself. In security terms this is called 'hardening the target'. Although UN agencies rely on protection measures more heavily than NGOs do, some forms of additional protective measures will be required by most international entities in insecure settings (if only to prevent opportunistic crime). The downsides to protection—and the risk of 'bunkerisation'

in operational stance and mindset—were described among the key concepts in the introduction. The measures listed below are those which can add a layer of protection while minimising the negative aspects of protection:

**Discreet protection measures.** Some features of protective hardening—such as using facilities set back from the road, erecting concrete planters as opposed to simple blast barriers—can serve the purpose without the militarised appearance. One international organisation, for example, reinforced the walls of their office premises from the inside with sandbags and other protective materials—from the outside it appeared as a normal compound.

**Diplomatic or international enclaves (with restricted traffic access).** In some contexts, these are preferable to the retro-fitted facilities in population centres. The diplomatic enclave in Islamabad, for example, features blocked and secured streets in a wide radius, obviating the need for crude blast walls and razor wire around agency compounds. While at some level this could be viewed as simply a ‘bigger cage’, and perpetuates the isolation from local inhabitants, it nonetheless avoids the disturbing optics of the jury rigged bunkers and alleviates some of the negative psychological effects for staff living and working under heavy protection.

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### 3.6 Deterrent measures: Issues around armed protection

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Deterrent approaches are defined as those that pose a counter-threat in order to deter the threat. They are primarily understood to mean the threat or use of force. Although many humanitarian organisations are sensitive to the idea of armed security, virtually all aid agencies at one time or another have used some form of armed protection (Stoddard, Harmer, & DiDomenico, 2007). Increasingly, organisations have established written policies on the use of armed protection that clarify the conditions (normally exceptional) that could justify the use of armed protection. For instance a diffuse threat of violent criminality would tend to be more amenable to deterrent solutions than a conflict situation between organised armed groups. One agency’s guidelines states that armed protection can be considered under specific circumstances:

- A large number of lives are at risk.
- The threat is not political but related to widespread banditry.
- The provider is acceptable.
- The deterrent can be effective.

Many practical considerations exist, such as that armed protection makes humanitarian response much less flexible in terms of movement, as permissions and escorts must be organised in advance, and the capacity and resources for this are not always available (HPN, 2010).

Other forms of deterrence exist, including sanctions (rarely employed by aid agencies) and the suspension or withdrawal of operations.

**Suspension or withdrawal of operations.** A familiar mechanism that aid agencies use in the face of certain threats or after security incidents is to temporarily suspend their aid programmes, or at least threaten to do so. In reality, the threat of suspension is the strongest leverage an organisation has to use with the authorities, and must be carefully and selectively deployed to not be called as an empty bluff. The actual suspension of work is a dramatic and definitive measure that is not easily reversed.

Good practice in pursuing such an approach is having a clear organisational (or inter-agency) position on when to suspend and when to resume programming. In reality, agencies have often threatened to suspend, but then did not, or suspended but then resumed despite no noticeable improvements. This undermines their credibility and makes similar actions in the future less credible (HPN, 2010). Good practice would suggest that stated positions need to be maintained. In Darfur, for example, one organisation suspended operations in response to one of their staff being kidnapped. The lifting of the suspension was conditional on the release of the staff member and lasted 147 days.

**Area security rather than armed escorts.** Where armed protection is recommended by the peacekeeping mission, good practice points to providing area security rather than armed escorts. Such security involves ‘clearing’ roads, maintaining a presence in the area (but not being distinctly visible or accompanying the convoy or vehicles), and providing flyovers.

**Community-based policing mechanisms.** In Chad and more recently in DRC, humanitarian agencies have sought alternatives to the protection mechanisms used by UN peacekeeping forces. In Chad, a special community policing capacity, *Détachement intégré de sécurité* (DIS) was established by MINURCAT to assist in maintaining the rule of law in refugee and IDP camps and key towns. The humanitarian community led by UNHCR and UNDP are considering supporting the DIS, once the mission draws down, for continued area security presence (and, where necessary, armed escort). In eastern DRC, early discussions around an increased reliance on the Congolese National Police force (CNP) by the humanitarian community have taken place; some argue that with the right incentives (i.e. a payment structure), it might be possible. However, these policing mechanisms are considerably challenging to maintain in resource-depleted environments.

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### 3.7 Other operational means for enhancing secure access: Programming options, coordination, partnerships, and resourcing

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#### 3.7.1 *Programming issues*

**Rapid response mechanisms or programmes.** These involve a high degree of flexibility with a light delivery strategy and are an example of effective programming in rapidly changing and unpredictable security contexts. These involve a highly mobile network of response teams, programming for short periods of time with the affected local communities. By contrast, rigid, bureaucratic organisations tend to adapt slowly and become locked into ineffective operational modalities. They are

therefore much more vulnerable to programme interruption when the programming environment changes.

**‘Do no harm’ operational considerations.** WFP has developed a checklist to provide guidance for integrating protection concerns into food assistance operations. It underlines the importance of good information, sound analysis, and informed strategy as part of every aspect of WFP’s operations. It also puts into practice the ‘do-no-harm’ approach, humanitarian principles, and other standards of conduct for ethical humanitarian action (Crawford et al., 2010). In DRC, for example, WFP has at times provided smaller rations more frequently and as close as possible to their beneficiaries on the assumption that the population is less likely to be attacked with smaller concentrations of commodities and with reduced distances to travel. Interviewees noted that, in other contexts, large-scale distributions of non-food items can increase security risks to both beneficiaries and aid workers; as a result the agencies were prioritising relatively smaller and highly targeted distributions.

**Potential of cash and voucher approaches.** In some contexts where market conditions are conducive, WFP and NGOs have invested in programmes to provide cash transfers, cash for work, or vouchers to people rather than trucking, transporting, storing, and distributing goods. In doing so, agencies are increasingly utilising new technological approaches to transfer money. In Somalia for example, some agencies use remittance companies to deliver cash to beneficiaries. New technologies, such as smart, prepaid, or debit cards and mobile phone SIM cards, are also starting to be used.

**Livelihoods programming.** Small-scale, targeted livelihood and self-help projects are considered to be an alternate means to channel assistance, as well as to mitigate the effects of protection risks, where large-scale emergency relief might not be possible, or desirable. UNHCR’s ‘Protection and Livelihood’ programming in Somalia, for example, aims to improve IDPs’ own capacity to avoid or mitigate the effects of protection risks. Protection risks are reduced through projects that strengthen IDP households’ assets and capabilities, thereby expanding the range of livelihood activities available to them. By having more choices or livelihood opportunities, IDPs may be able to avoid those livelihood activities that carry significant risks, such as collecting firewood or getting (exploitative) domestic labour work. In this sense, livelihood projects are an alternative assistance mechanism for delivering protection (Jaspars & O’Callaghan, 2010).

**Issues for male and female staff.** No sex-disaggregated incident data is available to determine whether male or female aid workers are more at risk of violence on the job. Survey results indicate that most national aid workers perceive that the sex of staff has little affect on individual security, but some respondents believed that females face a higher risk. In areas where strong cultural attitudes exist regarding women and men working together and the status of women in society (for instance parts of Afghanistan and Pakistan) the presence of female staff can potentially be a serious security liability if the organisation does not take measures to demonstrate respect for local norms. For some organisations this has included



having separate project facilities for males and females and instructing all staff, including internationals, to adhere to local forms of dress. In an alternate scenario, many organisations operating in eastern Congo have stricter security protocols for women than men due to the incidence of sexual violence. For example, one NGO with a highly mobile programmatic approach has a policy that women never travel alone (not even ten meters) and must share compounds with male staff.

### *3.7.2 Coordination, partnerships, and resourcing*

**NGO security coordination platforms.** Those in Afghanistan (ANSO), oPt (GANSO), Somalia (NSP), and Pakistan (PakSafe) are highly useful, providing a range of security services such as incident report, security trends analysis, and training.<sup>15</sup> Such mechanisms are considered worthy of replication in other field settings (yet all need greater representation and participation of national NGOs). To date these have relied on a willing host organisation and project-based funding, which may account for the difficulty in establishing them more widely around the world, despite their demonstrated usefulness. During the years of extremely limited international access in Iraq, the NCCI network has been particularly important to national and international actors alike, for information gathering and sharing between organisations and across regions of the country. It is a broader coordination tool than the above security groups, but it also plays a security coordination role by comprehensive incident tracking and mapping for trend analysis.

NGOs in DRC failed to establish a formal structure of their own, but in recent years OCHA provided significant support to maintaining a database of security incidents and undertaking security analysis. OCHA supports a security tree for disseminating information on incidents, and the NGOs also established a security flash alert system for reporting incidents—which reaches 80 security focal points in the region. In Goma, a security company, called MIKE7.2, is dedicated to responding to NGO security incidents and particularly to those concerning national staff. This is an important, rare example of a shared security resource for national staff.

**Saving Lives Together (SLT) and NGO liaison officers in UN Security Information and Operation Centres (SIOC).** SLT is a joint UN-NGO initiative designed to improve security collaboration between the UN and IASC-engaged NGOs at the field level. Despite having limited roll-out thus far and being dependent on extra-budgetary resources, the initiative can point to some positive examples in the field. In Darfur, for example, NGOs cite significant benefits as the security advice, inter-agency collaboration, and information sharing that has developed from the SLT programme.

UNDSS has supported an initiative to include an NGO representative within a five-person SIOC team to serve as the focal point for information and analysis with

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<sup>15</sup> For a detailed discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of NGO security coordination platforms see HPN's Good Practice Review on Operational Security in Violent Environments (HPN, 2010).

NGOs in the area. As the UN reforms its security management system and the NGO community develops more advanced security coordination systems of its own through the field-level platforms, SLT potentially takes on greater importance, in that it could serve as the vital informational and strategic link between the two.

**Security support and mentoring for implementing partnerships.** With one or two exceptions, few agencies and INGOs reported discussing with their implementing partners the partners' security needs, or budgeting for security capacity or equipment. Somalia had more exceptions to this than other contexts, and had the additional unique benefit of being the only context where common funding (the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF) was directly accessible by national NGOs. In Pakistan, one UN agency had a security plan prepared jointly with its implementing partners for distribution points. In the DRC, another agency attempts to secure and provide funds to all its operational partners to ensure that they are MOSS compliant in terms of offices, residences, and vehicles.

**Common resourcing and coherent budgeting for joint security needs.** The 'safety and security' line in appeals, where it exists as a standalone line, remains the most under-funded of all the sectors. Common security needs are not well articulated and security actors do not know how to fundraise for them. To identify common security needs and determine the resources required to meet them requires the initiative and strong coordination in the field of OCHA and UNDSS, which in many instances has been lacking. (As a case in point, very little for security was included in the recent CAPs for some of the most volatile and dangerous security settings, such as Chad, Pakistan, and Sudan, representing a significant missed opportunity.) Donor governments have preferred to fund security within individual project budgets, as they are both wary of double counting and loath to be seen contributing to a security support line as opposed to direct aid. On the positive side, some donors have stepped up their responsibilities regarding security at the country level, including ensuring a thorough review of agency security arrangements before deciding to fund. Most encourage the inclusion of budget lines for security reviews and upgrades in their grants. Some have also developed greater expertise in supporting remote managed programmes.



## 4 Political constraints

This section examines some of the more indirect challenges to humanitarian action in complex security environments. These challenges are often created by political actors, including donor governments and host states in the name of security to further their own strategic objectives. They can be counterproductive to humanitarian action as they undermine the good practices and operational measures of agencies to stay engaged in highly insecure contexts. In some cases such political initiatives can make aid actors markedly more insecure.

The issues of concern include

- host governments using insecurity as a pretext for access constraints on humanitarian aid personnel and goods, and imposing security measures;
- donor governments, and more broadly member states, politicising aid;
- governments having policies of non-recognition or non-engagement with non-state armed actors designated as ‘terrorists’; and
- a lack of proactive international humanitarian leadership.

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### 4.1 The role of host governments

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All parties to conflict, state and non-state, are responsible for ensuring that civilians, including humanitarian personnel, are respected and protected in situations of armed conflict. In addition, most UN member states are party to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The relationship between humanitarian aid agencies and the host government can be a sensitive one, however, particularly where the state is a belligerent in the conflict and seeks to constrain access and sometimes impose host-state security arrangements which interfere with neutral, impartial, and independent humanitarian operations (HPN, 2010; Harvey, 2009).

**Provision of state security.** For the most part, aid agencies do not want the state to provide protection for humanitarian workers directly; rather, they prefer the provision of ambient and proximate security, where necessary. Overly protective state arrangements for aid agencies can increase insecurity due to perceptions of partiality, and can make it more difficult for agencies to respond impartially to needs by making access dependent on armed state police or military escorts. Aid actors are also placed at risk for collateral violence, such as being caught in crossfire, when accompanied by armed escorts.

**Security-related access constraints.** Host states can use security as a pretext to keep aid personnel or materials out of certain areas for their own political and military objectives. Today, state-imposed security-related access constraints are most evident in Darfur, oPt, and Pakistan where insecurity, combined with state-imposed restrictions on access and movement, severely limit operational capacity. In Darfur, agencies were restricted from areas of ongoing fighting in eastern Jebel Marra for most of 2010. Aid workers in Pakistan point to similar actions on the part of host state authorities to control the presence of aid agencies by requiring government ‘non-objection certificates’ for projects. Generally the Pakistan authorities cite

security concerns as the basis for this procedure, though in many instances the rationale is not clear cut.

In Sri Lanka at the critical moments of the impending crisis in 2008 the government informed aid agencies that it could no longer guarantee their safety. The decision on the part of the UN to withdraw from Vanni is seen today as a definitive event, and one from which lessons can be drawn. The International Crisis Group argues that the UN agencies allowed themselves to be bullied by the government and accepted a reduced role in protecting civilians, most notably with their quick acceptance of the government's September 2008 order to remove all staff (ICG, 2010). Although ultimately partial or full withdrawal might have been inevitable, interviewees commented that better practice would have involved developing a stated position to the government on access to and protection of the civilian population. In addition, no ready and practical proposition for modes of safe access were put on the table to negotiate with.

The issue of harassment and intimidation of aid workers, particularly nationals, came up repeatedly in some country contexts. While not amounting to major security incidents, these acts have the effect of worsening tensions and general perceptions of security and adding to staff stress.

**Administrative and security assets constraints.** Agencies note the significant administrative burden and resource-intensive process that host states can create in placing bureaucratic restrictions on humanitarian access. OCHA, for example, made over 50 requests for access to eastern Jebbel Mara in 2010. In oPt, the OCHA access team members have a full-time job troubleshooting for agencies simply trying to get clearance at the roughly 600 checkpoints and roadblocks in the West Bank in order to carry their daily work.

Several interviewees relayed the sense of being kept so busy by the authorities navigating a complex administrative maze that little time was left for more meaningful advocacy and programming work. Limits can also be imposed by host states on access to security related assets. In Yemen, for example, import restrictions and controls on the use of security assets (Thuraya phones, armoured vehicles, flak jackets, and bullet-proof vests, as well as prohibitions on the import of high-frequency and satellite communication systems) is a significant security constraint. The Yemeni government argues that such assets could fall into the wrong hands, and in turn offers their own armed police escorts, particularly for international staff—a situation that forces aid agencies back to concerns regarding perceptions of partiality.

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## 4.2 States, specifically donor governments

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UN member states and donor governments have also imposed measures which constrain the ability of humanitarian actors to manoeuvre, to engage in dialogue with all actors, and therefore to pro-actively manage their security risks (in Afghanistan, Somalia, and oPt in particular).

**Withholding aid on security and accountability grounds.** In Somalia, the highly politicised nature of donor assistance has added significant challenges to an already extremely difficult programming environment. Challenges include donor government preferences to fund programmes in Transitional Federal Government (TFG)-supported areas, funding agreements imposed on agencies that limit dialogue with Al-Shabaab (the party to the conflict which controls territory where humanitarian need is greatest) and significantly reduced funding for the south-central region by major donor governments. Insecurity of operations, as well as the inherent difficulty of monitoring and ensuring accountability of aid (i.e. the potential for diverting aid to benefit opposition belligerents) have often been stated as rationales by donor governments for not supporting humanitarian activities in the region. One experienced aid practitioner commented, ‘The perception of a high level of insecurity can serve a purpose—restricting access where international member states don’t want aid work to be present.’ A review of the Somalia case strongly suggests that politically-based concerns have driven donor policy decisions, replacing the humanitarian imperative to help those in greatest needs irrespective of context. The result has been a failure to meet the needs of a significant proportion of the vulnerable population.

**Stabilisation initiatives and the instrumentalisation of aid.** As mentioned in Section 2, the US-led counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy in Afghanistan and elsewhere is based on the (controversial<sup>16</sup>) logic that aid services provided to a population will win it over and enlist its help in driving out opposition elements. In development contexts, government donors have a long tradition of using aid as a carrot for political ends, but in conflict situations it is dangerously easy for the carrot to become a stick, leading to the imposition of unethical and inhumane conditions for relief assistance in situations of desperate need. In one extreme example, in an Afghan province flyers were disseminated in the local language admonishing the local people to provide information to coalition forces on the whereabouts of Taliban and Al-Qaeda commanders being hunted ‘in order to have a continuation of the provision of humanitarian aid’.

Governments have found willing partners among a few INGOs to implement stabilisation programmes and provide information that serves political or military objectives. The issue of humanitarian principles grows murkier when the INGO or the programme is development oriented. Some humanitarian practitioners in Afghanistan, however, have argued that by insistently labelling the needs and country as reconstruction or developmental rather than humanitarian, donor governments seem to skirt the issues of international humanitarian law (IHL) and humanitarian principles that they have committed to uphold. This is also evident in other context such as Yemen, where funding has been difficult to attract for humanitarian response, but large amounts of funding are available for stabilisation work in the areas of governance and livelihoods as a way of increasing the legitimacy of the government in Sana’a and eroding the support base of Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula.

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16 Recent research by analysts at the Feinstein International Center (Tufts University), and others argues that no direct positive relationship can be demonstrated between aid provision and political allegiances among populations or long-term stability (Bradbury and Kleinman, 2010; Azarbaijani-Moghaddam et al., 2008; Wilder, 2009).

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### 4.3 Non-state armed actors and the terrorist label

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The designation of some non-state armed actors (NSAs) as ‘terrorist’ groups by states, and the resulting ambiguity surrounding the limits of humanitarian negotiations with these groups, has resulted in significant challenges for aid organisations. It inhibits possibly important talks with de facto authorities or important armed actors and thus further hinders humanitarian access and delivery while increasing the vulnerability of humanitarian personnel operating in the region.

In oPt many actors, including the Quartet of international entities of which the UN is a member, maintain a policy of ‘no contact’ with Hamas, which is interpreted more-or-less strictly depending on the actor.<sup>17</sup> In Somalia, Al-Shabaab, which has primarily controlled south-central Somalia since the end of 2009, has been officially listed as a foreign terrorist organisation by the US and other member states. US domestic legislation and policies enacted through funding agreements with humanitarian organisations bar engaging in any kind of dialogue with Al-Shabaab and prohibit the provision of ‘material support’ at the risk of prosecution.

In both cases (Hamas and Al-Shabaab) the US government takes the strictest line of all donor governments. In a June 2010 ruling (*Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*) the US Supreme Court upheld a law against providing any ‘material’ support to organisations considered to be terrorist groups, including training, advice, and material assistance such as food, water, and shelter, and seemingly prohibits the coordination of any such action with such organisations.<sup>18</sup> The law could have potentially serious implications for humanitarian NGOs attempting to negotiate with de facto authorities to obtain security assurances and allow for the provision of critical humanitarian assistance. The UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs argued this point in a 2010 statement to the Security Council.<sup>19</sup> In oPt, the US forbids travel to Gaza for its diplomats and bars any INGO who accepts USAID funding from anything but the lowest-level logistical contacts with Hamas. The US Office for Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), in its rulings on Somalia

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17 Although the UN itself has no formal ‘no-contact’ policy, its self-imposed limits on contacts with Hamas as a political strategy have discouraged humanitarian contact and negotiation at higher levels. This was borne out repeatedly by interviews with UN actors in the region.

18 One reading of the US legislation (18 U. S. C. § 2339) and the Supreme Court decision that upheld it could support the argument that while direct tangible and intangible support is prohibited, the law would not preclude negotiation for access with the ‘terrorist’ groups, since the law ‘does not penalize mere association’. However it has had a chilling effect on aid agency activities in that there is no explicit humanitarian access exemption, and the language applies to all activities ‘directed to, coordinated with, or controlled by foreign terrorist groups’ which could be interpreted as relief deliveries coordinated with the de facto authority under areas of its control (*Holder v. Humanitarian Law Project*, 2009).

19 Statement by Ms. Valerie Amos, 22 November, 2010, in Security Council Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: ‘I am increasingly concerned by the growing body of national legislation and policies relating to humanitarian funding which limit humanitarian engagement with non-State armed groups that have been designated as terrorist organisations. In the United States, for example, domestic legislation defines “material support” in such a way that it includes advocacy, technical expertise and advice, even when such activities are aimed at bringing the conduct of these non-State actors into line with international law.... Humanitarian actors face potential criminal liability and prosecution for engaging with designated terrorist organisations in the course of, for example, securing the release of child soldiers or for simply delivering aid to civilian populations in an area controlled by such an organisation.... Measures of this sort can take us further, rather than nearer, to our goal of protecting civilians.’

sanctions regulations in 2009 and 2010,<sup>20</sup> allows no waivers or exemptions for the provision of humanitarian aid in areas under Al-Shabaab's control, despite the fact that previous waivers have been issued for humanitarian assistance provided in contexts such as Sudan, Gaza Strip, and areas controlled by Hezbollah in Lebanon (DARA, 2010).

Inevitably dialogue does occur on a regular basis with many designated 'terrorist' groups, particularly at the local level for access and security guarantees, but takes place without transparency and without clear guidance from organisational leadership. In some cases political interests serve to increase opportunities for a dialogue. In Afghanistan, where the government had forbidden contacts with the growing Taliban insurgency for years, the donor governments' stance has softened as the broader political climate has changed. As the Kabul government itself is now encouraged to enter into talks with Taliban, so too has tolerance and even tacit encouragement increased for aid agencies to dialogue with opposition elements.

Blanket restriction on contact with any party to a conflict violates the fundamental humanitarian imperative by precluding the inter-arma negotiation and consent required for humanitarian access. Such policies are a serious breach of humanitarian principles that donor governments themselves have ascribed to through inter-governmental fora such as Good Humanitarian Donorship, and in their own internal policies. For example, the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the chief humanitarian arm of the US donor agency, is specially protected under the US Foreign Assistance Act by a 'notwithstanding authority' that allows it to speed assistance funding for any humanitarian crisis irrespective of any other federal regulations, bureaucratic impediments, or political considerations that would interfere with this imperative. It would seem appropriate for the broader enterprise of international humanitarian action, as provided by the UN agencies, NGOs, and Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement bodies, to have the humanitarian imperative reinforced by a policy instrument along the same lines as the notwithstanding clause, to guard against any infringement by political or administrative concerns.

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#### 4.4 International humanitarian advocacy and negotiation

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In many of these complex security contexts some international humanitarian actors are unable or unwilling to undertake humanitarian advocacy and negotiation, particularly in cases with a strong host state. This is sometimes due to self-imposed restrictions or a lack of strategic positioning and capacity to effectively advocate. This seems evident with the authorities in Sudan, Pakistan, and Israel and the oPt as well as in Sri Lanka during the war in late 2008 and 2009.

In oPt, for example, Palestinian as well as international humanitarian workers were significantly frustrated with member states. They felt a lack of international willingness to address the real underlying problems of the humanitarian crisis as no determined effort has been made to push the Israeli government for access

<sup>20</sup> See, US Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, 'Somalia Sanctions Regulations' (31 CFR Part 551). Retrieved from [http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/fr75\\_24394.pdf](http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Documents/fr75_24394.pdf)

and the requisite conditions for a permissive environment for aid. This is viewed as legitimising and facilitating the Israeli government's agenda in the occupied territories (Mountain, 2010). In Somalia, donor governments have not attempted any significant advocacy for humanitarian access. Some exceptions existed: Sweden and ECHO advocated and undertook diplomatic initiatives with other donors and UN political actors about the need to facilitate humanitarian access, but little changed on the basis of this (DARA, 2010).

It is widely acknowledged in sensitive conflict situations that humanitarian actors face a trade-off between public advocacy and continued access. This was a particular tension in Sri Lanka in 2008–09 where some argue that any stronger stance by the UN in Colombo would have resulted in expulsion and undermined the closed-door advocacy undertaken with Sri Lankan authorities. Others argue, however, that the Humanitarian Coordinator and key agencies essentially abdicated responsibility for their mandated protection roles and consistently failed to take any advocacy stance.

Advocacy by the UN leadership, acting as a neutral broker for humanitarian access, is seen as critical in aggregating the position of the humanitarian community. Field representatives from agencies and NGOs alike were of the opinion that the UN was often too deferential to the host and donor governments, did not use the good offices of UN headquarters, was unwilling to use leverage to 'push back' over certain terms of operations, and did not have the capacity to effectively articulate and take forward advocacy priorities.

**Common advocacy and communications strategies.** In some contexts, evidence suggests the humanitarian community would benefit from having common advocacy and communications strategies in complex security environments that stress a small number of priority informational and advocacy points. These should be consistently communicated to state actors at all levels, donor governments, and other relevant member states, as well as through media. This could be coordinated by OCHA. Equally significant gains could be made from donor governments being involved, either singly or jointly, in advocacy. In Yemen, due to the dual humanitarian-development programme, considerable efforts have been made to extensively communicate the UN's role in the country from the highest level of government to those receiving assistance in the IDP camps. Although difficult to achieve, the communications strategy has become an underlying principle of United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).



## 5 National and local humanitarian actors: Key issues

For the national humanitarian actors who live and work in the most dangerous environments, insecurity has distinct implications and challenges. Past studies have discussed, anecdotally, the fact that national staffers of most international aid organisations tend to have less access to security training than their international counterparts, as well as lower levels of physical security measures for residences and vehicles, and little access to off-hours telecommunications (Stoddard, Harmer, & Haver, 2006). National aid workers also often do not receive other supports afforded to many international staff, such as additional hazard pay, R&R leave, or equal access to psychological or stress counselling.

This unequal treatment does not typically represent neglect or unethical behaviour by the international organisations, but rather is often based on certain false assumptions, for instance, that a national will be able to work more securely anywhere in the country because he or she does not stand out as being visibly foreign, when in truth, nationals from another region or province may be perceived by locals to be just as much of an outsider and, by their association with certain ethnic or religious groups, clan affiliation, or economic privilege, may be at additional risk. Another misconception is that national workers don't need the additional security and psychological or morale supports because they have their communities and families to protect and support them. Such assumptions are often the result of insufficient threat and risk assessment and lead to what amounts to a lesser duty of care by international organisations for their national staff.

As a rule, the personnel of local NGOs receive an even lower level of security support through their organisations, even when engaged in implementing partnership arrangements with international entities. 'Duty of care' technically does not extend to local partner organisations in the same way it does to an international organisation's own national staffers, but as security conditions deteriorate and local NGO partners take on greater roles in program implementation as a result, the ethical issues become vitally important for the international organisation to consider.

To effectively address insecurity and mitigate risk for humanitarian operations having a clearer understanding of the issue from national aid workers' perspective is critical. National aid workers are the majority of aid staff in the field—upwards of 90 per cent—and consequently comprise the majority of attack victims. Even if international personnel have a higher incident rate per capita (of serious violence), which seems to be true particularly for the most extreme internationalised conflict environments, the international community has work to do to give comparable attention to the needs of its national staff and partners. This study therefore set out to identify and document the perspectives of national actors on a variety of security issues and to quantify the perceived levels of security between national and international aid workers. To establish this evidence base, the research team used a multi-language Web-based survey for national aid workers disseminated globally but with special emphasis on the highest-risk countries (the survey instrument is appended as Annex 3). The survey reached greater numbers of nationals than are typically represented in research interviews and consultations (which is why many such studies tend to skew toward the international view).



The results of the survey are presented below, combined with findings from field interviews with national aid workers in the country cases examined. These findings are the perspectives of national aid actors. They underscore a few key messages: First, the perceptions on threat and relative risk held by national staffers may differ from their international colleagues', but they line up closely with incident analysis and contextual features of the different case settings. This includes the perception that UN humanitarian agencies are perceived by national staff as a more likely target than other humanitarian actors. Second, that while the situation is improving in some respects, the international aid community still has far to go to address inequities in duty of care between their international staff and their national staff and local partners—in particular in channelling security resources to the front-line implementers. Third, the strongest of all the findings concerned the expression, perception, and practical use of the core humanitarian principles. While some respondents made qualifications to these statements, and a somewhat weaker consensus existed among national NGOs, they strongly indicated a broad-based acceptance of the principles as operational tools for secure humanitarian access.

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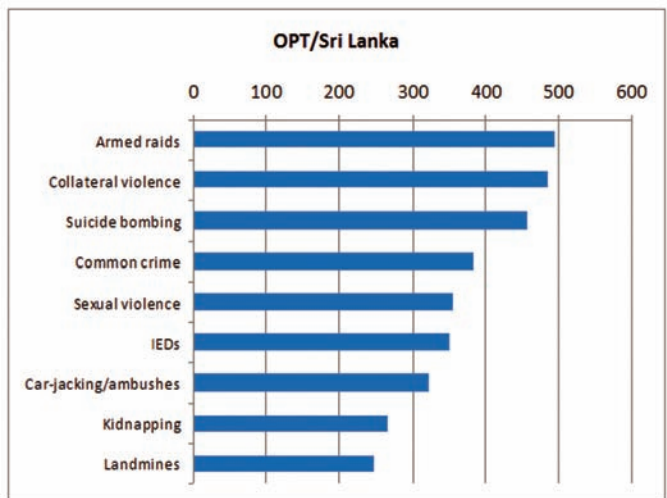
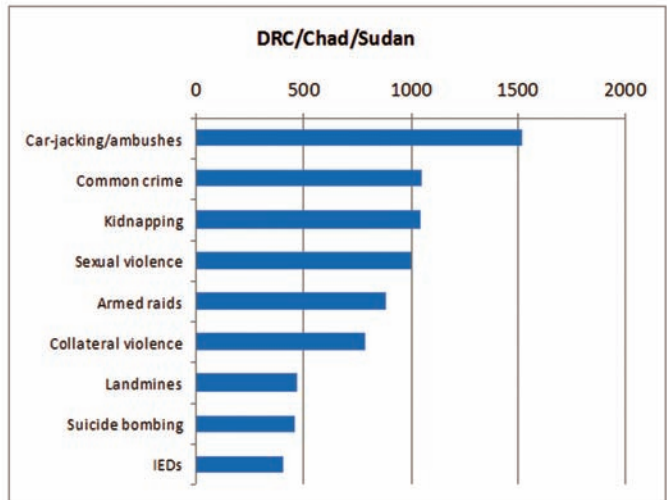
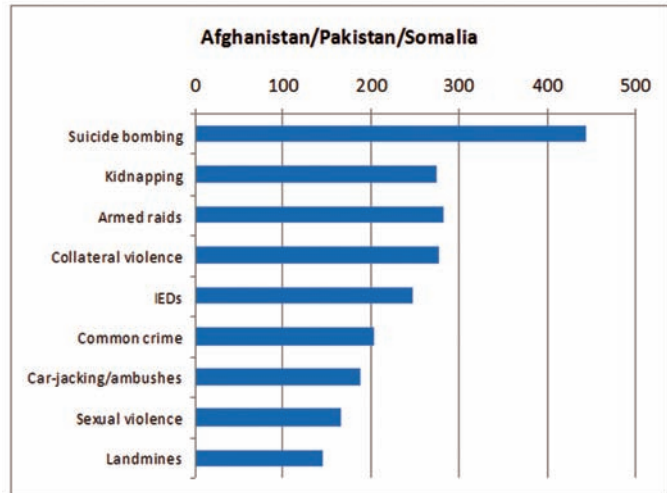
## 5.1 National perspectives on threat and risk

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A majority of respondents to the survey expressed the belief that nationals and internationals perceive security differently and, of those, most felt that internationals tended to overestimate the risk in relation to local security conditions. The national personnel, not surprisingly, have more longevity in their positions in-country than the expatriate staffers, who typically rotate in and out of insecure contexts in less than two years. A majority of survey respondents reported serving more than three years with their organisation, and nearly a quarter had served for more than five. The longer-term perspective, combined with the local frame of reference, may account for their seemingly more measured view of the security and access conditions in their countries. A minority (35 per cent) assessed the current conditions in their area as insecure, and most deem their operational environments as 'mostly secure' defined as 'a few isolated acts of violence, but no specific targeting'. The finding is reversed when data is disaggregated to look at only those responding from the more complex security environments (e.g. the 'internationalised insurgency' scenarios of Afghanistan, Somalia, Pakistan, and Iraq). Most national aid workers in those settings find the conditions to be 'somewhat' to 'highly' insecure. Similarly, respondents from these higher-risk contexts were more likely to perceive humanitarian access as having declined (as opposed to improving or staying the same) in their settings.

The type of context dictated what national actors saw as the most serious or prevalent threats. In the contexts of Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, and Somalia, respondents ranked the top two threats to aid operations as suicide bombings and kidnapping, in contrast to workers in other insecure humanitarian operational contexts (DRC, Chad, Sudan) where the top two threats were car-jacking and common crime, and oPt and Sri Lanka, where the chief concerns were mainly armed raids and collateral violence.

**Figure 3 National aid workers perceptions of most-serious or prevalent threats**



In terms of which types of national aid workers were the most at risk, respondents ranked guard, driver and field programme officer as the most dangerous jobs to hold, and employment for UN agencies was deemed to carry more risk than the other types of institutional affiliations, followed by Western INGOs, and religious organisations. This perception held across all contexts, except for oPt and Sri Lanka, where local organisations were considered to be more at risk.

A majority of national staff respondents reported that the sex of staff had little or no direct effect on security. Of the minority who believed that it did matter, more respondents believed that females were at greater risk, and a quarter reported that the presence of female staff added to their general insecurity due to local cultural norms.

A majority of national staffers (57 per cent) were of the opinion that national staffers were generally more at risk than internationals, but the issue was not completely clear cut. In survey comments and interviews, many nationals made the important distinction between the risk faced by national staff due to greater exposure (being more present out in the field ‘on the front lines’, travelling by road, living without additional security precautions at home) and the politically-motivated risk confronting the expatriate staffers due to animosities and mistrust toward the West. Only in oPt was there a strong consensus by the national staff respondents that they, as Palestinians, faced greater risk than their international counterparts.

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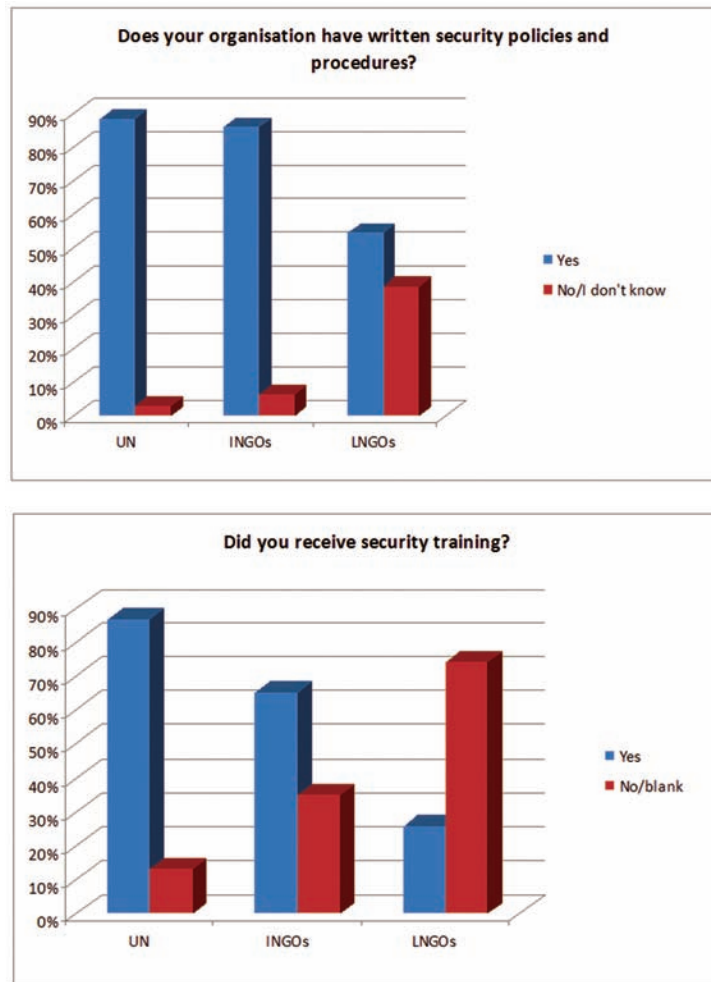
## 5.2 Duty of care and responsible partnership

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On the question of how well the employing organisations have fulfilled their security responsibilities vis-à-vis their national staff, the UN fared best in terms of staff reporting having received some training (which they noted as very welcome and useful) and being aware of organisational security policies and procedures. INGOs were rated a bit lower in these measures, and local NGOs the lowest of all, with only slightly more than half of respondents affirming the existence of policies and a majority who reported receiving no security training at all.

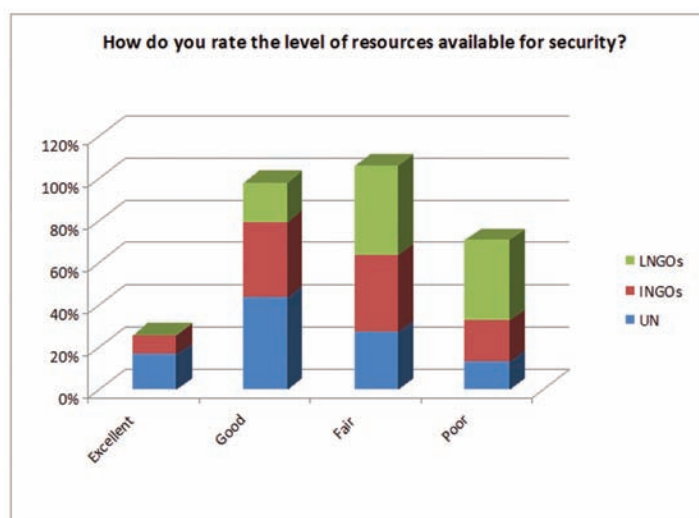
A similar breakdown was found in responses about the adequacy of available resources for security. Sixty per cent of UN national staff respondents rated the level of resources as good to excellent, while majorities of NGO staff (both national and international) rated their resource level as fair to poor. There were a number of survey respondents who commented on the lack of communications training and equipment in particular.

Figure 4 Organisational policies and training for national staff



Resources for security in UN agencies appear not to be filtering downward and outward through their NGO implementing partners. This finding was mirrored in interviews in the field, which found that only recently had a few of the large UN agencies started to more systematically reviewing security measures, contingencies, and capacity building with their implementing partners as a matter of policy and ongoing programme management.

**Figure 5 Resources available for national aid workers' security**



Finally, on a positive note, the majority of national staff across all institutional types reported that their organisations' attention to their security needs has improved, so the trend seems to be one of general improvement, although it may not be moving as far or fast as desirable.

Although it was not included in the survey questionnaire, the issue of addressing stress and trauma among national staff in high insecurity conditions is an important one that came up often in the field research. In some acute crisis contexts (e.g. combat operations in Gaza and Sri Lanka) these staff worked round the clock, taking on additional risk while they and their families were exposed to danger along with the rest of the local population. Unlike international staff who can take R&R leave for respite from the stressful environment, national personnel have little opportunity (or, as in the case of Gaza, may be unable) to leave for even short periods. In a few instances agencies were to sponsor national staffers to travel to external workshops or conferences, but this can only be of help to one or two individuals at a time. Some interviewees noted that they had recently been afforded access to stress counselling or peer counselling, which they found helpful, as it focused on practical measures they could undertake in their lives, as opposed to being simply talk for its own sake.

### **5.3 Coordination and consultation**

A number of national staff comments in surveys expressed feelings of not being listened to by international colleagues who 'project themselves as the experts'. It is easy to see how such international attitudes and obstacles to national staff consultation on security matters could amount to missed opportunities at best and dangerous missteps at worst. Indeed, the aid organisations interviewed in the field who had demonstrated successful secure access all made strong use of their national colleagues' (or partners') information and analysis, consulted them as co-equals

in security management, and often had nationals in senior leadership or analytical positions in the security area.

Majorities of national aid workers from all the types of organisations reported having a complaints mechanism in which issues of security could be raised and addressed (some more informal than others); however, not all were pleased with the outcome. As one respondent wrote, ‘We feel when we complain—the assessment team that looks into our concerns and do a “tourist kind” of assessment—they remain at the District HQ for example, talk[ing] to District Police Commander, Brigade Commander, but do not go deep in remote areas where field staff operate daily where this risk is high.’

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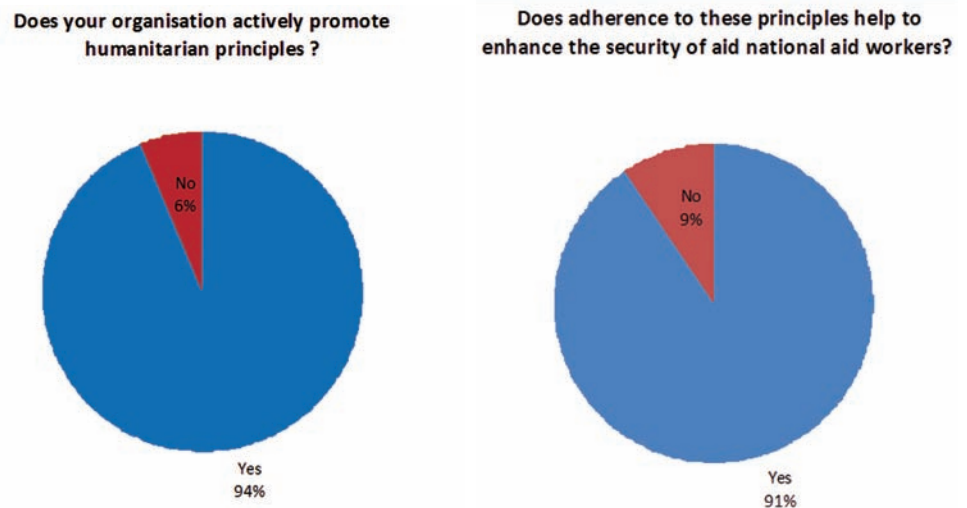
## 5.4 Principles and perceptions

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Interestingly, larger majorities than for any other question answered in the affirmative that their organisation actively promoted the principles of impartiality, independence, and neutrality (94 per cent) and that in so doing was helping to enhance their security.

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**Figure 6 Respondents’ perceptions on humanitarian principles**



A small number of respondents qualified their ‘yes’ response with a caveat, such as the following:

- ‘...but it violates it in practice.’
- ‘These principles are simply rules on paper.’
- ‘Yes but it needs more effort by incorporating the Do No Harm concept while delivering services in order not to be perceived as biased. In my country, the nomadic groups expressed it loudly that the international org[anisations] are not neutral and they prefer certain group[s] than others.’

However, the strength of the positive responses signals an acceptance of the practical usefulness of the principles in insecure conditions across different cultural settings. Conversely, lack of respect for principles was found to be the third-largest contributor to insecurity (out of seven) in the opinion of respondents, following ‘incompetent organisations taking unnecessary risks’ and ‘lack of experience and cultural awareness’. Such findings suggest that significant value exists in continuing to provide local staff and partners with training on humanitarian principles and, in turn, international staff could better appreciate the operational value of these principles to their staff and partners.



## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

This study has sought to provide a compendium of good practices that have assisted humanitarian actors in their efforts to maintain their presence and reach affected populations in contexts characterised by high security risks. These are non-prescriptive, non-exhaustive, and practical options for humanitarians to draw on and apply as appropriate across different types of security environments and risk patterns.

While noting that the cultivation of acceptance through sustained humanitarian dialogue is the foundation for secure humanitarian access, this study acknowledges that acceptance has its limits in highly violent settings and may need to be complemented by other security measures, including protective and, at times, deterrent measures. However, acceptance-based approaches must not be forsaken, even as more robust security measures become necessary. Moreover, the importance of decentralised decision-making for security has been increasingly recognised by agencies with presence in wide and varied operational contexts, as has the need to avoid scapegoating decision-makers, or others, when incidents occur.

The study also found that some host and donor governments, and at times the UN's political actors, have created unfavourable conditions and outright constraints to the forging of secure humanitarian access. They have done so by hindering the necessary work of humanitarian negotiation and by letting considerations other than humanitarian need take precedence in decision-making in some of the most critical humanitarian operations. In turn, some aid agencies have acquiesced in these conditions and not advocated strongly enough for respect for independent humanitarian action. The undermining of humanitarian principles presents more than merely theoretical or legal problems; it creates practical impediments to access, acceptance, and security for humanitarian operations.

Addressing these constraints is critical for effective humanitarian action. Concerted advocacy on the part of the UN's humanitarian leadership, as well as the rest of the humanitarian community, is needed if member states and donors governments are to uphold their commitments under international humanitarian law. In the current environment, political and religious leaders everywhere should better defend the universal principles of humanity as enshrined in international humanitarian law, forcefully and unequivocally condemn the attacks against civilian aid operations, and work to end the impunity with which they are perpetrated on an almost daily basis. Without these actions, aid workers and the people they serve are placed at greater risk.

The numerous practical examples cited throughout this report should be seen as recommended options for aid providers to consider adapting and implementing in their own areas of operation. The following set of targeted recommendations are therefore fewer in number and address the broader areas of coordination and leadership that the research has identified as in need of action.

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## To humanitarian aid agencies (NGOs, IOs and UN aid agencies)

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### *Risk management*

1. Humanitarian operations should be continually informed by ongoing context and threat analysis. Map the highest risk settings for your organisation and use this determination to prioritise resources accordingly. Invest in specialised skill-set development as well as rigorous selection and vetting of staff to deploy to complex security environments.
2. Security risk management must be recognised as an integral part of programming. Ensure security considerations and related cost implications are integrated at the outset in programme design, planning, and budgeting; this should include the prioritisation of critical programmes in situations of high risk. Improve the articulation of common security requirements, projects, and budgeting in humanitarian appeals and other fundraising mechanisms and bilateral negotiations with donors.
3. Building and maintaining acceptance by all relevant actors for humanitarian action should be a core component of an organisation's overall programme and its security management strategy. Invest in the capacities and skills required for humanitarian dialogue, outreach, and negotiation.
4. Each organisation should explicitly define and consciously determine its threshold of acceptable risk related to the criticality of its programme. Ensure that all staff are aware of the organisation's risk threshold in each setting and are operating on the basis of informed consent.

### *Duty of care and responsible partnership*

5. Existing gaps between security provisions for international and national staff should be immediately addressed. Review security management procedures to ensure comprehensive duty of care for national staff, including a determination of specific risks and needs for female and male staff. In addition, be proactive and innovative in finding ways to enhance national staff security and stress management or psychological support.
6. Responsible partnership entails strong security cooperation. Consult with local partner organisations on their requirements including specific provisions for security plans. Be proactive in helping partners determine their security support needs (including through training and capacity building exercises) and providing the resources—financial, material, and technical—to meet those needs.

### *Adherence to humanitarian principles*

7. Common adherence to humanitarian principles should be recognised as key to increasing the security of humanitarian operations. Ensure that staff deployed to high risk environments possesses a sound understanding of humanitarian principles as they relate to practical operations. Ensure organisational policies and operational decision-making on issues such as funding, beneficiaries, modes of operation, liaison with other actors, and security measures are in line with

humanitarian principles. Invest in communicating the organisation's adherence to humanitarian principles. Review operations in complex security environments on a regular basis to ensure compliance with humanitarian principles.

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### To global cluster leads

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8. Ensure greater engagement of clusters in managing risk, supporting coordinated and prioritised risk analysis and making security management decisions at the sectoral level. Clusters should also support the sharing of good practices and lessons in operating in complex security environments and address the coordination challenges in situations where the cluster lead has no field presence due to insecurity.

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### To Humanitarian Coordinators, UNDSS, and OCHA

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#### *Risk management*

9. Ensure that security management is mainstreamed as an integral part of humanitarian programming. Coordinate common security needs identification and fundraising. Ensure that security management is budgeted within CAP and Flash Appeal processes. This will require close and active coordination between OCHA and UNDSS in field settings.
10. In complex security contexts, the humanitarian coordinator and the humanitarian country teams should identify specific, priority objectives for improving secure access that could be pursued through collective advocacy or negotiation vis-à-vis host governments, military forces, or non-state actors. Objectives should be focused and practical: seek concrete negotiations and offer practical, specific guidance for improving secure humanitarian access.
11. Humanitarian coordinators should assume more active leadership with regard to security management decisions, as envisaged in the revised United Nations Security Management System. In decision-making, ensure full engagement of the security management team and sufficient and appropriate consultation with all relevant actors, including non-UN actors
12. Through recruitment and training measures, UNDSS should seek to ensure that the profiles of security personnel deployed in humanitarian operational settings possess a sound understanding of humanitarian programming and acceptance-based practices.

#### *Adherence to humanitarian principles*

13. Humanitarian Coordinators should lead the Humanitarian Country Team in the development of policies and strategies aimed at ensuring compliance with humanitarian principles. These could include, where appropriate, the development and implementation of codes of conduct, ground rules or principles of engagement. Identify and address concerns on relationships and practices by humanitarian actors that may jeopardise perceived adherence to

humanitarian principles and the related acceptance and security of humanitarian operations.

14. Undertake consistent messaging on humanitarian principles and the importance of safe and unimpeded access to affected populations with relevant state and non-state actors. Identify and engage influential political, military and religious leaders to further their understanding and acceptance of humanitarian action. Ensure that efforts at dialogue and negotiation with relevant actors are undertaken in a coordinated manner.

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### **To the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC)**

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15. The ERC has a critical role in promoting principled humanitarian action and safe, unimpeded, and timely access for humanitarian actors. Engage with all parties to the conflict and support in-country engagement by humanitarian coordinators in an effort to obtain acceptance and security assurances and to promote humanitarian access. Address policies and practices that impede humanitarian actors' ability to deliver humanitarian assistance in complex security environments. Identify and address concerns on relationships and practices by humanitarian actors that may jeopardise perceived adherence to humanitarian principles and the related acceptance and security of humanitarian operations.
16. Maintain a strong advocacy role with governments in defense of humanitarian access against any and all political interference or impediments to the humanitarian imperative.
17. Request OCHA to establish a web-based platform to facilitate humanitarian actors' access to and updating of good operational practices in complex security environments.

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### **To the Secretary-General and UN Secretariat departments**

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18. In overseeing the United Nation's engagement in country situations, actively encourage an environment conducive to humanitarian action. Acknowledge the need for humanitarian actors to engage with all relevant actors, including non-state armed groups, in order to promote secure access.

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### **To states**

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19. Refrain from enacting legislation and policies which undermine humanitarian engagement with all parties to the conflict, including non-state armed groups, essential to access all affected populations. Existing policies which seek to restrict such engagement should be reconsidered and brought in compliance with international humanitarian law.
20. To host states: Engage in dialogue with humanitarian actors to devise and undertake steps to create conditions conducive to humanitarian action. Comply with obligations under international humanitarian law as well as provisions set

out in host country agreements and mission agreements particularly as they pertain to assurances of safe and secure access for humanitarian personnel.

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### To donor governments

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21. Support sound risk management and initiatives by humanitarian actors aimed at enhancing access. Facilitate flexible budgeting by humanitarian organisations operating in the volatility of complex security environments and manage results-based expectations in recognition that establishing acceptance takes time and may not allow for quick returns.
22. Support investments aimed at skill-set development and duty of care to national staff and support the strengthening of national partnerships.
23. Support NGO security coordination platforms and Saving Lives Together at the field level, and encourage the development of additional field level mechanisms using compatible data gathering and reporting mechanisms.
24. Establish a permanent forum for donor dialogue and coordination on security through, for example, the established GHD forum. This will provide the opportunity for donors to collectively take a more active role in enhancing humanitarian security.

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# Annex 1 Study concept note

## OCHA Study

### Operating in Complex Security Environments:

#### A Review of Best Practices and Policy Implications of Humanitarian Operations [Working title]

#### CONCEPT NOTE

##### Introduction

The overall level of violence experienced by humanitarian personnel has risen significantly over the past decade, particularly since 2006, with 2008 marking the greatest number of humanitarian workers affected by violence in twelve years.<sup>1</sup> There are patterns and concentrated areas of increased risk within this global trend. Some 75% of attacks on aid workers in the past half decade have occurred in Afghanistan, Chad, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Sudan. In particular, it is national staff of UN agencies and NGOs who bear the brunt of this risk. Moreover, perceptions of affiliations with political and military agendas have eroded acceptance of humanitarian actors as impartial, neutral and independent and the protective nature of the emblems of the United Nations and of humanitarian organisations

There have been significant efforts to reduce the risks and/or overcome the security constraints impeding humanitarian operations by adjusting risk awareness and management but also operational procedures and arrangements to these new security challenges, and to develop alternative ways of working. Different approaches and modalities have been implemented in various contexts—with varying results—towards the objective of being able to maintain the ability of humanitarian actors to discharge their primary mandates and coordinate and deliver aid to beneficiaries even in areas of heightened risk in a way that is consistent with the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, independence and neutrality.

There is therefore considerable experience within the humanitarian community to establish some key success/failure factors and to inform the efforts of humanitarian colleagues currently working in challenging operational contexts. However, while many individual humanitarian agencies and country teams have analysed the implications of these trends in terms of their own operations, there continues to be a lack of system-wide analysis, guidance or compilation of good practices and lessons learned on initiatives, mechanisms, procedures, arrangements or policies that have allowed humanitarian agencies to continue to operate in these environments and which could be shared with operations managers and senior representatives to inform their on-going efforts and their discussions with security officials.

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1 'Providing aid in insecure environments: 2009 Update', HPG Policy Brief 34, Overseas Development Institute (ODI), April 2009

## Current Risk Patterns of Complex Security Environments

The ability to obtain and maintain access to populations in need is the key prerequisite

for national and international humanitarian agencies to discharge their primary mandates of delivering humanitarian assistance and providing measures of protection to populations in need, in a way that is consistent with the core humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality, humanity and independence. Alarming, this ability has been increasingly jeopardised, as the overall level of threats and the number of deliberate attacks on aid organisations and their personnel, equipment, facilities and vehicles have risen significantly.

The reasons for such attacks on humanitarian personnel vary. The following broad patterns can be identified:

### *a) Deliberate and targeted attacks on humanitarian operations*

This pattern is evident in situations where a) humanitarians are perceived to be affiliated to a party to conflict; b) the organisation itself may be the primary target, attacked for its actions or statements, particularly when these are considered to be ‘culturally intrusive’; or c) to prevent the delivery of aid to a certain population group. For example, deliberate attacks and harassment of humanitarian personnel are of primary concern in contexts such as Iraq, Somalia and Pakistan, where WFP premises were targeted.

### *b) High levels of criminality and banditry*

This is common in areas where there is a pervasive breakdown in law and order, an incomplete demobilisation or fragmentation of armed groups, and where relief supplies are seen as lucrative soft targets or an opportunity to equip and supply armed groups. Humanitarian operations have been affected by this kind of threats in Chad, the Central African Republic, the DRC and the Sudan.

### *c) Indiscriminate and terrorist attacks in areas populated by civilians*

In several operating environments humanitarian personnel have been exposed to indiscriminate violence against civilian populations. Suicide attacks and use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), often used in Afghanistan and Iraq, have affected humanitarian operations, even if they have not been targeted directly. Such attacks generally occur in populated areas or along major transport routes, likely to be frequented by humanitarian personnel.

### *d) Active hostilities, including air strikes and ground operations*

Active combat operations pose obvious security and coordination challenges for humanitarian actors, particularly where parties to conflict may not live up to their obligations under International Humanitarian Law to allow and facilitate aid provision for populations affected by fighting and trapped in conflict zones. In some cases, parties to conflict may deliberately prevent aid from reaching affected populations as a method of deliberate deprivation or punishment of an ‘enemy population’. In 2009, active fighting restricted access to conflict-affected populations in contexts such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gaza, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Somalia.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The overall aim of the study is to present humanitarian practitioners with suggested practices which could be put in place in order to maintain their ability to deliver on their primary mandates and be able to reach beneficiaries in complex security environments.

In particular the study aims to:

- Present a comprehensive compilation of operational practices used to facilitate aid operations, such as the development and implementation of acceptance strategies, protective and deterrent measures, extreme low-profile programming and remote management strategies in different types of security environments and risk patterns;
- Document the successes, failures, advantages, drawbacks and tradeoffs associated with operating in complex security environments;
- Identify good practices in the areas of risk management, programming, staffing, information, access, inter-agency/coordination, risk-benefit analyses to assist in effective management of humanitarian operations in complex security environments;
- Make recommendations towards enhancing the capacity and capabilities of humanitarian actors to deliver on their primary mandates while operating in complex security environments.

The study will also consider the implications of such complex security environments, and of the new security risk management approaches on the different vulnerabilities and capacities of crisis-affected women, girls, boys and men. Experiences from ‘regular risk’ and high-risk humanitarian environments demonstrate that understanding and responding to gender differences is critical to ensuring quality and accountable humanitarian protection and assistance.

## **Methodology**

The study will build on preliminary OCHA study undertaken in 2004 on maintaining a UN humanitarian presence in periods of high insecurity.<sup>2</sup> The study will use as reference UN security arrangements and existing methodologies to mitigate risk, including those contained in the UN Security Risk Management Model (SRM), which incorporates guidelines acceptable risk as well as recent IASC and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) discussions and policies on security related issues. The study will also take into account security coordination platforms in the field, including UN-led initiatives such as the Saving Lives Together initiative.

The study will adopt a multi-pronged approach to include:

**Literature review and desk-based case studies:** A desk review will examine existing analysis, approaches, decisions and experiences relating to humanitarian operations in complex security environments from a variety of agencies, inter-agency consortia and research centers. On the one hand, the desk review will consider current agency operational and security practice, including policy documents, resolutions, guidelines, manuals and training materials, as well as recent and ongoing commissioned

2 “Maintaining a UN humanitarian presence in periods of high insecurity: learning from others”, independent study by N. Morris and M. Gaouette, OCHA, 2004.



studies on key policy question, including humanitarian access, protection of civilians, the role of integrated missions and the drawdown of peacekeeping operations. On the other hand, it will assess security arrangements and existing methodologies to mitigate risk, including those comprised in the UN Security Risk Management Model (SRM), which incorporates guidelines on acceptable risk as well as recent IASC and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) discussions and policies on security related issues. The study will draw on a range of past and present country situations, ranging from Lebanon (2006), Iraq (2003 and 2006/7), Sri Lanka (2009), Colombia, to Chad, and Haiti.

**Field visits:** The desk review will be followed by a focused study of five to six specific complex security environments (such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia (Nairobi), DRC, Sudan and occupied Palestinian Territories) aimed at compiling practices and undertaking consultations on the challenges being faced and ways and means being put in place to address them. Interlocutors will include field national and international practitioners, authorities, beneficiaries, local groups, traditional and/or religious leaders, etc.

**HQ and key informant interviews:** In addition to travel to case study countries, key interviews and consultations will also take place with relevant experts and staff from agencies, operational partners, donors and academia informants in the field and in New York, Geneva and Rome.

**Quantitative analysis:** the analysis will include background statistics on the state of the operational security situation and access trends. These will be drawn from the global aid worker security database (AWSD) and other relevant sources, including OCHA's reporting on the most severe and prevalent constraints on humanitarian access for the Secretary General's Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict.

**Web-based survey of national humanitarian actors:** The team will design a survey instrument targeted at national and local staff of international organisations and representatives of local NGOs and national societies. The survey will be accessed online, with active dissemination in both the case study countries (field- and desk-based) and other relevant settings. It will be designed to elicit the perspectives of national actors on operational conditions and security management strategies for humanitarian activities and the relationship of international and national actors in this regard. In terms of respondents the survey will aim to match or exceed the number of international interviewees captured by the study, in order obtain a greater range of informants and lend weight to the national/local perspectives, which inevitably receive less attention in these types of exercises. In collaboration with OCHA, the survey will be translated into French and Spanish.

**Analysis of findings:** As a result of the desk and field reviews, an analysis of practices, drawing up operational and policy implications and identifying potential best practices in relation to the challenge of operating in complex security environments will be undertaken. The study will also identify gaps that require further action by OCHA and other actors.

## **Outputs/Products**

The project will culminate in the publication and distribution of an OCHA 15-20,000 word edited report,<sup>3</sup> with an Executive Summary that aims to inform on the challenges and considerations of facilitating humanitarian aid operations in crisis areas and maintaining humanitarian agencies' ability to discharge their primary mandates in complex security areas in keeping with humanitarian principles. Country case study findings will be incorporated into the final report, but they will not be published as separate papers.

The study will propose strategic approaches and practical modalities to safeguard the ability to carry out humanitarian operations wherever it is needed. In particular, the study will provide system-wide analysis, guidance or compilation of good practices and lessons learned on initiatives, mechanisms, procedures, arrangements or policies that have allowed humanitarian agencies to adopt an approach aimed at risk management rather than risk aversion.

Product derivatives that will be taken forward in-house might include a series of thematic discussions, briefing papers designed to inform and guide humanitarian actors, the UN Secretariat, Member States, etc. on the issue.

## **Responsibilities for the Study**

The project will be led by the OCHA's Policy Planning and Analysis Section (PPAS) in OCHA's Policy Development and Studies Branch (PDSB).

The research team is led by Jan Egeland, Director of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and composed of senior analysts, Abby Stoddard and Adele Harmer of Humanitarian Outcomes.

The study team will work closely with the Humanitarian Coordinators and Humanitarian Country teams of focus countries, collaborate with the IASC and relevant subsidiary bodies and also draw on the policy work and existing studies by partners such as UNDSS, DPKO, DOCO, WFP, HABITAT, as well as academic research.

## **Advisory Group**

OCHA will convene an Advisory Group to guide and facilitate this research and consider its practical use for all relevant stakeholders (humanitarian organisations, UN Secretariat, Member States, etc.). Given the multi-faceted nature of the study, the Advisory Group will be composed of experts with particular personal expertise in operating in complex security environments from various backgrounds.

The Advisory Group will act as a sounding board for the study's development. It will have no managerial or oversight responsibilities. Its key tasks will include providing advice on the scope of the study, comments on the findings, and advising on the follow-up to the study.

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<sup>3</sup> Once released for publication by OCHA, the authors will publish an online version on the Humanitarian Outcomes website.

## **Anticipated Timeline**

The budget, concept, identification of the research team and composition of the Advisory Group was finalized in May 2010. The study itself will be initiated and completed in 2010 to include a desk review in the second quarter of the year, field visits in the second and third quarter, a completed draft, final consultations and completion of the study in the fourth quarter. The draft report will be delivered by end of November 2010. Publication and dissemination of the report is scheduled for January to March 2011. A launch conference will be organised in February-March 2011.

## **Annex I—Project Timeline**

| <b>Project Activities/Outputs</b>  | <b>Month(s)</b>       |
|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Preparatory work</b><br>Consult with Team Leader on vision for report and plan of work<br>Develop methodology/research framework and field questionnaire<br>Consult with OCHA NY and country offices on field visit programming and travel arrangements | April-May 2010        |
| <b>Desk review / research synthesis</b><br>Compile and review current research<br>Prepare summary points and areas for further examination for Team Leader—use as basis for defining scope of work for field visits  | April-May 2010        |
| <b>Field visits (5-6)</b>  | June-October 2010     |
| <b>Report drafting</b>   | October-November 2010 |
| First draft of report submitted to OCHA/AG for review and comment  | End of November 2010  |
| Comments incorporated and final report submitted   | End of December 2010  |
| Publication and Dissemination of the Report  | January-March 2011    |
| Launch Conference  | February-March 2011   |

## Annex 2 People Interviewed

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### Afghanistan

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Indrananda Amarakoon, Head of Sub-office, Kandahar, OCHA

Ted Bonpin, Assistant Country Director, CARE

Scott Braunschweig, Kabul Representative, Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Brian Cavanaugh, Afghanistan Country Director, CARE

Peter Crowley, Representative, UNICEF

Hassan El Sayed, Country Director, Solidarites

Maria Luiza Galer, Health Cluster Coordinator, WHO

Anne Garella, Deputy Country Director, MSF

Peter Graaff, Head of Mission and Representative, Afghanistan, WHO

Bradley B. Guerrant, Deputy Country Director, WFP

Abdul Halim Halim, Managing Director, Coordination of Afghan Relief (CoAR)

Margaret Hall, Head, Information Management Office, OCHA

David Joy, Head, Office of the UN Resident Coordinator, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

Dennis Killian, Senior Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (CMCoor) Office, OCHA

Bob Kitchen, Country Director, International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Abdul Ghafoor Latifi, Program Coordinator, Emergency Response and Rehabilitation Programme, CARE

Nic Lee, Director, Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO)

Annette Leijenaar, Chief Security Adviser, Afghanistan (incoming), UNDSS

Nauludole Mataitini, Chief Security Adviser, Afghanistan (outgoing), UNDSS

Fiona McLysaght, Country Director, Concern

Alessandra Morelli, Representative a.i., UNHCR

Charlotte Olsen, Country Director, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Timothy Pitt, Head of Office, OCHA

Mohammad Haider Reza, Programme Director, Mine Action Coordination Center for Afghanistan (MACCA)

Sumbul Rizvi, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR

Laurent Saillard, Country Director, Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR)

Shashwat Saraf, Head of Mission, Action Contre la Faim (ACF)

Kay Schwendinger, Deputy Head, Office of the Resident Coordinator, United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

Manohar Shenoy Country Director, Oxfam Great Britain

Stephane Sobol, Senior Humanitarian Adviser, OFDA

Reto Stocker, Representative, ICRC Afghanistan

Eveline Viehboeck, Head of Sub-Office, OCHA

Mohammad Fareed Waqfi, Chief Technical Advisor, Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA)

Mohammad Zaher Wali Zada, Vice President, Afghan Red Crescent Society

Jake Zarins, Shelter Project Coordinator, Mazar-i-Sharif/Sar-e-Pol, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

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### Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Banu Altunbas, Head of Mission, MSF-Holland

Kojo Anyanful, Representative a.i., WFP

Stephane Auvray, Protection Adviser, Office of the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/ Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator, United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO)

Florent Babi, Secretary, FONAHAD

Edem Blege, Civil Affairs Coordinator, MONUSCO

David Bulman, Eastern Coordinator, WFP

Robert Dekker, Head of Operations, WFP

Sebastian Fouquet, Humanitarian Adviser, DRC, UK Department for International Development

Laurent Guepin, OiC, Civil Affairs Section, MONUSCO

Guy-Rufin Guernas, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR

Max Hadorn, Head of Office, OCHA

Bienvenu Kasereka, Security and Logistics Officer, Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Jean-Baptiste Kiyana, President FONAHAD

Mvukiyehe Laban, FONAHAD

John Mbonimpa, Security Assistant, UNDSS

Stephane Moissaing, Head of Mission, Solidarites

Felician Molima, Head of Office, UNICEF  
Clovis Mwambutsa, Head of Programme, Beni, Oxfam  
Great Britain  
Jay Nash, Coordinator, Office of US Foreign Disaster  
Assistance (OFDA), USAID  
Bryce Perry, Provincial Coordinator, International Rescue  
Committee (IRC)  
James Reynolds, Deputy Head of Mission, ICRC  
Esteban Sacco, Head of Office, North Kivu, OCHA  
Fergus Thomas, Provincial Coordination Officer,  
Stabilisation Support Unit, United Nations Organisation  
Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of  
Congo (MONUSCO)  
Ulrich Wagner, Country Director, Merlin  
Johannes Zech, Associate Programme Officer, UNHCR

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### Occupied Palestinian Territories

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Saad Abdel Haq, HAA, Field Coordination Unit, North  
West Bank, OCHA  
Amina Abu Sala, Field Support Specialist, Nablus Field  
Office, OCHA  
Hamada Al-Bayari, Humanitarian Affairs Analyst, Gaza  
Office, OCHA  
Mustafa Al-Halabi, Driver, Gaza Office, OCHA  
Elayan Al-Jamal Principal, Hebron UNRWA Basic Boys'  
School, UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine  
(UNRWA)  
Hossam Al-Madhoun, Officer Manager, Action Contre la  
Faim (ACF)  
Isdud Al-Najjar, Mercy Corps  
Mahmoud Al-Titi, Medical Officer, Hebron UNRWA  
Health Center, UN Relief and Works Agency for  
Palestine (UNRWA)  
Barbara Amsted, Representative, ICRC  
Nader Atrash, Access and Liaison Officer, OCHA  
Suna Aweidah, Access and Liaison Officer, OCHA  
Khulood Badawi, Humanitarian Affairs Associate, Central  
Field Coordination Unit, OCHA  
Nasser Barakat, WASH Advocacy and Force Officer, Oxfam  
Great Britain  
Kimberlee Bell, Deputy Director of the Program Office,  
USAID  
Mahmoud Daher, National Health Officer, OiC, Gaza  
Office, WHO  
Majdi Dana, Senior Program Assistant, WFP

Maher Daoudi, Deputy Head of Development Cooperation  
and Humanitarian Programme Manager, Consulate  
General of Sweden, Jerusalem  
Jihad Fararjeh, Assistant Operations Support Officer, UN  
Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA)  
Reena Ghelani, Deputy Head of Office, oPt, OCHA  
Lubna Ghneim, Programme Officer, DFID  
Savita Hande, Chief Security Adviser, UNDS-UNRWA  
Erik Hedberg, Vice Consul, Consulate General of Sweden,  
Jerusalem  
Nizzar N. Khadder, Field Monitor Assistant, WFP  
Rula Khalaf, WFP  
Isra' Muzaffar, Humanitarian Affairs Analyst, Central Field  
Coordination Unit, OCHA  
Tahir Nour, Deputy Country Director, WFP  
Imad Okal, Area Operations Officer, UN Relief and Works  
Agency for Palestine (UNRWA)  
Peter O'Sullivan, Researcher, Gaza Strip NGO Safety Office  
(GANSO), CARE International  
Ramesh Rajasingham, Head of Office, oPt, OCHA  
Ala' Said, Field Monitor Assistant, WFP  
Adeeb Salman, Humanitarian Affairs Assistant, Ramallah  
Office, OCHA  
Bayan Sarsour, Field Assistant, South Office, OCHA  
Shawky Seif El-Nasr, Operations Support Officer, UN  
Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA)  
Mahmoud Shalabi, Project Coordinator, Gaza Strip NGO  
Safety Office (GANSO), CARE International  
Fikr Shaloot, Programme Coordinator, Gaza Strip, Medical  
Aid for Palestinians (MAP)  
Ahmed Abu Shammaleh, Humanitarian Affairs Assistant,  
OCHA, Gaza Office  
Iyad Shwaikeh, Humanitarian Affairs Analyst, OCHA  
Abed Al Rahman Tamimi, Director General, Palestinian  
Hydrology Group (PHG)  
Rosemary Willey-Alsannah, Head of Field Coordination  
Unit, OCHA  
Stephen Williams Head of Mission, ACF, Palestinian  
Territory  
Tim Williams, Movement & Access Adviser, Office of the  
Quartet Representative  
Amir Yasin, WFP

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### Pakistan

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Alim Afridi, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Sarhad  
Rural Support Programme (SRSP)



Waheed Anwar, National Humanitarian Officer, Peshawar, OCHA

Ziaullah Khan Bangash Executive Director, Khushal Awareness and Development Organisation (KADO)

Wahid Bangash, Security Coordinator, Coordinator for Kohat NGOs, Khushal Awareness and Development Organization (KADO)

Nicola Bennett, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA

Manuel Bessler, Head of Office, OCHA Pakistan

Dorothy Blave, Country Director, Concern

Raphael Bonnaud, General Coordinator, Emergency Mission, Medecins du Monde (MDM) France

Jack Byrne, Country Director, Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Georgem Clanfield, RSSA Asia, International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Anita Cole, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, World Vision International (WVI)

Thomas Conan, Head of Mission, MSF France

Officer Dilawar, District Police Officer, Kohat

Saif-ur-Rahman Durrani, Project Manager Centre of Excellence for Rural Development (CERD)

Neil Elliot, Security Adviser, CARE

Lenny Gill, Security Adviser, ICRC

Tammy Hasselfeldt, Country Director, International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Tim Headington, Security Coordinator, Peshawar, WFP

Fawad Hussain, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA

Shehzad Jameel, Field Coordinator, Emergency Mission, MDM France

Rudy Juanito, Field Security Coordination Officer, UNDSS Family Kashmirkhan, (IDPs in Kohat)

Umer Ayub Khan, Security and Operations Adviser, Mercy Corps

Wajid Khan, IDP Coordinator, Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP)

Killian Kleinschmidt, Deputy to the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General

Zahid Mahmood, Director, CARE

Aamir Malik, Program Director (RAPID), Concern

Sajid Mehmood, Program Services Manager, Oxfam Great Britain

Ian Miller, Deputy Security Adviser, UNDSS

Martin Mogwanja, Humanitarian Coordinator and UNICEF Representative, UNICEF/OCHA

Mohammed Qazilbash, Country Director, Save the Children

Waleed Rauf, Country Director, CARE

Antje Ruckstuhl, Head of Sub-delegation, ICRC

Urooj Saifi, Senior Protection Officer, Protection Cluster Coordinator, UNHCR

Stefano Savi, Head of Quetta Sub-office, UNICEF

Whycliffe Songwa, Senior Emergency Coordinator, CCM IDP Programme, UNHCR

Alexander Surkov, Security Manager, World Vision

Haider W. Yaqub, Country Director, Plan

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## Somalia

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Frans Barnard , Acting Programme Manager/Analysis and Operations Manager, NGO Safety Programme (NSP), Somalia

Andrea Berloff, Project Manager, FAO

Mark Bowden, Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, UNDP

Mónica Camacho, Head of Mission, Médecins Sans Frontières, OCBA

Omar Castiglioni, Chief Security Advisor, Somalia, UNDSS

Francesco Nicolo Cornaro, Logistics Officer, WFP

Stef Deutekom, Netherlands Embassy

Marthe Everard, Representative for Somalia, WHO

David Gilmore, Country Director, CARE Somalia and South Sudan

Rosemary Heenan, Country Representative, Troicare

Ayaki Ito, Deputy Representative, UNHCR

Graziella Ito-Pellegrini, Cluster Coordinator, WASH, UNICEF

Hassan Khaire, Country Director, Kenya and Somalia, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

Peter Klansoe, Regional Director, DRC, Horn of Africa & Yemen

Stephen Maina, Regional Coordinator Bay/Bakool, World Vision

Robert Maletta, Policy Advisor, Oxfam Novib

Simon Mansfield, Regional Humanitarian Advisor, DFID

Graham Mathieson, International Trainer, NSP

Gwendoline Mensah, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR

Grainne Moloney, Chief Technical Advisor, Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU)

Tony Monaghan, Senior Security Operations Officer, Somalia, UNDSS

Patrick Mweki, Country Director, International Medical Corps (IMC)  
Stefano Porretti, Head of Office, WFP  
Omar Saleh, Cluster Leader, WHO  
Gemma Sanmartin, Regional Advisor, COOPI  
Tanya Schumer, Focal Point, Somalia NGO Consortium/  
NGO Safety Programme, Somalia  
Iftikhar Shaheen, Regional Coordinator, Islamic Relief Somalia  
Edwin Siala, Regional Coordinator, Juba region, World Vision  
Paul Thomas, Deputy Head of Office, OCHA  
Angela Valenza, Humanitarian Affairs Officer, OCHA  
Hugo van den Eertwegh, Deputy Head of Delegation, ICRC  
Abdullahi Warsame, Field Coordinator, OCHA

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## Sudan

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Abdulrasoul Abdalla, Health Coordinator, Sudanese Red Crescent Society  
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## Global/Headquarters level

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Larry Bottinick, Senior Policy Officer, UNHCR  
Genevieve Boutin, Chief, Humanitarian Policy Section, UNICEF  
Oliver Behn, Executive Coordinator, European Interagency Security Forum (EISF)  
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Lloyd Cederstrand, Senior Civil-Military Coordination Advisor, OCHA  
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Vance Culbert, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)  
Federica d'Andreagiovanni, Desk Officer, OCHA  
Terry Davis, Security Coordinator, UNICEF  
Pierre Dorbes, Delegate, Delegation to the United Nations, ICRC  
Stephen Gluning, Senior Security Officer, WFP  
Francois Grunewald, Groupe URD  
Arzu Hatakoy, Desk Officer, OCHA  
David Kaatrud, Director of Emergencies, WFP  
Heidi Kuttab, Desk Officer, OCHA  
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# Annex 3 Survey Instruments and Summary Results

1/25/2011 Zoomerang

**Operating in Complex Security Environments: Survey for national humanitarian workers**

1 \* The country where you live and work

2 \* The type of organisation/institution you work for:

- Local/national NGO or community-based organisation
- International NGO
- UN agency (or fund, program, office) involved in aid
- National Red Cross / Red Crescent society
- ICRC
- IFRC
- National Government (host government)
- Regional organisation (for example, SADC, ASEAN)
- Other, please specify

3 How long have you been working for this organisation?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 3-5 years
- Over 5 years

4 What type of programming does your organisation do (primarily)?

- Many types of aid (multi-sector)
- Agriculture
- Coordination
- Logistics and Support Services
- Economic Recovery and Infrastructure
- Education
- Food

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Health  
Mine Action  
Protection / Human Rights / Rule of law  
Security  
Shelter and Non-food Items  
Water and Sanitation  
Other, please specify

5 What best describes your position/job? (choose the closest)

Head of Office/Director  
Programme/project manager  
Programme/project staff (including health worker)  
Local Security Assistant/focal point  
Finance officer  
Administrator  
Warehouse manager  
Logistician  
Administrative/office assistant  
Driver  
Guard  
Communications/media officer  
Other, please specify

6 How would you rate the security of your local work environment for aid operations?

Secure (no major acts of violence against aid workers)  
Mostly secure (a few isolated acts of violence, but no specific targeting)  
Somewhat insecure (a growing number of threats and some acts of violence)  
Highly insecure, dangerous (aid workers/operations regularly targeted for attack)

7

During the time you have been working, has access (due to deteriorating security) for aid operations in your local work environment:

| Improved | Stayed about the same | Worsened |
|----------|-----------------------|----------|
| 1        | 2                     | 3        |

8

In your opinion, what is the greatest (most prevalent) source of threat facing aid personnel and assets in your environment? Please rank the below from 1 (lowest: rare or non-existent) to 9 (highest: major source of threat or constraint to aid work)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Common crime - robbery/burglary

Car-jacking and other attacks on the road

Kidnapping

Landmines

Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)

Collateral violence (proximity to attacks on military or other targets)

Targeted armed attacks on aid project facilities or offices

Sexual violence

Suicide bombing

9

In your environment, which jobs do you think carry the most risk? Please rank the different types of positions in terms of the risk involved (1 is lowest risk/safest; 6 is highest risk/most dangerous)

1 2 3 4 5 6

Senior management

---

Programme/project staff in the field

---

Administrative/finance/media staff in the office

---

Warehouse staff

---

Drivers

---

Guards

10 Does your organisation have written security policies and procedures?

Yes

No

I don't know

11 Did you receive security training during the time you have been employed by your organisation?

Comments (optional):

12 Do you regularly participate in security meetings and informational briefings?

Comments (optional):

- 13 How do you rate the level of resources (training, equipment, funding) that your organisation provides for staff security?

| Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|-----------|------|------|------|
| 1         | 2    | 3    | 4    |

- 14 During the time you have been working there, has your organisation's attention to the security needs of its staff:

| Improved | Stayed about the same | Worsened |
|----------|-----------------------|----------|
| 1        | 2                     | 3        |

- 15 Does your organisation have a complaints mechanism in which you can raise issues of security?

Additional Comment

- 16 In your view, who faces a greater level of threat of deliberate violence being committed against them in your setting?

National/local aid workers

International (foreign/expatriate) aid workers

Why? (comment optional):

- 17 In your opinion, do international organisations ask their local/national staff to accept:

A comparable burden of risk compared to internationals?

Less risk compared to internationals?

More risk compared to internationals?



18

Do different types of organisations face different levels of threat in your setting? If no, leave blank and go to question 19. If yes, please choose those who appear to be especially at risk (click on all that apply)

Local/national NGOs or community-based organizations

International NGOs in general

Western NGOs

Faith based organisations

UN agencies

National Red Cross / Red Crescent societies

ICRC

Other, please specify

19

In general, do you think *international* aid workers (in your organisation or in other organisations) perceive the general security conditions in the location to be:

Different than the local/national staff's perceptions

About the same as the local/national staff's perceptions

20

If you think international aid workers perceive the local security conditions differently, do you think internationals generally:

**Overestimate the risk**

**Underestimate the risk**

Comments (optional):

21

How does the gender of staff members affect security? (Select all that apply)

Female staff are generally at greater risk than male staff



18

Do different types of organisations face different levels of threat in your setting? If no, leave blank and go to question 19. If yes, please choose those who appear to be especially at risk (click on all that apply)

Local/national NGOs or community-based organizations

International NGOs in general

Western NGOs

Faith based organisations

UN agencies

National Red Cross / Red Crescent societies

ICRC

Other, please specify

19

In general, do you think *international* aid workers (in your organisation or in other organisations) perceive the general security conditions in the location to be:

Different than the local/national staff's perceptions

About the same as the local/national staff's perceptions

20

If you think international aid workers perceive the local security conditions differently, do you think internationals generally:

**Overestimate the risk**

**Underestimate the risk**

Comments (optional):

21

How does the gender of staff members affect security? (Select all that apply)

Female staff are generally at greater risk than male staff

Male staff are generally at greater risk than female staff

The presence of female staff can add to the threat against our operations in general, due to local attitudes

Gender has little or no affect on security.

Comments (please elaborate):

22

In your opinion, how is the communication on security issues between international and national staff (either within an INGO or between LNGOs and INGOs)?

| Good | Adequate/improving | Poor |
|------|--------------------|------|
| 1    | 2                  | 3    |

23

Are national/local NGOs and international aid organisations equally accepted and trusted by all parties to the conflict?

Yes - all aid organisations are more or less accepted

No - the national/local organisations are more accepted than international ones

No - the international aid organisations are more accepted than the national/local ones

Comments (optional):

24

Does your organisation actively promote the humanitarian principles of impartiality, independence, and neutrality in its operations?

Comments (optional):

25

In your opinion, does an organisation's adherence to the humanitarian principles of impartiality, independence, and neutrality help to enhance the security of aid national aid workers?

Comments (optional):

26

Please rank the below factors by how much they contribute to insecurity for humanitarian operations in your setting.

Rank from 1 (lowest, least impact on secure access) to 7 (highest, greatest impediment to secure access):

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

Lack of independence, impartiality, or neutrality; for example, perceived alignment with one side of the conflict

Poorly coordinated response efforts between humanitarian actors

Lack of security awareness and training

Shortage of security materials and equipment, for instance telecommunications

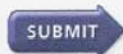
Poor communication and analysis on security issues

Lack of experience and cultural awareness

Incompetent organisations taking unnecessary risks which impact the aid community as a whole

27

Please use this space to add any additional comments you would like to make



# Annex 4 Legal Documents

## Normative basis related to operations in complex security environments<sup>1</sup>

### A. Relevant legal instruments and non-binding principles pertaining to security and access

#### I. International Humanitarian Law

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#### Responsibility of States and other parties to the conflict to meet the needs of the civilian population and role of relief organizations

- **Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War**, Geneva, 12 August 1949:
  - Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions: in a non-international armed conflict, an impartial humanitarian body may offer its services to the Parties to the conflict;
  - Article 55: duty of the Occupying Power to ensure the food and medical supplies of the population;
  - Article 56: duty of the Occupying Power to ensure public health and hygiene in the occupied territory;
  - Article 59 (1): if the whole or part of the population of an occupied territory is inadequately supplied, the Occupying Power shall agree to relief schemes on behalf of the population, and facilitate them by all the means at its disposal.
- **Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)**, Geneva, 8 June 1977:
  - Article 69 (1): the Occupying Power shall ensure the provision of basic needs of the civilian population of the occupied territory;
  - Article 3 common tArticle 69 (2): relief actions for the civilian population of occupied territories shall be implemented without delay;
  - Article 3 common tArticle 70 (1): if the civilian population of any territory under the control of a Party to the conflict, other than an occupied territory, is not adequately supplied, humanitarian and impartial relief actions shall be undertaken, subject to the agreement of the Parties concerned;
  - Article 3 common tArticle 71 (1): relief personnel may assist in any relief action, subject to the approval of the Party in whose territory the relief duties will be carried out.

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<sup>1</sup> Compiled by the Protection and Displacement Section (PDS), PDSB, OCHA, February 2011.

- **Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)**, Geneva, 8 June 1977:
  - Article 18 (1): relief societies may offer their services;
  - Article 18 (2): if the civilian population is suffering undue hardship due to a lack of supplies essential for its survival, humanitarian and impartial relief action shall be undertaken, subject to the consent of the High Contracting Party concerned.

### **Facilitation of humanitarian activities and free passage of relief supplies**

- **Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War:**
  - Article 23: all Contracting Parties shall allow the free passage of all consignments of medical supplies, food and clothing;
  - Article 59 (1): in the case of occupation, the occupying power shall facilitate relief schemes;
  - Article 59 (3): all Contracting Parties shall permit free passage of consignments and guarantee their protection;
  - Article 59 (4): a power granting free passage to consignments on their way to territory occupied by an adverse Party shall have the right to search them, to regulate their passage and to be satisfied that they are to be used for the relief of the population and not for the benefit of the occupying power;
  - Article 61 (1): in occupied territories, the distribution of relief consignments shall be carried out with the cooperation and under the supervision of the Protecting Power, a neutral Power or any impartial humanitarian body;
  - Article 61 (2): consignments shall be exempt from all charges, taxes or customs duties; the Occupying Power shall facilitate the rapid distribution of the consignments.
- **Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I):**
  - Article 70 (2): Parties to the conflict and all Contracting Parties shall allow and facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage for all relief consignments, equipment and personnel;
  - Article 70 (3): Parties to the conflict and all Contracting Parties may prescribe technical arrangements for such passage;
  - Article 70 (4): Parties to the conflict shall protect relief consignments and facilitate their rapid distribution;
  - Article 71 (3): each Party in receipt of relief consignments shall assist the relief personnel in carrying out their relief mission; the activities of the relief personnel may only be limited or their movements restricted in case of imperative military necessity.

### **Prohibition of attacks against humanitarian personnel and assets**

- **Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I):**
  - Article 71 (2): relief personnel shall be respected and protected.

### **Entitlements of affected persons or related obligations of State Parties**

- **Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War:**
  - Article 30: entitlement of protected persons to apply to relief organizations;
  - Article 62: entitlement of protected persons in occupied territories to receive individual relief consignments.
- **Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I):**
  - Article 54 (1): prohibition of starvation as a method of warfare;
  - Article 54 (2): protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.
- **Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II):**
  - Article 14: protection of objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population.

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## **II. Human Rights Law**

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### **Entitlements of affected persons or related obligations of State Parties**

#### *Universal Instruments*

- **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**, New York, 16 December 1966:
  - Article 6: right to life;
  - Article 7: prohibition of torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, New York, 16 December 1966:
  - Article 11: right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing and housing;
  - Article 12: right to health.



- **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination**, New York, 21 December 1965:
  - Article 5 (e): prohibition of racial discrimination in the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, New York, 20 November 1989:
  - Article 6: right to life, survival and development;
  - Article 22: protection and assistance of refugee children;
  - Article 24: right to health;
  - Article 27: right to an adequate standard of living;
  - Article 38 (1): duty to respect applicable rules of international humanitarian law relevant to the child in armed conflicts.
- **Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**, New York, 13 December 2006:
  - Article 10: right to life;
  - Article 11: protection in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

#### *Regional Instruments*

- **European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**, Rome, 11 April 1950:
  - Article 2: right to life;
  - Article 3: prohibition of torture, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- **American Convention on Human Rights**, San Jose, 22 November 1969:
  - Article 4: right to life;
  - Article 5: right to humane treatment.
- **Additional Protocol to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**, San Salvador, 17 November 1988:
  - Article 10: right to health;
  - Article 12: right to food;
  - Article 16: special right of children to protection;
  - Article 17: protection of the elderly.
- **African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights**, Banjul, 27 June 1981:
  - Article 5: right to life and integrity of person;

- Article 16: right to health.
- **Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa**, Maputo, 13 September 2000:
  - Article 3: right to dignity;
  - Article 4: right to life, integrity and security of the person;
  - Article 11 (2): States Parties shall protect civilians, including women, in the event of armed conflict;
  - Article 14: right to health;
  - Article 15: right to food security;
  - Article 24: special protection of women in distress.
- **African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child**, 11 July 1990:
  - Article 5: right to life, survival and development;
  - Article 23: right of refugee children to protection and humanitarian assistance.
- **Arab Charter on Human Rights**, Tunis, 22 May 2004:
  - Article 5: right to life;
  - Article 8: prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman, degrading or humiliating treatment;
  - Article 39: right to health.

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### **III. Refugee Law**

#### **Facilitation of humanitarian activities and free passage of relief supplies**

- **Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa**, Addis Ababa, 10 September 1969:
  - Article 8: cooperation with UNHCR.

#### **Entitlements of affected persons or related obligations of State Parties**

##### *Universal Instruments*

- **Convention relating to the Status of Refugees** (and its Protocol of 31 January 1967), Geneva, 28 July 1951:
  - Article 20: equality of treatment in terms of rationing;
  - Article 21: favourable treatment as regards housing;

- Article 23: equal treatment with respect to public relief and assistance.

Regional Instrument

- **Cartagena Declaration on Refugees**, Cartagena de Indias, 22 November 1984:
  - Paragraph II (h): reinforcement of programmes for protection of and assistance to refugees.

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#### **IV. International instruments and policies on Internal Displacement**

##### **Responsibility of States and other parties to the conflict to meet the needs of the civilian population and role of relief organizations**

- **African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa**, Kampala, 22 October 2009:
  - Article 5 (1): primary duty and responsibility of State parties to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons within their territory or jurisdiction.
- **Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement<sup>2</sup>**:
  - Principle 3: primary duty and responsibility of national authorities to protect internally displaced persons;
  - Principle 25 (1): primary duty and responsibility of the national authorities for providing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced persons;
  - Principle 25 (2): right of international humanitarian organizations to offer their services.

##### **Facilitation of humanitarian activities and free passage of relief supplies**

- **African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa**:
  - Article 3 (1) j.: States Parties shall ensure assistance to internally displaced persons by meeting their basic needs as well as allowing and facilitating rapid and unimpeded access by humanitarian organizations and personnel;
  - Article 5 (7): States Parties shall enable and facilitate the role of local and international organizations and humanitarian agencies;
  - Article 6: Obligations of international organizations and humanitarian agencies to respect the laws of the host country, international law and humanitarian principles;
  - Article 7 (5) b.: members of armed groups shall be prohibited from hampering the provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced persons under any circumstances;

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<sup>2</sup> Annex to the Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General, Francis M. Deng (UN Doc: E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2). Although the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement do not constitute a binding instrument, they reflect and are consistent with international human rights, humanitarian law, and analogous refugee law.

- Article 8 (3) c. and d.: collaboration of the AU with humanitarian agencies with respect to measures taken to protect and assist internally displaced persons.

### **Prohibition of attacks against humanitarian personnel and assets**

- **African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa:**
  - Article 5 (10): States Parties shall respect, protect and not attack or otherwise harm humanitarian personnel, resources or materials.
- **Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement:**
  - Principle 26: respect and protection of humanitarian personnel, transport and supplies.

### **Entitlements of affected persons or related obligations of State Parties**

- **African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa:**
  - Article 3 (j): basic needs of internally displaced persons;
  - Article 3 (k): promotion of sustainable livelihoods;
  - Article 7 (5) c.: Members of armed groups are prohibited from denying internally displaced persons the right to live in satisfactory conditions of dignity, security, sanitation, food, water, health and shelter.
- **Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement:**
  - Principle 4: special protection and assistance for children, women, disabled and elderly persons;
  - Principle 18: right to an adequate standard of living;
  - Principle 19: right to medical care.

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## **V. International Criminal Law**

- **Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel**, New York, 9 December 1994: criminalization of attacks against United Nations and associated personnel.
- **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel**, New York, 8 December 2005: expansion of the scope of application of the Convention to the delivery of humanitarian assistance.
- **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court**, Rome, 17 July 1998:

- Article 8 (2) b. (iii) and (xxiv): intentional attacks against humanitarian personnel and assets in international armed conflicts considered as war crimes;
- Article 8 (2) b. (xxv): intentional starvation of civilians in international armed conflicts considered as a war crime;
- Article 8 (2) e. (ii) and (iii): intentional attacks against humanitarian personnel and assets in non-international armed conflicts considered as war crimes.

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## **VI. Privileges and Immunities**

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### **Facilitation of humanitarian activities and free passage of relief supplies**

- **Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations**, New York, 13 February 1946, in particular:
  - Section 2: immunity of United Nations property and assets;
  - Section 3: inviolability of United Nations premises;
  - Section 7: the United Nations, its assets, income and other property shall be exempted from direct taxes, customs duties and prohibitions and restrictions on import and exports in respect of articles for official use and publications;
  - Section 9: the United Nations shall enjoy facilities in respect of official communications;
  - Section 11: privileges and immunities of representatives of members to United Nations organs and conferences;
  - Section 22: privileges and immunities of experts on mission for the United Nations;
  - Sections 24 to 26: issuance of laissez-passer for United Nations officials and experts on mission.
- **Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of Specialized Agencies**, New York, 21 November 1947, in particular:
  - Section 4: immunity of specialized agencies' property and assets;
  - Section 5: inviolability of specialized agencies' premises;
  - Section 9: the specialized agencies, their assets, income and other property shall be exempted from direct taxes, customs duties and prohibitions and restrictions on import and exports in respect of articles for official use and publications;
  - Section 11: specialized agencies shall enjoy facilities in respect of official communications;
  - Section 13: privileges and immunities of representatives of members at meetings convened by a specialized agency;

- Sections 26 to 29: issuance of laissez-passers for officials of the specialized agencies and experts on mission.

## B. Relevant resolutions adopted by United Nations organs

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### I. Security Council resolutions<sup>3</sup>

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#### Facilitation of humanitarian activities and free passage of relief supplies

- **Resolution 1894 (2009)** on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:
  - OP 13: importance of humanitarian principles;
  - OP 14 and 15 (a): role of all parties to armed conflict to facilitate rapid and unimpeded passage;
  - OP 15 (b): role of peacekeeping and other missions to assist in creating conditions conducive to safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian assistance;
  - OP 17: systematic monitoring and analysis of access constraints.
- **Resolution 1674 (2006)** on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:
  - OP 11: special needs of women and children, including the facilitation of the provision of humanitarian assistance;
  - OP 22: call to all those concerned to allow full unimpeded access by humanitarian personnel to civilians in need of assistance.
- **Resolution 1296 (2000)** on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:
  - OP 8: call to all parties concerned to cooperate with the United Nations in providing access;
  - OP 10: call upon parties to a conflict to promote “days of immunization” and other opportunities for the safe and unhindered delivery of basic necessary services to meet the protection and assistance requirements of women, children and other vulnerable groups;
  - OP 15: consideration of the appropriateness and feasibility of security zones and safe corridors for the protection of civilians and the delivery of assistance.
- **Resolution 1265 (1999)** on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:
  - OP 7: importance of safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in armed conflict.

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<sup>3</sup> For a selection of relevant country-specific resolutions, see the *Aide Memoire for the consideration of issues pertaining to the protection of civilians in armed conflict* (Addendum: Selection of agreed language), 2010 revised version (Annexed to UN Doc S/PRST/2010/25).



### **Prohibition of attacks against humanitarian personnel and assets**

- **Resolution 1894 (2009)** on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:
  - OP 16: condemnation of attacks against humanitarian personnel.
- **Resolution 1674 (2006)** on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:
  - OP 22: call to all those concerned to promote the safety, security and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel.
- **Resolution 1296 (2000)** on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:
  - OP 12: call to all parties to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel.
- **Resolution 1265 (1999)** on the protection of civilians in armed conflict:
  - OP 8: recognition of the need for combatants to ensure the safety, security and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel;
  - OP 9: call to all parties to respect the status of United Nations and associated personnel, condemnation of attacks and need for accountability.

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## **II. General Assembly resolutions<sup>4</sup>**

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### **Facilitation of humanitarian activities and free passage of relief supplies**

- Resolutions on the **Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations**:
  - Resolution 46/182 (paragraph 35d. of the Principles annexed to the resolution) and subsequent resolution 48/57 (OP 19): role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator in facilitating access to emergency areas by obtaining the consent of all parties concerned.
  - Resolution 58/114 (OP 10) and subsequent resolutions 59/141 (OP 18), 60/124 (OP 2), 61/133 (OP 4), 62/94 (OP 24), 63/139 (OP 25), 64/76 (OP 26), A/65/L.45 (OP 27): call upon all Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel, supplies and equipment
- Resolutions on the **Protection of and Assistance to internally displaced persons**:
  - Resolution 56/164 (OP 10) and subsequent resolution 58/177 (OP 11), 60/168 (OP 12), 62/153 (OP 15), 64/162 (OP 16): call upon Governments to facilitate assistance by the United Nations agencies and humanitarian organizations, including by improving access to internally displaced persons.

### **Prohibition of attacks against humanitarian personnel and assets**

<sup>4</sup> For further details, see the *Reference Guide for Normative Developments on the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Security Council since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 46/182*, OCHA Policy and Studies Series, Vol. I No. 2, 2009.

- Resolutions on the **Safety and security of humanitarian personnel:**
  - Resolution 52/167 (OP 3) and subsequent resolutions 53/87 (OP 11), 54/192 (OP 3), 55/175 (OP 4), 57/155 (OP 5), 59/141 (OP 18), 60/123 (OP 4), 61/133 (OP 4), 62/95 (OP 4), 63/138 (OP 4), 64/77 (OP 4), A/65/L.31 (OP 4): call upon all Governments and parties in complex emergencies to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel.
  - Resolution 52/167 (OP 2) and subsequent resolutions 53/87 (OP 10), 54/192 (OP 4), 55/175 (OP 5), 57/155 (OP 6), 59/141 (OP 17), 60/123 (OP 9), 61/133 (OP 9), 62/95 (OP 9), 63/138 (OP 10), 64/77 (OP 10), A/65/L.31(OP 11): condemnation of all act of violence against humanitarian and United Nations personnel.

### **Entitlements of affected persons or related obligations of State Parties**

- Resolutions on the **Assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa**
  - Resolution 60/128 (OP 11) and subsequent resolutions 61/139 (OP 12), 62/125 (OP 14), 63/149 (OP 14) and 64/129 (OP 15): importance of timely and adequate assistance and protection for refugees.

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### **III. Economic and Social Council resolutions<sup>5</sup>**

#### **Facilitation of humanitarian activities and free passage of relief supplies**

- Resolutions on the **Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations:**
  - Resolution 2002/32 (OP 22) and subsequent resolutions 2003/5 (OP 7), 2004/50 (OP 9), 2009/3 (OP 12), 2010/1 (OP 13): call upon all Governments and parties in complex humanitarian emergencies to ensure the safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel, supplies and equipment.

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*



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