



# RRN newsletter

All RRN materials are published in French and English.

## In this issue...

### Articles ..... 1

- ◆ *Former Child Soldiers in Liberia* ..... 1
- ◆ *Monitoring Children's Rights in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* ..... 3
- ◆ *Integrating Human Rights in all sectors of field work* ..... 5

### News ..... 9

- ◆ *The Fragile Financial Position of the UN* ..... 9
- ◆ *International Standards for IDPs* ..... 10
- ◆ *An Ombudsman for Humanitarian Assistance?* .. 11
- ◆ *The New ICVA* ..... 12
- ◆ *Benchmarks, Sticks or Carrots?* ..... 13
- ◆ *The West African Network for Peace-building* ..... 14

### Regional Focus... 15

- ◆ *Burma* ..... 15
- ◆ *Burundi* ..... 16
- ◆ *Guatemala* ..... 17
- ◆ *Guinea Bissau* ..... 23

## Former Child Soldiers in Liberia

### Call Me By My Real Name, A Cry for Lost Identity

by Sam Gbaydee Doe, West African Network for Peacebuilding

Three months after the Liberian civil war, Commanding Officer "Dirty Ways" one morning begged his neighbours to call him by his real name. "I have come to tell you not to call me "CO Dirty Ways" anymore. Call me by my real name. I am Junior Sawyer." Since the end of the civil war, a major source of violent conflicts among youths in Liberia is name calling. One specific case that comes to mind took place in a secondary school located in a rural county of Liberia. A former child soldier took a pistol to school in order to "kill a friend who refused to take warning when I told him to stop calling me crazy". During the seven year civil war, Dorwee proudly moved around his community with the name "General Crazy". One year after the civil war, he takes a pistol to kill someone for calling him by that name.

In order to recreate children and turn them into monsters, Liberian warlords devised several strategies to destroy the original identities of children whom they conscripted into their

fighting forces. In my six years of work with child soldiers in Liberia, I have not come across any child soldier who used his family- or given name in the civil war. Why did warlords take identity recreation as their single most important strategy in their conscription exercises? What are the social consequences of their actions on post-war Liberia?

One of the most devious aspects of the Liberian civilian war has been the creation of enemy images in order to brainwash young people into fighting. One child soldier I spoke with said this, "I know my enemies. They are from the other tribe. I heard them speak in their ethnic language when they rained terror on the people of my village. I hate them".

From my research in Liberia, I discovered that, many times, guerrilla leaders of the same faction, in order to win the loyalty of children, designed strategies that eventually portrayed them as

saviours of victimised community members. A former general disclosed this to me, “When we target a village for recruitment purposes, we divide our team into two groups. The first group is given the mission to kill especially the elderly and babies, rape the girls and burn the village in the guise of another faction.” They were commanded to speak the predominant language spoken by that group as they maim and kill the villagers. “While the massacre is being carried out,” he indicated, “our second team appears and behaves as the saviour of the people. When the first team is driven away, we assure the villagers that we will protect them and that they should join us to destroy the enemy.” Many young people happily joined fighting forces in order to revenge the death of their relatives and friends.

This strategy yielded several results in the interest of the rebel factions. One, it instilled deep and passionate hatred in the victims. Second, young people felt obliged to seek revenge in order to restore the “lost dignity of their people.” Finally, the faction leader is perceived as a saviour. In 1993, during one of our tours to rural Liberia to conduct a peace building workshop, we saw a billboard with a portrait of one of Liberia’s faction leaders. Below the image were these words, “This is our messiah.” The stimulation of this deep sense of spirituality reinforces the victims belief in, and loyalty to, the “saviour.” Not only is the leader a saviour, he becomes their new creator. By being attacked, the victims are reminded of how vulnerable they are; consequently, they doubt and even abandon their sense of safety and selfhood which defined them and their relationships prior to the onslaught. When the victims abandon their original sense of self and safety, they take on and internalise the new self and safety offered by the “saviour”.

Warlords concluded their training and orientations by giving the converts new names. Like Western Christian missionaries who insisted on the change of name after baptism in Africa, faction leaders insisted on the change of name after savage initiating rituals, with “Buck Naked”, “Human Eater”, “Dirty Ways”, “Rambo”, “Chuck Norris”, “General Crazy” as common replacements. Why did warlords take renaming of children seriously? What is the significance of name in the Liberian society? How does this inform us in understanding the identity crisis that plagues ex-combatants and other post-war Liberian children?

Having a sense of identity means being able to see oneself as an individual with certain characteristics. An individual whose important qualities existed in the past and will continue into the future. One who is able to

view himself as having a certain place in society. In the Liberian context, the single most important social mechanism through which one’s individuality is established is the naming ritual. Liberia’s four major ethnic groups (Mel, Mande, Kwa, Americo-Liberians) have different naming rituals but they all have a common traditional, spiritual, and philosophical ground for the ceremonies. Liberians believe that every human being’s behaviours and characteristics are conditioned by his name.

When I was born, for example, my parents named me after my deceased grandfather. I remember vividly as a child growing up in a six-hut village in Southeastern Liberia how the villagers had pre-conceived expectations about how “a Gbaydee” should behave. “You are a Gbaydee. When Gbaydee was here with us he was generous, jovial and wise. Why are you doing the opposite?” This question was drummed in my ears every time by the villagers so much that, in reflection, I realise that my behaviour and self-concept was largely conditioned by them.

Two lessons can be learned out of this experience. Firstly, an individual in Liberia has no authority over how he will be named, and secondly, when the name is given, his/her self-knowledge is influenced by the expectations and preconditions set by his social environment. It was this fundamental social practice that warlords exploited during the civil war. A child who was named “Dirty Ways” was expected to be nasty in dealing with civilians or his ‘enemies’. A “Rambo” was expected to be as brave and adventurous as Hollywood’s Sylvester Stallone.

Warlords in Liberia did not only rename children, they destroyed every earlier relationship which defined the children. Children were sent to their own villages and people to kill, loot and destroy. “We went at night. I knew some of the people. They too knew me, but I was a different person now. Once I take my tablet, I can do anything to anyone. All the big, big people were scared of me. I was the commander in my village,” a former child soldier told me. When rebel leaders complete this ritual, they take away the child’s community friends, and relatives which defined him and provided his view of the world. They replace it with a new community characterised by killing, looting, and vandalising. For seven years, this was the community to which they belonged. For seven years, they were the prominent

---

***I have come to tell you not to call me “CO Dirty Ways” anymore. Call me by my real name. I am Junior Sawyer.***

---



---

***I can do anything to anyone. All the big, big people were scared of me. I was the commander in my village.***

---

people in their communities. Their basic human need for recognition was demanded from people of their communities through the use of the gun.

On 19 July 1998, after the general elections which ended the Liberian civil war, military factions were dismantled and children who were not lucky to be absorbed in the new shades of security forces were asked to return to their families, villages, towns and cities, some of which they destroyed during the civil war. Now the identity they held onto for seven years has disappeared and the identities they had before the civil war, it seems, cannot easily be recollected and assumed. Now there are at least 30,000 nameless and faceless children roaming the streets of Monrovia. They are bereft of an identity and are being forced to ask the fundamental question “who am I?”.

One thing that is clear is that this generation of “Dirty Ways”, “Human Eaters”, “No Nonsense” etc. will not just disappear from the scene. They will assert themselves in society through looting, armed robbery, prostitution, and other crimes. They are the reserves of potential armed insurrection. Worst of all, they are the living evidence of the inhumanity of adults against children.◆

The Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex and the Children’s Legal Centre, an independent NGO, has recently set up the ‘Children and Armed Conflict Unit’ as a resource and information centre. It will work closely with Olara Otunnu, the UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict. It welcomes any information on this issue.

The Children’s Legal Centre, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester C04 3SQ, UK. Fax: +44 (0)1206 874 483 or email [armedcon@essex.ac.uk](mailto:armedcon@essex.ac.uk)

## Membership Details

*Have you recently changed post?  
Working on a new project?  
Moved from headquarters to the  
field? Or from the field to  
headquarters?*

*Keep us informed of your current  
position and changing situations  
so that we may continue to tailor  
our work to meet your needs.*

**NOT A MEMBER OF THE RRN  
BUT WOULD LIKE TO JOIN?  
see centre pages for details...**

# Monitoring children’s rights in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

*by the Division for Child Rights, Ombudsman  
Institution and Redd Barna (Save the Children  
Norway).*

## Introduction

The state of Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence in 1991. Following years of war, the Washington Agreement of 1994 led to the establishment of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBH) whose main population consists of Croats and Muslim Bosnians. The Dayton Agreements of 1995 then created the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which comprises the Federation and the mainly Serb Republica Srpska. The peace is still fragile, and very dependent on the presence of 30,000 NATO soldiers.

In the Washington Agreement, the authorities in FBH made a commitment to respect human rights as expressed in several human rights conventions including the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. When a Constitution was drafted for the subsequently created Federation, much emphasis was placed on human rights. The Constitution also prescribed the establishment of an Ombudsman Institution for Human Rights (Ombudsman Institution) with the responsibility to “*protect human dignity, rights and liberties as provided in the Constitution, in the instruments listed in the Annex thereto, and in the constitutions of the Cantons. In particular, they shall act to reverse the consequence of violations of these rights and liberties and especially of the ethnic cleansing*”.

The Ombudsman Institution was established in 1995, with funding provided by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The office is headed, not by one but by three Ombudspersons – “one Bosnian, one Croat and one other”. The head office is located in Sarajevo while sub offices are gradually being established in each of the 9 cantons in FBH.

So far no such institution has been established in the Republica Srpska, but its authorities are strongly encouraged to set one up. It is within this organisational structure that a child rights monitoring body – the Division for Children’s Rights – was established in June 1996 at the Ombudsman Institution office in Sarajevo.

### Children’s situation in the FBH

As in all armed conflicts, the children in FBH were very much affected by the 1992-1995 civil war: approximately 17,000 children were killed, more than 34,000 were wounded, out of which close to 2,000 have become disabled and 25,000 children lost one or both parents. In addition, 950,000 people became internally displaced and 600,000 took refuge abroad; many of these are now in the process of returning. Close to half of the displaced and refugee population were children, many deeply traumatised.

A general review of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina shows that economically, socially and politically there is a lack of administrative bodies both at a state and federal level which can deal with issues related to children’s rights and protection. There is a total absence of systematic programmes for children including the most vulnerable groups like children without one or both parents, children in institutions, children with disabilities, displaced and refugee children, juvenile delinquents and drug addicts. To make the Convention on the Rights of the Child an instrument for protecting children, it is necessary for the relevant authorities to have children as a specific focal point.

### Establishment of the Division for Child Rights

In May 1996, Redd Barna visited FBH to establish contacts with the authorities and international organisations which were responsible for monitoring the implementation of the peace process and to address the specific needs for protection of children after the war. Redd Barna made contact with the Ombudsman Institution for Human Rights in Sarajevo and learned that protection of children’s rights was included in their mandate.

The Ombudsman Institution’s work load was enormous. Although the Ombudsman expressed a desire to focus on children’s issues because of concern with the deficiency of child rights protection in FBH, the necessary resources to focus on children were unavailable. Redd Barna offered the Ombudsman Institution support to establish a separate unit to be responsible for aspects related to violations of children’s rights.

This concept was discussed and developed over a 12-month period. The Ombudsman Institution was

responsible for developing the concept and establishing the division, while Redd Barna acted as a discussion partner. Norway was the first country in the world to establish an Ombudsperson office for Children, and a visit of the Ombudsperson to that office in Norway was organised as part of the conceptual discussion. The Division of the Rights of the Child, officially opened in June 1997, has a small office with two permanent staff and a group of part-time consultants. It receives financial support from Norwegian NORAD, through Redd Barna.

The main **objective** of the Division is to monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in light of the Ombudsman Institution’s mandate and to monitor the compliance of the authorities of FBH with the Convention.

So far, the main challenges for the Division have been to ensure that the federal authorities comply with the Convention when processing new laws through the parliamentary system. With the assistance of independent Bosnian experts, the Division has analysed the current legislation and recommended certain changes. For example, different laws on education have been examined with regard to quality; the Division has recommended abolishing military education as an obligatory subject in secondary school curriculum.

Another area of concern has been advocacy and awareness raising among authorities, institutions and professionals working with children. The Division has been initiating and organising conferences and round-table discussions on different issues like children with disabilities and juvenile delinquency. Training seminars for the police and judges on children’s rights have also been conducted.

The main **task** of the Ombudsman Institution is to deal with individual complaints concerning violations of human rights. The Division deals also with individual cases mainly related to ethnicity and unequal treatment of children with special needs.

The media has been a useful instrument for the Division to raise different issues related to children. In 1997 the Federal Ministry of Education instructed the ministries at canton level to begin implementing two different curriculums in the schools – one for Bosnian children and one for Croat children. Because this would encourage further ethnical separation in the schools, the Division called for a meeting with all relevant government ministries. As a result of these consultations, the instruction was withdrawn.

## Challenges for the future

The first challenge will be to find the right balance between advocacy, information and awareness raising in general and the handling of individual complaints. So far, the Division has been recognised both by the authorities and general public as an important player when it comes to children's rights. The media is interested in its work and it is viewed as some sort of a "watchdog". It is important that the Division keeps this high profile, focussing on advocacy work as well as issues related to individual cases.

In FBH, a large degree of decision making power has been delegated from the Federation to the cantons. In the future, it will also be an important goal to expand the focus of children's issues to the different cantons and to establish divisions for children's rights at all the Ombudsman's sub-offices to facilitate the monitoring

of children's situation, to address violations and to carry out advocacy work at a local level. The first phase in reaching this goal is to open divisions in three of the cantons by the end of 1999.

An increasing number of countries have established Children's Ombudsman or similar institutions to monitor children's rights. To reduce the risk of violation of children rights, the UN General Assembly has been recommended to initiate the establishment of specific Children's Ombudsman in war and post-war situations. The establishment of the Division for Child Rights within the Ombudsman Institution for Human Rights in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina illustrates a step in this direction and could perhaps serve as inspiration for the establishment of such monitoring bodies, not only in war ridden countries but also at the UN level.◆

---

# Integrating Human Rights in all Sectors of Field Work

by *Karen Kenny, International Human Rights Trust, Ireland*

The potential inherent in the UN Secretary-General's commitment to integrate human rights throughout the activities of the Organisation is such that it should change the way all field operators work: whether relief or development agency, police, military or human rights 'specialists'. In addition, it should revolutionise the way we work together.

## Human Rights and conflict

There has long been theoretical recognition of the link between human rights violations and peace. Here, we speak not only of civil and political rights but those economic, social and cultural rights whose denial through structural injustice and discrimination lie at the root of conflict. 'Today's human rights violations are tomorrow's conflicts'. Left unaddressed, human rights violations contribute to conflict escalation, making peace, and ultimately reconciliation, infinitely more difficult to achieve. Peace without justice is indeed a contradiction in terms.

## The UN Charter 50 years ago

Understanding the link between human rights and conflict sheds new light on Article 1 of the United Nations Charter. Not only is to 'promote and encourage respect for human rights' an express purpose of the Organisation – it is also at the heart of the other aims, especially that of maintaining international peace and security. The latter is increasingly understood to mean *human* security and not merely state security. From the outset, the UN has had the legal mandate from its member states in Article 1 of the Charter to integrate the promotion of human rights in all its activities.

## Human Rights and peace-support operations

In fact, human rights work is inherent in all aspects of peace-support operations, although hitherto it has rarely been understood as such. By definition, the UN's military, police and political personnel aim to provide freedom from fear – while those UN and NGO personnel who provide relief and rehabilitation support aim at freedom from want. In reality, both aims are common to all peace-support actors though they use different methods to achieve them when a host state is unwilling or unable to do so alone.

In the early 1990s, the link between human rights and conflict was openly applied to a UN peace-support operation for the first time in El Salvador (ONUSAL). It placed civilian human rights officers on the ground six months before there was a cease-fire and before uniformed UN contingents (military or civilian police) arrived to verify compliance with the peace agreements.

Several other 'human rights operations', run from the UN headquarters in New York, followed as a specific element of peace-support operations: Haiti (MICIVIH,

a joint operation with the Organisation for American States), Cambodia (UNTAC), Croatia (UNTAES) and Guatemala (MINUGUA) are examples of these.

Meanwhile a new post of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was created by the General Assembly, with the first incumbent taking up that post just as Rwanda imploded into genocide. The new office of this High Commissioner in Geneva has established human rights operations in addition to those run by the UN Departments of Political Affairs and Peacekeeping Operations. By 1999 there are expected to be 22 such Geneva-UN human rights field ‘presences’ around the world, of varying size and mandate.

Just as in the early days of ‘peace-keeping’ itself, the first experiences have been ad hoc and reactive with, even today, minimal learning from one to another. As a result there has frequently been a rigid compartmentalisation among the ‘disciplines’: military, police, humanitarian aid, development aid and classical human rights ‘specialists’. They have each been weakened due to the lack of a unifying underlying concept the only real source for which is international law and principle.

### **Integrating human rights in all UN activities**

Fifty years on, Kofi Annan’s proposal in his ‘Programme for Reform’ to integrate human rights in the work of the UN merely makes an official policy of fulfilling the promise of the Charter. Following through on this proposal, the Secretary -General established Executive Committees composed of top UN management, covering four of the five sectors in which the UN is active: peace and security, humanitarian affairs, economic and social affairs and development co-operation. These Committees can be likened to a government’s cabinet which meets to assist the Secretary-General. There is no human rights Executive Committee per se because human rights has been designated as an issue which underpins all the UN’s activities and must be integrated into its work in every sector. Thus the now second High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, is represented on each of the UN’s four Committees when they meet. These developments have the potential to change the way each of us works across the spectrum of field activities.

### **Integrating human rights in practice**

The commitment to integrate human rights is first of all a reminder that our own behaviour is governed by international legal obligations. The Secretary-General should ensure that where there are allegations such as torture or unlawful detention made against UN personnel, that there are meaningful channels for complaints to be heard, to be promptly and impartially

investigated and to ensure that they are prosecuted and punished appropriately at the national or international level.

Secondly, the field ‘presences’ under the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights do not yet fully reflect the indivisibility of the full spectrum of rights (civil and political, social, economic and cultural), and particularly the human rights of women. All UN member states reaffirmed by consensus at the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 that all human rights are indivisible and inter-dependent. Increased efforts are needed to reflect this in field work, and to move beyond the old Cold War approaches in which the Western block inappropriately prioritised civil and political rights and the Eastern block social and economic rights. There is a need for two-way integration of human rights and development thinking.

Thirdly, integrating human rights in all our activities means that not only those labelled ‘human rights specialists’ have responsibility for human rights tasks. It also means that integrating human rights applies to our work in all places at all times, regardless of our immediate mandate which authorises us to deploy. This is because the root of authority for integrating human rights is not the Secretary-General’s report or a ‘new’ UN policy. The obligation flows from the UN Charter and from international human rights law.

Integrating human rights in all our field work poses many tensions and dilemmas: for the military commander, who under pressure to get a convoy through, can undermine the protection of international law by making compromises; for the UN negotiator who needs to relate a cease-fire to ‘peace’, for the aid worker providing food to displaced populations that is also being diverted to feed combatants. But the questions have to be asked. Because each of us, while doing our respective jobs, should be consciously part of the *common human rights aim*. The example of the failed Arusha Agreement regarding Rwanda signed in 1993 illustrates all too clearly that the UN negotiators should ensure that human rights concerns are at the heart of peace processes that the UN is involved in brokering, mediating, facilitating or verifying. Yet is difficult to apply lessons that should have been learned. Once again, over Kosovo, negotiations have ignored the human rights causes of what is again mis-presented as a ‘humanitarian aid crisis’. This time it is the OSCE military observers who are deployed in a mission which *effectively misses the point*.

### **Learning to integrate human rights**

Integrating human rights will require all of us to examine our mandates and doctrines, and our ways of operating. As organisations we will need to recognise that we all

have the same human rights aim and that we need *unity of effort* to achieve it. We will have to learn each other's professional languages and breakdown stereotypes through common training. We will have to recognise each other's professionalism and ensure our efforts are *mutually re-enforcing* through an efficient but well co-ordinated division of labour.

We will also have to review how we assess, analyse and describe a crisis by applying the link between human rights and conflict, and by asking *why* a crisis is occurring? We will need to apply a rights-based approach to the programme cycle, and question the design of our interventions, what we do, how and with whom we do it, for how long and why, from a rights-perspective. And we will need to ensure that our work is informed by, and uses the available human rights framework and its tools (ranging from the UN Treaty

Bodies, to Special Rapporteurs and regional mechanisms, to the vital work of local and international NGOs) to the maximum.

Perhaps most fundamentally, both as individual organisations and collectively, we will have to re-examine how we measure 'success'. The question is the same now for all our work, whether military, aid or human rights 'specialist': *Have we harnessed our energies and pooled our skills with the host society and with each other, toward a sustainable improvement in the human rights situation?* ♦

The International Human Rights Trust Website can be found at: [www.lowwwe.com/ihrt/index.html](http://www.lowwwe.com/ihrt/index.html)

See page 36 for a review of Kenny's book: "Towards effective training for field human rights tasks".

# Abstracts

...of recent RRN publications. Readers who are not full RRN members can order them via the website [www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html) – or see centre-pages for further details.

**RRN Network Paper 27**

ISBN: 0-85003-379-9

## **'Between Relief and Development: targeting food aid for disaster prevention in Ethiopia** by Kay Sharp

The paper focuses on the question of how food aid can best be targeted to the neediest households in food-insecure areas, particularly in the context of the 1993 National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management (NPDPM) and its central strategy of channelling relief food through employment generation schemes (EGS) in place of general free distributions. The debate on household-level targeting of such schemes has centred on the choice between self-targeting and administrative / community targeting.

As a framework for the discussion, a typology of targeting methods is briefly set out, suggesting that three dimensions of classification are needed for each targeting system: the institutional channel or mechanism; the level; and selection criteria. Community targeting, which has received little attention in the international literature, is discussed.

A review of previous Ethiopian experience with targeting through public works shows little evidence that it successfully self-selects the poorest and excludes the relatively better-off, even at low payment rates. A summary of views expressed by beneficiaries and implementing staff in chronic food-aid recipient areas

**community targeting option is not an easy or cheap one**

sheds further doubt on the potential of pure self-targeting to meet the targeting objectives of the NPDPM. However, it also suggests that the community targeting option is not an easy or cheap one, and that a strong preference for sharing aid as widely as possible within communities applies equally to employment entitlements.

The paper concludes that a combination of self-targeting elements with community prioritisation of the neediest households is the best available targeting option for EGS. At the same time, attention is needed to improve administrative targeting at area levels.

**how food aid can best be targeted to the neediest households in food-insecure areas**

**RRN Network Paper 28**

ISBN: 0-85003-411-6

**‘The Illegal Proliferation Misuse: a development or arms control issue?’** by *Chris Smith*

This paper will overview and analyse the cause and effect of the tremendous growth in the availability of illegal light weapons since the end of the Cold War. Although most of the institutional concern in the West

---

***global analysis of the scale  
and nature of the light  
weapons problem***

---

has emanated from departments of development, the light weapons problem is seen clearly and almost exclusively as an arms control phenomenon. Although arms controllers have much to offer this debate, there is an equally important argument for addressing the failed and weak state phenomenon, not just in Africa and Asia but in Eastern and Southern Europe as well.

Following a global analysis of the scale and nature of the light weapons problem, the author goes on to discuss current initiatives and how finding the correct backdrop for policy analysis will be crucially important in the search for solutions that have some chance of success. It is argued, for example, that exclusive emphasis on weapons shuts out the long- and medium-term issues which are far more related to human security. Therefore, too great an emphasis on arms control will overlook what needs to be done to reduce factors relating to both supply and demand.

**RRN Good Practice Review 7**

ISBN: 0-85003-373-X

**‘Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance Programmes in Complex Emergencies’** by *Alistair Hallam*

Evaluation is a key tool in efforts to improve accountability and performance in the operation of the international humanitarian aid system. However, humanitarian aid has been subjected to less rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures than those applied to development aid. As the share of overseas development assistance allocated to humanitarian aid has risen, and awareness of the complexity of humanitarian assistance has increased, so the need to develop appropriate methodologies for the evaluation of relief aid has become more apparent.

This Good Practice Review is the written output of an OECD/DAC project initiated to identify and disseminate best practice in the evaluation of humanitarian assistance programmes. The study seeks to improve the consistency and quality of evaluation methodologies, and enhance the accountability function of evaluation, contribute to institutionalising the lessons learned, and identify better methods for monitoring performance of humanitarian aid operations.

---

***this Good Practice Review  
is the written output of an  
OECD/DAC project  
initiated to identify and  
disseminate best practice  
in the evaluation of  
humanitarian assistance  
programmes***

---

**Contributors to Newsletter 12 ‘News’ section:**

**UN Finance:** A. McDermott, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway

**IDPs:** Roberta Cohen, Co-director of the Brookings Institution Project on Internal Displacement, USA

**Ombudsman:** Deborah Doane, Ombudsman Project, British Red Cross

**ICVA:** Anders Ladekarl, Chair, International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)

**WANEP:** Sam Gabaydee Doe, WANEP

**SPHERE:** Sarah Longford, RRN

**APOLOGIES to contributors to Newsletter 11**

where the contributor’s section was omitted – full credit is given here:

**Norwegian Human Rights Policy:** Hilde Selbervik, CHR-Michelsen Inst. Norway

**People in Aid:** Sara Davidson, People in Aid Coordinator

**CHAD replaces EMAD:** Laura Gibbons, RRN

**Arms Exports:** Koenraad Van Brabant, RRN

**Stoking Fires with Arms in Burundi:** Joost Hiltermann, Arms Division, Human Rights Watch

*Please note that the views represented in ‘News’ reflect only those of the author, and not necessarily those of their organisation or any organisations mentioned.*

# News

## The Fragile Financial State of the UN

### More and less of the same

The money owed by member states to the UN system remains its perennial curse and has become the focus of this year's discussion of the UN's financial condition. It has overshadowed the question whether the proposals for UN reform put forward by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in July 1997 are yet showing signs of being effective or credible. This had been the yardstick by which the US administration, and in effect this means the Republican-dominated Congress with its anti-UN cohorts led by Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms, had measured its willingness to pay its assessed dues.

The UN's regular budget expenditures for the biennium 1998-99 total \$2.53 billion, compared with \$2.54 billion for 1996-97. If this sum appears large, note that Americans spend some six times that amount annually on health care alone. With arrears impacting on cash flow and the UN's cash flow typically diminished during the second half of the year, the UN survives financially largely thanks to peace-keeping. The peace-keeping budget has no simple money-in/money-out arrangement: money flows through different channels, into different accounts and according to different financial years.

By 30 September 1998, member states owed \$1.8 billion overall from ordinary assessed contributions to UN for peace-keeping, of which \$0.50 billion was for the current period and \$1.3 billion from previous years. One device by which the UN survives is by obtaining on credit the services and materiel for peace-keeping operations from troop-contributing countries. The sums owed to these member states have totalled \$789 million (1994), \$1.16 billion (1995), \$867 million (1996) and \$884 million (1997) with \$864 million projected for 1998. The countries most affected in 1997 were Belgium, Britain, Canada, France, India, Italy, the Netherlands, Pakistan and the US. These 'free' contributions have caused considerable resentment.

The peace-keeping budget has several accounts, some of which run surpluses at different times of the year.

Little goes to reducing the overall peace-keeping arrears as there has rarely been enough in the peace-keeping budget to do more than keep the level of the amount owed. The surpluses in the peace-keeping current account for some years have been used to bail out the deficits of the regular budget which could reach \$247 million by the end of 1998. The problem is that peace-keeping expenditure, after a peak in 1995 of \$3.4 billion, is decreasing. In 1996-1997, it amounted to \$1.14 billion. For 1997-1998, appropriations were approved by the General Assembly at \$853 million and for 1998-1999 a mere \$636.7 million. Although the number of operations – 17 in July 1998 – remains high, the size of the troop deployment has dropped dramatically from 77,783 at the end of 1994 to 14,453 in mid-September 1998. As a consequence the cash flow surplus has fallen (at the year end) from \$677 million in 1996 to \$669 million in 1997 and a further fall to \$528 million is projected for 1998 – lower than earlier estimates. Some 32% of the peace-keeping surplus, a higher proportion than before, will go to the regular budget, but peace-keeping is a shrinking resource.

In his reform proposals, Annan proposed results-based budgeting and the establishment of a \$1 billion Revolving Credit Fund. The latter was intended to tide the system over during shortfalls caused by the late payment of assessed contributions. Both have had their introduction deferred. The reductions in the size of the regular budgets have been more to impress those who would like to have the UN run like a corporation. The strongest proponent of this view is Joseph E. Connor, the Under-Secretary-General for Management with a strong background in business. Given that the UN is the product of its 185 members, this is an unrealistic goal which has caused administrative problems through attempts to make savings by not filling vacant jobs.

In all this, the US factor is a paradox. By the end of September, the US owed around \$0.547 billion from current arrears to the 1998 regular, International Tribunals and Peace-keeping budgets, and \$1.029 billion from previous years. Although there is dispute with the UN about what is owed precisely when, this brought the US arrears theoretically over the two-years' accumulated arrears penalty limit. Failure to pay at least enough to stay under that limit could, under Article 19 of the UN Charter, have led to the US losing its right to vote in the UN General Assembly. On 19 October, the US Congress however passed a bill to provide an additional \$250 million for the UN, enabling it to avoid that penalty.

The amount the US owes is, seen in the perspective of US national accounts, insignificant. Its arrears are embarrassing to those Americans not of the Helms unilateralist persuasion and even Annan has apparently become disillusioned with Washington, as protestations of support for the UN in the Administration and Congress fail repeatedly to turn into tangible support. A survey conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide for the United Nations Association of the USA showed that 72% of the American public viewed it as ‘very important’ that the country remained an active member of the UN, which they ranked higher than NATO, the World Bank and WHO. This was up from the 54% of the 1995 and 1996 survey results. Americans favoured the US paying its dues by three to one.

Not that this is much consolation for the UN and Connor’s office, whose statistical briefing statements have, all year, devoted one page to the mantras: ‘cash position is weak and getting weaker’; ‘the ability to cross-borrow is drying up’; and ‘debt to Member States has become resistant to change’. Sad, familiar *and* true.◆

Note that Anthony McDermott, author of this article, is also the author of the forthcoming book ‘The New Politics of Financing the UN’. For further details, please contact him by email: [anthony@prio.no](mailto:anthony@prio.no)

## International Standards for Internally Displaced Persons

For the first time, international standards have been developed specifically tailored to the needs of the internally displaced (IDPs). Since 1951, standards have existed for refugees – persons forced to flee their countries in search of international protection abroad. Now those forcibly displaced within their own countries have a document to turn to when they are denied life-saving protection and assistance. Entitled the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, they set forth the rights of the internally displaced and the obligations of governments and insurgent groups toward these populations. The Guiding Principles – thirty in number – were presented to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in April 1998 by Francis Deng, Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons.

The 53-state Commission, in a unanimously adopted resolution, took note of the principles and of the stated intention of the Representative to use them in his work. A month earlier, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, composed of the heads of the major international humanitarian and development organisations had welcomed the principles and encouraged its members to share them with their executive boards and staff and to apply them in the field. As a result, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and other international organisations and NGOs have begun to disseminate the principles and familiarise their staffs with their provisions. In the

Americas, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States directly applied the principles while on a mission to Colombia.

Although not a binding instrument like a treaty, the principles are based on human rights and humanitarian law, and refugee law by analogy, which do bind governments and insurgent groups. Developed at the request of the UN Commission on Human Rights and General Assembly by the Representative and a team of international lawyers, the principles restate existing law and address the grey areas and gaps found in the law.<sup>1</sup> Among the gaps identified by the legal team were “normative gaps,” where international law is silent. For instance, there is no right to restitution of property lost as a consequence of displacement during armed conflict or to compensation for its loss. The team also found “applicability gaps,” where a legal norm exists but does not apply in all circumstances. Humanitarian law, for example, does not apply to situations of tensions and disturbances short of armed conflict whereas human rights law does not generally apply to non-state actors. IDPs, thus, may have minimum legal protection if violations are committed by non-state actors in situations of internal strife. In addition, “consensus gaps” were identified. Here, a general norm exists but there is no consensus on how to give effect to that norm in situations of internal displacement. For example, while there is a general norm that prohibits cruel and inhuman treatment, it does not explicitly say that the forcible return of IDPs to places of danger should be prohibited. Similarly, while a general norm provides all persons with recognition before the law, it does not specify that IDPs shall be issued the documents they need to enjoy their legal rights.

The Guiding Principles tailor the law to the needs of the internally displaced and make explicit what is implicit in the law. They do so in all phases of displacement – before displacement takes place, during displacement and after return and reintegration. At the same time, the

principles do not create a new legal status for the internally displaced. IDPs are in their own country and enjoy the same rights and freedoms as other persons in their country. By virtue of their displacement, however, they have special needs which the principles seek to address.

Particularly innovative are the principles against arbitrary displacement, which formulate for all persons a right not to be arbitrarily displaced and set forth the grounds and conditions by which displacement is impermissible. Displacement on ethnic, religious or racial grounds is prohibited in all circumstances whereas displacement by large-scale development projects is deemed arbitrary when there are no compelling and overriding public interests to justify the project. Indigenous peoples and other groups with attachment to the land are provided special protection.

Why are guiding principles not a binding legal instrument? For one, because there was deemed to be little international support for a legal instrument. Also, it was argued that numerous instruments already existed with relevance to the internally displaced and that what was needed was better implementation of these instruments. At the same time, there was agreement that

the norms applicable to the internally displaced should be consolidated into one document. A compact, usable document was recommended that could be applied right away to meet the urgent needs of IDPs.

The Guiding Principles apply both to governments and insurgent groups and should prove an important advocacy tool for international organisations and NGOs. They can help governments develop laws to protect IDPs and can reinforce the efforts of displaced communities advocating for their rights. However, since they contain no monitoring machinery, it will be up to governments, international organisations, NGOs and displaced communities to see that they are widely disseminated and implemented.◆

<sup>1</sup> See *Compilation and Analysis of Legal Norms*, Report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons to the Commission on Human Rights, E/CN.4/1996/52/Add.2, United Nations, December 1995.

For a copy of the Guiding Principles in English or French, write to A. Baocchi at [baocchi@un.org](mailto:baocchi@un.org), c/o OCHA, One United Nations Plaza, DC1-1568, New York, NY 10017, USA. For a copy in Spanish, Russian, Arabic or French, contact E Mooney at [c/o UNHCHR, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland](mailto:c/o UNHCHR, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland). Email [emooney.hchr@unog.ch](mailto:emooney.hchr@unog.ch)

## An Ombudsman for Humanitarian Assistance?

The debate surrounding accountability in humanitarian assistance took a step forward recently, as attendees of the World Disasters Forum in June agreed to pilot an ‘Ombudsman for Humanitarian Assistance’ (HAO). The Forum was attended by the majority of UK humanitarian agencies who gathered in London to review the findings of an 8-month feasibility study, known as ‘the Ombudsman Project’, co-ordinated by the British Red Cross.

The main finding from the feasibility study was that, in principle, it is possible to develop an Ombudsman system for use in humanitarian emergencies. There remain, however, a number of outstanding issues that require further investigation. What are the outstanding challenges?

### Beneficiary Access

The focus on access for claimants was considered to be the primary motivation for creating an Ombudsman, as

no other mechanism of accountability has such a direct relationship with beneficiaries. At the same time, there are a number of limitations to this approach as access to beneficiaries will be dependent on the particular context. A programme of outreach, using local partners and beneficiary representatives, may help to facilitate access in certain situations. At the same time, an Ombudsman would need to avoid any attempts by powerful stakeholders to ‘represent’ beneficiaries for their own political aims.

### Internationalisation

So far, the ‘Ombudsman Project’ has been led by UK-based agencies. However, it was agreed at the World Disasters Forum that the Ombudsman would best work within an international jurisdiction which would include membership from non-UK NGOs. Furthermore, an HAO would require legitimacy amongst organisations within the international humanitarian system, which includes host governments, local organisations and the UN. The creation of an International HAO would require immense commitment, time and negotiation with numerous actors and organisations.

### Methodology, Role & Outcome

The feasibility study proposes a flexible methodology for the Ombudsman. The main role would be to provide

advice and incentives for agencies to adhere to the main codes of practice and standards in humanitarian assistance – the Red Cross and NGO Code of Conduct and the Sphere Project Minimum standards as a start. Finding a consensus on interpreting codes and standards will no-doubt present big challenges as different agencies, each with their own *'raison d'être'*, may interpret the Code of Conduct differently according to their own values and the political and ethical context in question. The Ombudsman would examine the potential for identifying a more regulatory approach so that sanctions may be used if facilitation does not affect the required changes in practice.

### Financing

An HAO will require considerable and sustained financing in order to carry out its activities. Private Sector Ombudsman are generally financed by the sector themselves and these additional costs are passed onto their customers. This method of financing is clearly more problematic in the field of humanitarian assistance. Some government funding may be available, but relying upon this for the majority of funds could result in a loss of ownership and compromise independence of the Ombudsman. Ultimately, agencies must be prepared to pay membership fees, on a sliding scale, in order to sustain an independent Ombudsman for their sector.

### Next Steps: Where do we go from here?

A proposal for a pilot project is now being developed, in consultation with a wider range of humanitarian actors, including international organisations and beneficiary representatives. It is anticipated that the proposal will be presented to UK agencies early in 1999, with the hope of starting a pilot project by next summer.

## The New ICVA

In early 1997, the Executive Committee of the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) saw no other solution to the organisation's financial crisis than suggest to its membership to close ICVA down. But this proposal was opposed by a significant majority of the ICVA membership who asked for a "restructured" ICVA instead of a closure. Backing up this proposal, ICVA received substantial moral and financial support from individual member organisations, UN friends, governments and others. The Executive Committee accepted this change of approach and in January 1998 elected new leadership: Mr. Anders Ladekarl from the Danish Refugee Council as the new Chair of the Executive Committee and Mrs. Roswitha Dinger of the Lutheran World Federation as Treasurer. Following the elections, Mr. Ed Schenkenberg van

The pilot itself will involve two key elements:

- **Testing the Methodology of the Ombudsman**  
Only through first-hand interaction with both beneficiaries and agencies in the field can we see which methodologies will prove to be the most effective. Modest interventions will take place with the Ombudsman, agencies, host governments and beneficiaries.
- **Institutional Development**  
A strategy will be developed and implemented over the same period of time to determine how to establish legitimacy with stakeholders and seek to broaden participation in the Ombudsman scheme within the international arena. A governance framework will also be developed.

### Overcoming the challenges

In spite of the challenges, there has been an overwhelming amount of support for the Ombudsman concept. Agencies in the humanitarian community are well aware of the criticisms they have faced in recent years, regarding the lack of accountability and professionalism, and are anxious to respond to these in a proactive manner. By self-imposing an Ombudsman on the sector, they are not just acknowledging that problems do exist, but more importantly, are recognising that beneficiaries should have a direct say in helping to discover the appropriate solutions. ◆

For further information about the Ombudsman Project, contact Deborah Doane, Ombudsman Project, British Red Cross, 9 Grosvenor Crescent, London. SW1X 7EJ. Tel: (44) 171 201 5283; Fax: (44) 171 235 4397. Email: DDoane@redcross.org.uk

Mierop (formerly with MSF-Holland) was employed as the new Co-ordinator.

Over the last six months, the process of restructuring has taken off. The aim is to develop a new organisation that effectively can fulfil its potential role as a *representative and a facilitator for co-ordination and networking among humanitarian NGOs*. In particular, stronger links are being formed with organisations from developing countries. While not excluding sustainable development, the focus of ICVA shall be on humanitarian affairs in the broadest sense, including rehabilitation and reconstruction. ICVA will endeavour to play a strong advocacy role on humanitarian principles and issues on behalf of membership in fora such as the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee and UNHCR's Executive Committee. ICVA also intends to work closely together with other NGO networks such as the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response

(SCHR) and the European and American networks, VOICE and InterAction.

*ICVA is committed to serving its membership.* ICVA now have 84 members of which many are umbrella structures, such as the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), InterAction and CARE International. Fifty-two members are organisations based in the south. Only three members have left ICVA in the past difficult year, while five new organisations have joined. The Secretariat was recently moved to new premises and has at the same time been streamlined staff and size-wise. More use will be made of modern communication techniques such as e-mail so that there is an easier exchange of information and consultation process with the membership. ICVA

does not intend to start new field-based projects. Member organisations, however, will be asked to lead ICVA initiatives and form consortia such as the ICVA Consortia in former Yugoslavia and Guatemala.

It is clear that a lot of time and energy is needed before ICVA will be able to fully meet expectations, but members are encouraged to contact the Secretariat for an update and to discuss its new focus and structure.◆

For more information on ICVA, contact the secretariat at a new address: ICVA, 48, chemin du Grand-Montfleury, 1290 Versoix (near Geneva), Switzerland. Tel + 41 22 950 9600 Fax. +41 22 950 9609 and E-mail: [icvagva@mbox.unicc.org](mailto:icvagva@mbox.unicc.org)

## Benchmarks, Sticks or Carrots? Differing perceptions of the role of standards

In the closing days of Phase 1 of the Sphere Project, discussion and debate about the *practical* use of minimum standards in disaster response intensified at humanitarian agency headquarters. Why? With the imminent launch of Phase 2 of Sphere and circulation of a draft preliminary edition of “The Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Relief”, apprehension resurfaced in some quarters about the apparent rigidity of the standards. Was it really possible to set common benchmarks or yardsticks for disaster response? Are they applicable and relevant? How do you ensure compliance? Will initiatives such as the ombudsman approach suffice when agencies fall short of the stick? And what carrots are needed to get everybody on board?

In September, a group of French NGOs, including Action Contre la Faim, Médecins du Monde, Médecins sans Frontières, and group Urgence Réhabilitation Développement expressed concern to the Sphere Management Committee about “significant shortfalls” in the recommended list of standards, which cover water and sanitation, nutrition and food aid, shelter and site selection and health issues. Concerns raised related both to conceptual and technical issues. Many of the technical concerns, as well as concerns over operational practice, had already been taken into consideration in subsequent versions of the standards (the French NGOs were using an early draft version of the standards), so this was a sequential problem easily resolved.

More problematic have been the differing perceptions about the issues of principle which form the backbone

of the standards debate. Among the fears raised by the French NGOs were that the standards could essentially only be applicable in secure and “ideal camp situations” and had inadequately taken into account the diversity and changing nature of humanitarian situations; that there were inconsistencies between advocating for participatory approaches and prescriptive and imposed standards; and that NGOs from developing countries had been “excluded from the process”. An over-arching worry was that the standards were already considered as the “unique and universal reference” by some humanitarian actors and donors, and that a “bureaucratic, normative, standardisation process” might kill innovative initiatives by agencies faced with the reality of changing and complex situations.

Many of these concerns have in fact already been debated by the agencies who have worked on Sphere. Staff from some of the criticising agencies were themselves very involved in the work of establishing the Standards over the last two years, a process which has drawn on the broad range of experience of 641 named individuals (and countless un-named) from some 228 organisations, including NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, academic institutions, the UN and governmental agencies. Nonetheless, differing perceptions about the conceptual approach and value of this initiative to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system have persisted.

Acknowledging the concerns of the French NGOs, agencies supporting the Sphere project have reasserted their baseline position. With the ultimate objective of the Sphere project being to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance provided to people affected by disasters, and to improve the accountability of agencies to their beneficiaries, their membership and their donors, the standards are seen as an important tool in defending people’s rights, asserting humanitarian agencies right of access to disaster victims and lobbying government to fulfil their obligations under existing international

law, conventions and practice. Furthermore, they maintain that in order to develop a framework for minimum standards, certain assumptions about situational settings including resource availability, security conditions, etc. had to be made. It has also been reaffirmed that agencies should not be threatened by the standards as there will still be room for innovative and flexible approaches.

With regard to next steps and process – the issue that seems to have been most problematic in the past and be most relevant for the future, there are plans to enter a wider process of dissemination and institutionalisation of the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Phase II of the Sphere project. It has been recognised that the French agencies’ concerns, and dialogue with them and other partners, both in the north and south, must inform the work of the next phase. The Sphere Management Committee will also invite the signatories of the French letter to a meeting to share views on the next stages of the development of the standards. The

preliminary edition of the Sphere Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Relief will be subjected to a trial period in a wide variety of humanitarian emergency response settings prior to publication at the end of 1999. Participating NGO networks are therefore being encouraged to seek their members’ commitment to take part in this “pilot phase”.

Getting thus far in the search for commonality of approach has not been an easy task. And the next stage of testing the **relevance** and **applicability** of the standards will also pose fundamental challenges. But the very fact that a lively debate continues, reflects the real effort being made to bridge cultural and philosophical differences, as well as developing meaningful accountability mechanisms.◆

Nan Buzard has replaced Susan Purdin as the new Sphere Project Manager. E-mail: [buzard@ifrc.org](mailto:buzard@ifrc.org). Further information can be found on the website at: [www.ifrc.org/projects/sphere.html](http://www.ifrc.org/projects/sphere.html)

## WANEP

### The West African Network for Peace-building

In September this year, several peacebuilding, human rights and other civic organisations from Liberia, Sierra Leone, Benin, Togo, Cameroun, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and the USA gathered in Accra, Ghana, to give birth to the West African Network for Peace-building (WANEP). A strategic planning and endorsement meeting followed a twelve-month intensive exploratory exercise carried out in 8 countries of the sub-region, and consultation with prominent persons from 3 others.

The exploratory team reported the following as challenges to peacebuilding in West-Africa:

- A proliferation of human rights, conflict resolution/transformation, inter-confessional, trauma healing and reconciliation groups in all countries visited. This is partly due to the increase of violent conflicts in those countries, and partly a consequence of the flow of donor funds for peace-related activities in the world. While this increase of peace-related organisations is laudable, the lack of trained practitioners in these organisations poses a grave danger to peace-building in the sub-region.
- Chasing donor funds has become a source of competition and conflict among many local NGOs in West African countries.
- There is little or a lack of communication between

the peace-building organisations and practitioners in many West African states.

- Traditional peace-building values and practices in West Africa are gravely overlooked by international and local peace-building practitioners. As a result, peace-building is viewed by many as imperial or colonial brain-washing in West Africa. This has led to apprehension and scepticism in traditional and some scholarly communities in the sub-region.

As a result, WANEP was established as an enabling and facilitating mechanism for cooperation among peacebuilding practitioners. It will embark on a training campaign to increase the capabilities of practitioners already in the field; provide a space where practitioners will meet and establish personal and functional relationships; develop and suggest a framework for the support of peace-building organisations in West Africa and promote the traditional values and practices of peace-building in West Africa through research and publication.

This initiative brings to fruition a dream of young African scholars from three universities in the USA (Eastern Mennonite, George Mason, Duquense) who met at a conference in 1997 in Virginia (USA) to discuss the plight of their continent. The Nairobi Peace Initiative based in Kenya, and the Institute for Peace-building of the Eastern Mennonite University in Virginia provided practical and moral support for the exploratory phase, while the Winston Foundation for World Peace in Washington DC made WANEP financially possible.◆

For further information, contact Sam Doe by email: [gbyaydee@liberia.net](mailto:gbyaydee@liberia.net) or [gbyaydee@africaonline.com.gh](mailto:gbyaydee@africaonline.com.gh)

# Regional focus...

## BURMA

Ten years after the bloody military coup of 1988, the State Peace and Development Council, formerly the State Law and Order Restoration Council, continues to block democratic reform as Burma slips into crisis.

Once one of Asia's healthiest economies, Burma has now been reduced to Least Developed Country Status. With only 47 million people and no external enemies, Burma has one of the largest armies in Asia. Half the state budget is spent on the military, whose numbers have increased from 180,000 in 1988 to 400,000 today. The economy is characterised by soaring inflation, rice shortages, rampant corruption, plummeting foreign exchange reserves and a crippling external debt burden. The World Bank has recently cut financial ties because the regime has defaulted on loan repayments. Public services are collapsing. The Asian economic crisis has further shaken Burma's fragile economy, with many foreign investment projects cancelled or put on hold and some foreign companies withdrawing from the country altogether.

Human rights abuses such as arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, death in custody and forced relocation are rampant. The findings of an Inquiry in August 1998 by the International Labour Organisation accuse Burma's ruling military of 'crime against humanity' for its 'widespread and systematic' use of forced labour.

Moreover, Burma has a democratically elected government that has never been permitted to govern. The National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi won 82% of the seats in the 1990 elections. Thereupon the junta changed the rules and declared the election was not for a parliament but for a constituent assembly to draft a new national constitution. The military controlled National Convention (NC)

produced a draft that has so far enshrined military dominance of any future government and marginalised Burma's ethnic minorities. In 1995 the NLD withdrew from the NC in protest.

In May 1998, to mark the anniversary of the 1990 elections, the NLD issued an ultimatum that Parliament be convened by August. In response, the regime restricted Members of Parliaments (MP) to their home towns and arrested those that failed to comply. On 16 September, with over 200 NLD MPs and 971 party members detained, the NLD and elected representatives of four ethnic nationality parties formed the 'Committee Representing the People's Parliament' (CRPP). Burma's military junta has threatened to dissolve the NLD and to arrest its leaders.

The junta's relations with the country's diverse ethnic nationalities are no more harmonious. The seven major ethnic regions, Arakan, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Karenni, Karen and Mon, together make up as much as 75% of the country's land mass and are home to about one third of the population. Rebellions have flared and simmered in Burma's borderlands for nearly five decades. The principal demands of Burma's ethnic nationalities are genuine autonomy for their home areas and a significant voice in the

affairs of the country. Since 1988 the regime has negotiated uneasy cease-fires (with no political settlement) with most armed groups and waged fierce assaults on others. There are now hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people. The forced relocation of many ethnic minority villages for purposes of 'internal security' has also fueled the exodus of tens of thousands of refugees to Thailand, Bangladesh, India and China.

Aid however remains a contentious issue. It is extremely difficult for NGOs to work without the permission and without the interference of the authorities. Despite



Burma's growing humanitarian crisis, Aung San Suu Kyi has clearly expressed the opinion that NGOs should concentrate at this stage on assisting the Burmese refugees along the country's borders.

Since 1988 the international community's approach to Burma has been schizophrenic: western countries have made limited attempts to isolate the regime – politically rather than economically – while Asian governments have made significant attempts to engage the regime – economically rather than politically. As a result, the regime has felt relatively little pressure.

At present, the United States is the only country which has imposed economic sanctions with a ban on all new US investment. There are also 21 cities, states and counties in the US with selective legislation making it difficult for American companies working in Burma to gain contracts with local government institutions.

The European Union (EU) has imposed a visa ban for members of the regime, an arms embargo, a ban on non-humanitarian aid and has withdrawn trade preferences from Burma due to the regime's use of forced labour. There are however no European economic sanctions on Burma. In fact the EU is currently taking action at the World Trade Organisation to dismantle sanctions put in place by the US state of Massachusetts.

The NLD has repeatedly called on the international community to impose economic sanctions on Burma. The economy is the Achilles heel of the regime. A dual approach combining economic isolation with an invigorated diplomatic initiative by the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), China, Japan, and the United Nations can 'encourage' the regime into a more conciliatory approach. The initiative should have a single goal – a transitional programme from dictatorship to democracy. ♦

## BURUNDI

### A delicate balance

The calm of Bujumbura is deceptive. UNICEF, HCR, WFP and other UN agencies are highly visible around the town. ICRC has reopened its office two years after the killing of four delegates in Cibitoke. More than forty foreign NGOs work in fifteen provinces, none more than a day's drive from the capital. The town is clean and in good repair, with good restaurants, shops and telecommunications. There is a superficial prosperity, ascribed by sceptics to the profits afforded by sanctions breaking. But it is a dangerous place: in July a WFP official was murdered in his driveway. Earlier this year an expatriate NGO official was murdered in unexplained circumstances. In the interior, no one knows how many have been murdered. Yet another disturbing incident occurred at the end of October with 34 unarmed civilians killed in Nyamaboko, a rural province near Bujumbura. Local staff of NGOs have been killed and injured. The people are in rags, caught between the government army and sundry rebel groups; 9% of the population is displaced; 345,000 receive food aid. According to UNICEF, the numbers of people in

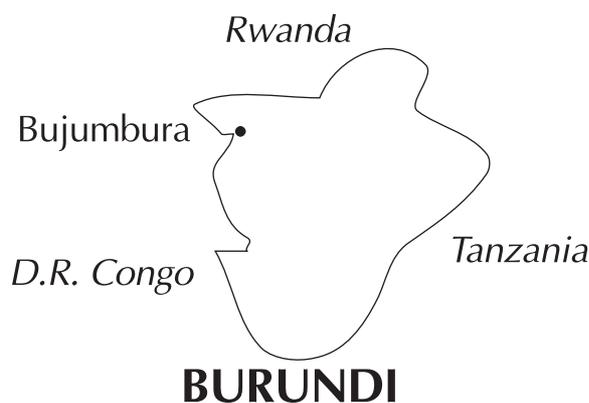
supplementary feeding programmes rose in a year from 5,200 to 38,000. One million Burundi live outside their homes, 600,000 of them internally displaced and the rest mostly as refugees in Tanzania. At any one time, one third of the country is inaccessible because of insecurity. More access would reveal more need, but access is not constant.

There are only two developments which might be termed an improvement so far this year. Firstly, international pressure on the government over its controversial "Regroupment" policy has probably modified it. More

than 250,000 people went home from camps last year in Kayanza, Muramvya and Karuzi. In these areas it has been claimed that regroupement did stabilise the provinces and improve living conditions, because those affected received health and nutritional assistance from WFP and NGOs, had more secure access to their fields, and also received resettlement packages before

going home. Elsewhere, the situation is less clear cut and it will be some time before the effects of grouping people into more and smaller camps near their homes are assessed.

Secondly, the government's internal and external peace process has made a little progress. How much this is due to the economic embargo is unclear. Those who support the "negotiated transitional government" say that



Pierre Buyoya has met all the conditions set by his neighbours to have sanctions lifted. Those who oppose the government say that the embargo must remain, in order to keep him under pressure. Most groups were represented amongst the seventeen parties at the Arusha talks, although the armed wing of CNDD, the FDD, claims that Leonard Nyangoma should not speak for it. The FDD launched a series of attacks in the south of the country, probably to highlight their exclusion from Arusha.

The parties had a number of procedural disagreements but the October round of Arusha talks were called off after a couple of days due to a cited lack of funds. Despite the willingness of the parties to reconvene early in 1999, the process is tenuous. The failure to lift the embargo endangers Buyoya on two fronts: his military backers might feel his reforms have delivered nothing and be tempted to overthrow him, whilst FRODEBU, the majority party, might feel that talks have gained them nothing either and armed struggle would be a better option. If either of these reactions occurred, massive bloodshed would be probable.

Whatever the effects of sanctions on politics, the cost of living has doubled in two years, by some measures, and the government says that GNP has declined by 7% because of the economic embargo. There is no bilateral aid to the country, although at least three EU member states are contemplating resumption of their programmes. The main donors at present are the EU and the USA. The USA would like to see greater economic liberalisation and structural adjustment before resumption of bilateral aid. Neither is possible without a

continuing peace process.

Burundi today is a good example of the complex of problems faced by weak states in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War:

- A long-standing dictator falls and an attempt is made at democracy;
- An elected government proves unable to cope with the problems and/or is removed by the military; civil conflict starts;
- Dormant differences are exploited to give an ethnic dimension to civil strife; refugees and internally displaced gather in camps;
- The country's economy and resources do not place it high on any list of western priorities;
- Vaccination coverage declines, primary school enrolment goes down, health services suffer, food security is reduced and malnutrition rises;
- Western nations do not have a coherent policy but fund humanitarian aid;
- The neighbouring states are involved in the conflict and appear to take sides for ethnic, religious or other reasons; they also host refugees;
- Failure to resolve the political crisis leads to a proliferation of armed factions, which prey on civilians and aggravate the situation;
- The state becomes increasingly hard to govern and the prolonged crisis of legitimacy reduces the middle ground when peace talks are convened.◆

## GUATEMALA

The signing of Peace Accords between the Government of Guatemala and the URNG (The National Revolutionary Unity of Guatemala) on 29 December 1996 put a formal end to more than 35 years of internal armed conflict. But the promised benefits of peace have been slow in coming and the peace process is in deep crisis; implementation of the Accords is severely behind schedule and major power sectors oppose implementation of key elements of the Accords. Furthermore, the international community is threatening to significantly reduce its contributions to the \$1.9 billion commitment originally approved by the Consultative Group of the International Monetary Fund if there is not considerable progress on the key elements of implementation within the next months. The implementation of the Accords, which contain nine

agreements on substantive issues such as treatment of uprooted peoples, a Truth Commission, the rights and identity of indigenous peoples, social-economic and agrarian policy, strengthening civilian power and the role of the military in a democratic society, constitutional reform and the reincorporation of the URNG guerrillas, has been at a virtual standstill for the better part of 1998.

The government attributes this to the complexity of implementing more than 400 commitments contained in the Accords and to the opposition of certain political power centers. But, progressive popular and political groups say that the conservative government of President Alvaro Arzú lacks political will when facing confrontation with conservative economic sectors and the military. The public lacks knowledge about and enthusiasm for the Accords as no immediate benefits have materialized to alleviate constant major concerns – citizen insecurity and poverty.

In addition, the peace process suffered a major set-back when Catholic Bishop Juan Gerardi, the leader of a church project which collected, catalogued and analysed testimony and information on the 35 years of violence, was assassinated just two days after the project made public its report “*Recuperation of the Historic Memory*” – REMHI. Despite efforts by the government to portray the assassination as a common crime, the prevailing assumption in the country is that it is a political crime committed by former and present members of the military – those most implicated as the violators of human rights in the REMHI report. The assassination and the inability of the state to mount a credible investigation of the crime reinforces the culture of impunity that protects human rights violators and the belief of the people that military repression has not ended. It rekindles the fear of the war years, making national reconciliation a seemingly unreachable goal.

While almost everyone agrees that the Accords have brought a new political opening in the country, the URNG, significant sectors of civil society, the international community and other analysts have indicated that there are **five key areas** of concern in the agreements that require immediate and dramatic action in order for the peace process to have a future. With national elections planned for the latter part of 1999 and the electoral process already politicising all issues, the time for action is reduced to the last three months of 1998.

The international community of donors is most concerned that the government meet its commitment to **increase taxes**. The peace agreements indicate that by the year 2000 the state should be able to collect 12% of the Gross National Product in order to sustain the economic goals related to national investment in education, health, housing and rural development and to pay the debt that will be incurred to implement the Peace Accords. The increase is to come through direct taxation in which those who have more, give more. Nevertheless, the first progressive tax measure suggested by the government and approved

by the legislature was quickly rescinded when the conservative economic interests objected, and the government, fearful of losing the support of this group to the rival conservative party led by ex-General Rios Mont, withdrew its support for the measure. Now, the government is stating that the 12% goal needs to be rescheduled for the year 2002.



Another key element to the implementation of the Accords is **constitutional reform** which would provide the legal and constitutional basis for civilian control of the military, redefine their role in society, reform the corrupt and inefficient justice system, recognise the rights and identity of indigenous peoples and reform electoral law. The original goal was to have such reforms approved by the Congress early in 1998 in order to present them to

the people for approval in a popular referendum before the end of this year. International donors have indicated that approval of such reforms is an absolute necessity for continued aid. Nevertheless, the constitutional reforms are only now being considered by the Congress and the popular referendum cannot be held before early next year, by which time election campaigns could possibly affect the outcome.

Progress in three other key areas of concern for a successful peace implementation – reform of the **justice system, land reform** and important questions related to **human rights**, has been slow or non-existent. If these commitments are not implemented more effectively and quickly, then the Accords will fail in

helping the nation overcome some of the principal causes of the recent armed conflict. Thus, by the second anniversary of the signing of the Peace Accords, it remains to be seen if the Accords will provide the possibility of a path toward economic development for the poor and social justice for all, or, whether there is only a continuation of economic and social repression under the facade of a formal, but meaningless, democracy. ◆

***The promised benefits of peace have been slow in coming and the peace process is in deep crisis.***

## RRN Network Papers...

...are contributions on specific experiences or issues prepared either by RRN Members or contributing specialists.

- 1994
- 1 *MSF-CIS (Celula Inter-Secções), Mozambique: A Data Collecting System Focused on Food Security and Population Movements* by T. Dusauchoit
  - 2 *Responding to the 1991/92 Drought in Zambia: The Programme to Prevent Malnutrition (PPM)* by D. Mukupo
  - 3 *An Account of Relief Operations in Bosnia* by M. Duffield
  - 4 *Bad Borders Make Bad Neighbours - The Political Economy of Relief and Rehabilitation in the Somali Region 5, Eastern Ethiopia* by K. Van Brabant
  - 5 *Advancing Preventive Diplomacy in a Post-Cold War Era: Suggested Roles for Governments and NGOs* by K. Rupesinghe
  - 6 *The Rwandan Refugee Crisis in Tanzania: initial successes and failures in food assistance* by S. Jaspars
  - 7 *Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*
- 1995
- 8 *Targeting the Poor in Northern Iraq: The Role of Formal and Informal Research Methods in Relief Operations* by P. Ward and M. Rimmer
  - 9 *Development in Conflict: the Experience of ACORD in Uganda, Sudan, Mali and Angola* by ACORD
  - 10 *Room for Improvement: the Management and Support of Relief Workers* by R. Macnair
  - 11 *Cash-for-Work and Food Insecurity in Koisha, Southern Ethiopia* by P. Jenden
  - 12 *Dilemmas of 'Post'-Conflict Transition: Lessons from the Health Sector* by J. Macrae
- 1996
- 13 *Getting On-Line in Emergencies: A Guide and Directory to the Internet for Agencies involved in Relief and Rehabilitation* by L. Aris, P. Gee and M. Perkins
- 1997
- 14 *The Impact of War and Atrocity on Civilian Populations: Basic Principles for NGO Interventions and a Critique of Psychosocial Trauma Projects* by D. Summerfield
  - 15 *Cost-effectiveness Analysis: A Useful Tool for the Assessment and Evaluation of Relief Operations?* by A. Hallam
  - 16 *The Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda: Study III Main Findings and Recommendations*
  - 17 *Monetisation: Linkages to Food Security?* by J. Cekan, A. MacNeil and S. Loegering
  - 18 *Beyond Working in Conflict: Understanding Conflict and Building Peace (The CODEP Workshop Report)*, by J. Bennett and M. Kayitesi Blewitt
- 1997
- 19 *Human Rights and International Legal Standards: what relief workers need to know* by J. Darcy
  - 20 *People in Aid Code of Best Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel*
  - 21 *Humanitarian Principles: The Southern Sudan Experience* by I. Levine
  - 22 *The War Economy in Liberia: A Political Analysis* by P. Atkinson
  - 23 *The Coordination of Humanitarian Action: the case of Sri Lanka* by K. Van Brabant
- 1998
- 24 *Reproductive Health for Displaced Populations in Emergencies* by C. Palmer
  - 25 *Humanitarian Action in Protracted Crises: the new relief 'agenda' and its limits* by D. Hendrickson
  - 26 *The Food Economy Approach: a framework for understanding rural livelihoods* by T. Boudreau
  - 27 *Between Relief and Development: targeting food aid for disaster prevention in Ethiopia* by K. Sharp
  - 28 *The Illegal Proliferation Misuse: a development or arms control issue?* by C. Smith

## RRN Good Practice Reviews...

...are commissioned 'state of the art' reviews, on different sectors or activities within the relief and rehabilitation field. Prepared by recognised specialists, and subject to peer review, they are produced in a format that is readily accessible to field-based personnel.

- 1994
- 1 *Water and Sanitation in Emergencies* by A. Chalinder
  - 2 *Emergency Supplementary Feeding Programmes* by J. Shoham
- 1996
- 3 *General Food Distribution in Emergencies: from Nutritional Needs to Political Priorities* by S. Jaspars and H. Young
  - 4 *Seed Provision During and After Emergencies* by the ODI Seeds and Biodiversity Programme
- 1997
- 5 *Counting and Identification of Beneficiary Populations in Emergency Operations: Registration and its Alternatives* by J. Telford
- 1998
- 6 *Temporary Human Settlement Planning for Displaced Populations in Emergencies* by A. Chalinder
  - 7 *The Evaluation of Humanitarian Assistance Programmes in Complex Emergencies* by A. Hallam

## RRN Newsletters...

...provide a forum for brief analysis and update on current developments in the field, key policy issues etc. Hard copies of the Newsletter are available free and can also be downloaded from the RRN web site.

**To obtain any of the above, please complete the form overleaf and return it to:**  
RRN – Publications, Relief and Rehabilitation Network, Overseas Development Institute,  
Portland House, Stag Place, London SW1E 5DP, UK.  
Tel: +44 (0)171 393 1631 Fax: +44 (0)171 393 1699 E-mail: [rrn@odi.org.uk](mailto:rrn@odi.org.uk)

# ORDER **RRN** publications

PLEASE ENTER THE NUMBER OF COPIES YOU WISH TO ORDER:

Network Papers (£5 each excluding postage – £3.50 to members or for orders of 10 or more)

<input type="checkbox"/> NP 1	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 5	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 9	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 13	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 17	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 21	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 25
<input type="checkbox"/> NP 2	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 6	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 10	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 14	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 18	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 22	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 26
<input type="checkbox"/> NP 3	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 7	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 11	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 15	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 19	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 23	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 27
<input type="checkbox"/> NP 4	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 8	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 12	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 16	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 20	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 24	<input type="checkbox"/> NP 28

Good Practice Reviews (£10 each excluding postage – £7.50 to members or for orders of 10 or more)

<input type="checkbox"/> GPR 1	<input type="checkbox"/> GPR 2	<input type="checkbox"/> GPR 3	<input type="checkbox"/> GPR 4	<input type="checkbox"/> GPR 5	<input type="checkbox"/> GPR 6	<input type="checkbox"/> GPR 7
--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------------------------

Postage and packing: 20% of order value for UK and EU;  
25% for all overseas orders; 35% for Far East and Australasia.

**TOTAL VALUE OF ORDER** £

**DELIVERY ADDRESS**

Title (Dr/Mr/Ms etc) ..... Forename ..... Surname .....

Delivery address .....

..... Postcode ..... Country .....

tel ..... fax ..... e-mail .....  
*please include country codes*

publication orders

**HOW TO PAY**

- I enclose **cash/postal order**
- I enclose a **cheque** made payable to the **Overseas Development Institute**
- I enclose **credit card details** (Mastercard/Visa/Access)

please debit my mastercard / visa / access card no. ....

expiry date of card ..... signature .....

credit card billing address .....

- I request an **invoice** to be sent to me

invoice address .....

..... purchase order ref .....

# FORM registration **RRN**

PLEASE COMPLETE **BOTH** PAGES

Title (Dr/Mr/Ms etc.) ..... Forenames ..... Surname .....

Present post .....

Organisation .....

In which country are you *physically* located? .....

Nationality ..... *Please note that we request details of nationality and location only to monitor our circulation.*

Approximate no. of people working in your organisation (country office): .....

Mailing Address ..... telephone .....  
*please include country code*

..... fax .....  
*please include country code*

..... e-mail .....

Postcode ..... Country ..... website .....

Annual subscription to the RRN entitles members to three Newsletters, 4-6 Network Papers and two Good Practice Reviews per year. Back issues are available to members at a reduced rate.

In which language would you prefer to receive RRN publications?  French  English

I would like to **become a full member at a cost of £25.00 per year\***

*\*please see over for details on how to pay*

I would like to be considered for **full membership free of charge** and enclose evidence of the following:

- an active involvement in humanitarian assistance operations
- ongoing activities in countries/regions experiencing complex political emergencies

A limited number of free memberships are available annually with a maximum of 3 per office per country.

I would like to receive **a free annual subscription to the Newsletter** only

I have access to the World Wide Web and would like to **receive RRN publications via e-mail** free of charge.

**Please indicate the type of organisation for which you work** (*please tick only one*)

- 'Northern' NGO - Operational
- 'Northern' NGO - Funding agency
- 'Southern' NGO
- National agency/Government department
- Bilateral donor organisation
- UN Agency (eg. OCHA, WFP, UNHCR)
- Red Cross Movement
- Independent Consultancy
- University/research institution
- Library/documentation centre/publisher

*please answer further questions overleaf...*

***I have completed the registration form (and enclose the appropriate remittance\*)***

signed .....

date .....

**Visit our web-site and register on-line at:  
[www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html)**

For our own evaluation purposes, please complete the following sections:

**Current sector of work**

- Medicine/health
- Water/sanitation
- Anthropology/sociology
- Logistics/transport/food aid
- Nutrition
- Economics
- Agriculture
- Human rights
- Civil engineering/architecture
- Natural/environmental sciences
- Education
- Other - please specify

**Current country/region of work**

- Western Europe
- Eastern/Central Europe
- CIS
- Central Africa
- East Africa
- West Africa
- Southern Africa
- North Africa
- Middle East
- North America
- Central & South America
- Far East
- South East Asia
- Central Asia
- Australia & Pacific
- Other - please specify

Please name up to 6 countries of which you have particular experience/knowledge:

**How did you hear about the RRN?**

- At a conference
- RRN Newsletter
- Via a colleague
- RRN personnel
- Personal invitation
- Other - please specify

*Note that the details given on this form are stored electronically on the RRN database.*

*If you **do not** wish your name and organisation to appear on the RRN World Wide Web site, please tick box*

annual subscription fees  
**HOW TO PAY**

- I enclose £25.00/£55.00\* **cash/postal order**
- I enclose a **cheque** for £25.00/55.00\* made payable to the **Overseas Development Institute**
- I enclose **credit card details** (Mastercard/Visa/Access)  
Please debit my mastercard / visa / access card no:  
.....  
Expiry date of card ..... signature.....  
credit card billing address.....  
.....  
.....
- Please send me an **invoice** for £25.00/£55.00\*  
Invoice address .....  
..... purchase order ref.....

**Please return form to:**  
RRN Subscriptions  
Relief and Rehabilitation Network,  
Overseas Development Institute,  
Portland House, Stag Place  
London SW1E 5DP, UK  
Tel: +44 171 393 1631  
Fax: +44 171 393 1699  
E-mail: rrn@odi.org.uk

**Disasters** Full members of the RRN are entitled to a 15% reduction on the annual subscription to Disasters. Joint annual subscription costs £55.00.

I would like to **subscribe to both the RRN and Disasters** at a total cost of £55.00.\*

[www.blackwellpublishers.co.uk](http://www.blackwellpublishers.co.uk)

# GUINEA BISSAU

## Developing a Common Humanitarian Action Plan

### The context

**G**uinea Bissau, a former Portuguese colony, became independent in 1973, and went through political and economic transformation. It has had a multiparty system since 1996. The last legislative and presidential elections were held in 1994, with the first municipal elections held in 1997. With its estimated 1.1 million people, a population growth of 2.1% and a GNP of US\$220/habitant, the country is characterised by an illiteracy rate of 68%, infant mortality (below 5) rate of 240/1,000 and a life expectancy of 43.5 years.

The country is also faced with rapid urbanisation, limited access to water/sanitation and inadequate housing. Nevertheless, the country has the agricultural potential to provide sufficient food to its inhabitants. However, food production is below the national requirement as a result of climatic hazards. Greatest priority is given to its cash crop, above all cashew nuts which is usually bartered for rice, the country's staple food.

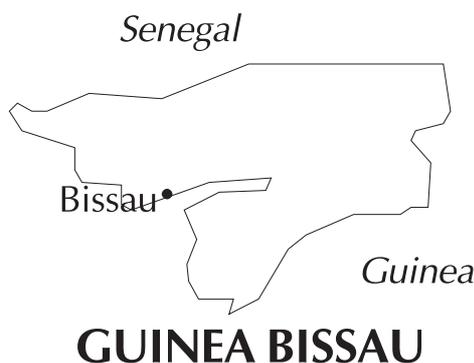
### Military Rebellion

Conflict erupted between Government troops and part of the army on 7 June 1998 following the replacement of General Ansumane Mane with a new army chief. Fighting between Government troops loyal to President Joao Bernardo Vieira and soldiers under Mane occurred in two phases, in early June and in October. The immediate result was the displacement of an estimated 350,000 people (representing one third of the entire population of the country) from Bissau city to the surrounding countryside or to Senegal, Gambia, Cape Verde and Guinea Conakry as refugees (about 5,000). After a truce agreed upon by both parties on 26 June, a period of relative calm followed and an estimated 200,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) returned to Bissau. But with the resumption of hostilities between 9 and 18 October, most of the IDPs who had returned to Bissau left the city again. Of those new IDPs, between 70,000 and 80,000 went to Prabis and Cumura and are now living in even more extreme conditions than they were during the 26 June – 8 October period in Bissau.

### Implications of a peace agreement

On 21 October, President Joao Bernardo Vieira declared a unilateral cease-fire and agreed to meet with Brigadier Ansumane Mane to discuss a peace agreement. This was signed on 1 November 1998. With the cautious assumption that the conflict is over, it is now appropriate to reflect on a number of factors influencing humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance activities. Some positive factors which may contribute to a humanitarian assistance programme oriented towards rehabilitation and development are:

- Very few of the estimated 350,000 lived in temporary shelters, camps or special sites created for IDPs. The vast majority of them lived with family members, friends or were hosted by strangers in small towns and rural areas, with hosting families showing a significant sense of solidarity. IDPs have in turn contributed to their host households by participating in the sowing season in July and August which has resulted in an increased number of hectares cultivated compared with the previous three years.



- FAO specialists have recently indicated that the 1998 harvest will be good due to favourable climate conditions.
- During the hostilities, many civil servants employed in productive or social sectors remained in the country and active at their posts either in Government or in military junta controlled areas even though salaries were suspended. Understandably, time was spent on food production or other productive activities rather than “at work”.
- Even though delays in granting authorisation to deliver humanitarian assistance were experienced in-country and between Guinea Bissau and neighbouring countries, both sides manifested reasonable respect for civilians and humanitarian workers, avoiding using them as targets in the crisis.

Negative factors which may delay or make harder the process of rehabilitation include the following:

- The country is one of the poorest in the world ranking 163<sup>rd</sup> with low social indicators in all categories. The main productive activities are mostly agricultural; tourism will not resume significantly before a peace settlement is well on its way.
- The rural population's reserves have been depleted and coping mechanisms significantly weakened.

- Trade and commerce, already limited, for both cash crops (mainly cashew nuts) and family level agricultural production (cereals, vegetable, fruits and fishery) has been adversely affected. For example, family level trading with Senegal whose problems with the Casamance are likely to impinge on its relations with Guinea Bissau.
- Human rights abuses involving soldiers and civilians (mainly political figures) may foster a negative political climate.
- Tense relations between Guinea Bissau and its neighbours may result in the continuation of a “*de facto*” embargo of certain key products needed for humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation programmes.

### Developing a common humanitarian action plan

General **principles and criteria** that should apply in the humanitarian-rehabilitation assistance programmes are being discussed in the inter-agency context with a view to developing a Common Humanitarian Action Plan and a Consolidated Appeal. Consideration is being focused on:

- the choice of humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes that are mutually supportive.
- a timely response in both programmes categories.
- a good synergy between different funding sources.
- the reactivation of certain rehabilitation-development programmes, for example those suspended during the crisis and for which financing already exists.
- determining criteria to deal with categories and feasibility of rehabilitation projects.

This framework still leaves room for a number of humanitarian programmes that are supportive of sustainable rehabilitation and development projects and vice versa. For example, a seeds for recovery programme may be a relevant option as it could address significant humanitarian and development needs and contribute to the improvement of the seed bank in the country. Additionally, in the health sector, changing the supply of medical drugs, vaccines and supplies from the emergency type kits to the provision of supplies required to re-establish regular stocks is being discussed. Thirdly, a well-focused water-supply programme, along with basic community training to maintain and repair pumps and wells, could immediately reduce the potential of water-related diseases breaking out among IDPs and the local population, as well as have significant impact beyond the relief phase.

These are but a few categories and examples of humanitarian and rehabilitation programmes that are being considered and which intend to be reflected in the Common Humanitarian Action Plan currently under preparation for Guinea Bissau.◆

### CETI becomes more HATI

Inter-agency discussions have been ongoing over the summer and still continue about the funding base and future of the Crisis Environment Training Initiative (CETI). Originally designed *inter alia* to focus on developing inter-agency training modules and to promote inter-agency discussion at informal meetings on common training issues, CETI, formerly associated with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the UN Staff College, has been disbanded after agreement at the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Working Group (IASC-WG).

Of CETI's many components, the one which has received the most tangible support has been the website containing an inventory of currently available training materials and activities on humanitarian assistance. The value of the Humanitarian Assistance Training Inventory – better known as HATI – has been confirmed by a recent Reliefweb users' survey and a poll of members of the Emergency Personnel Seminar (EPS) Training Working Group established late last year.

HATI's home at Reliefweb ([www.reliefweb.int/research/training](http://www.reliefweb.int/research/training)) is secure so far as technical support and hosting – but the challenge now is to find funding to pay for a person working part-time to ensure its continuing maintenance and development. Funding is therefore being sought to secure its future.

As for CETI's other components, priority has been given to the future of the training modules and to the finalisation of a module on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). The IASC-WG set up an inter-agency task force on training issues, with representatives of the NGO networks as well as the main UN agencies, the first meeting of which has been convened by UNHCR.

Agencies should continue to send information on training courses etc. to [HATI@dha.unicc.org](mailto:HATI@dha.unicc.org)

### HATI – a valued common resource

#### Contributors to this 'Regional Focus' section:

**Burma:** Yvette Mahon, Burma Action Group UK, with input from Stephen Lanjouw

**Burundi:** Philip Winter, Independent Consultant

**Guatemala:** Daniel Long, World Council of Churches

**Guinea Bissau:** Yvon Madore, OCHA–Dakar

*Please note that the views represented reflect only those of the author, and not necessarily those of their organisation or any organisations mentioned.*

# Training courses

**Working with conflict**, 26 April - 2 July 1999, Birmingham, UK

A highly practical, experience-based course for people working in areas of instability and conflict. Especially suitable for NGO staff, aid workers, those concerned with rights, relief, reconstruction and developments. Includes conflict analysis, group dynamics, negotiation, mediation, trauma, confidence-building, conflict prevention and much else.

Places are limited and some scholarships are available. Applications are now being accepted for courses based in the UK. This is a ten week course, although, modules can be taken individually if required.

**Strengthening policy and practice in areas of conflict**, 12th-16th July 1999, Birmingham, UK

Primarily for staff of agencies concerned with relief, development, rights and peace-building programmes.

The workshop will provide practical models and methods to assist aid agency staff to analyse conflicts, and to integrate effective conflict-handling strategies into their programmes. Sessions will include:

- Analysing Conflict
- Evaluating Conflict Impact
- Conflict Prevention and Peace-building
- Training for Conflict Resolution and Peace-building

Contact: Responding to Conflict, Selly Oak Colleges – RRN, 1046 Bristol Rd, Birmingham B29 6LJ, UK. Tel: +44 (0)121 415 5641 Fax: +44 (0)121 415 4119 Email: enquiries@respond.org and website: www.respond.org/

**APOLOGIES to contributors to Newsletter 11 Regional Focus** where the contributor's section was omitted – full credit is given here:

**DR Congo:** Phillip Winter, RRN Regional Representative

**Western Sahara:** John and Tom Corsellis, Independent

**Afghanistan:** Refugee Council

**Sierra Leone:** Philippa Atkinson, RRN Regional Representative

*Please note that the views represented reflect only those of the author, and not necessarily those of their organisation or any organisations mentioned.*

**The International Diploma in Humanitarian Assistance**, February 1999, Geneva, Switzerland

Following the success of the Dublin and New York courses in 1997 and 1998, the third IDHA course will be held at the Centre de Conference, Chateau de Bossey, Geneva during February 1999.

This course is designed for professional aid workers of all disciplines to increase their knowledge and to strengthen their analytical skills in current critical issues in humanitarian crisis management.

The course awards successful students a diploma accredited by Hunter College of the City University of New York and The Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

Contact: The Course Administrator, Catherine Blum IFRC, Geneva, Switzerland. Tel: +41 22 730 4975, Fax +41 22 733 0395 or email: eblum@ifrc.org

**College for International Cooperation and Development**, Hull, UK

General background courses are offered to those who have no experience, but who are keen to serve in the field. Currently, the courses focus on Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, Angola and India. Courses are held throughout the year.

For further details regarding course content and fees contact: CICD, Winestead Hall, Nr. Hull, HU12 0NP, UK. Tel: +44 (0)1964 631826, Fax +44 (0)7970 847509 or email: cicd@winestead.karoo.co.uk

**RedR Provisional Training Programme 1999**, London, UK and Canberra, Australia

RedR courses provide a unique opportunity to develop skills appropriate to disaster relief. The one-week course, Refugees, Agencies and Relief Workers, should be regarded as an essential prerequisite for all relief workers, especially those without disaster relief experience.

The 1999 Provisional Training Programme will shortly be available: for more information contact Caroline Mitchell, RedR, 1 Gt. George Street, London, SW1P 3AA. Fax +44(0)171 222 0564

# Conferences

## Dispatches from Disaster Zones: The reporting of Humanitarian Emergencies

27 May 1998, London, UK.

Organised by 10 UK relief agencies and ECHO, this conference critically examined the reporting of humanitarian emergencies by both international humanitarian agencies and international broadcast news media. Key questions were asked: How good was the source information, where did it come from and by whom was it being manipulated? What quality of analysis was being offered to the audience, how much was it shaped by 'stereotypical' understanding and portrayal?

The 1994 genocide in Rwanda and the flight and plight of the Rwandan refugees from camps in east Zaire westwards into the Zairean forest made up the case studies examined in the two background research studies. The Glasgow Media Unit did a content study of British media coverage of these events. Nick Gowing's 'New Challenges and Problems for Information Management in Complex Emergencies' should be obligatory reading for any aid worker. Irrespective of the factual accuracy of his interpretation of indirect

indications of foreign involvement in the Great Lakes crisis, his central message stands as a vital warning: if the manipulation and possibly extermination of civilians is part of political and military strategies, then there may no longer be such a thing as 'neutral humanitarian' information. Reports on population and aid agency movements then become 'military intelligence' to warring parties and may put at risk the lives of both civilians and aid workers.

Aid agencies and journalists also neglect today's reality of instant global communications. Otherwise poorly equipped armies may have access to world service broadcasts and satellite TVs and have instant knowledge about the reporting on their situation. Armed groups are learning about information warfare. This may mean manipulating the truth by omission or commission, denying access to journalists and aid workers when no witnesses are wanted, and permitting it when the 'enemy' needs to be located. They even may have access to the technology to intercept satellite phone and fax communications, 'correcting' undesired reports of aid agencies and journalists with intimidation, expulsion or even assassination.◆

Background papers are posted on [www.alertnet.org](http://www.alertnet.org). The conference report and papers can also be obtained from, SCF-UK, Fax +44 (0)171 793 7615.

## The Future of Food Aid

17 June 1998, ODI, London, UK

The ODI report 'The Future of Food Aid: A Policy Review' by E. Clay, N. Pillai and C. Benson was publicly launched at a meeting in June which brought together a group of academics, policy analysts and practitioners to discuss the future roles of food aid and finance in supporting food and human security. Participants included Peter Grant from DFID (who commissioned the study), Professor Shetty of the Nutrition Unit at The London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Dr. J. Seaman and L. Gostelow of SCF and D. Church on behalf of VOICE.

Clay presented the main findings and recommendations of the policy study. A. Hallam (ODI) offered the wider humanitarian policy perspective and changing context of emergency food aid provision and J. Shoham (Emergency Nutrition Network) spoke about improving the effectiveness of food aid in providing nutritional security to crisis-affected and displaced people.

Aid-funded shipments of food to developing countries

should be phased out except in cases of dire emergency, according to the study. The results of the \$2 billion a year spent shipping food to poor countries are mostly 'unimpressive'. The report defends the use of food aid in real emergencies, like the current crisis in Southern Sudan – but two-thirds of all food aid is either sold on local markets, or used to support food-for-work programmes or supplementary feeding of children. Providing jobs and feeding children are both worthwhile, but sending food aid is not the best way to do it.

The study argues that WFP which delivers development food aid to over 60 countries, should instead become an emergency and relief logistics agency. The study proposes a larger role for the European Commission, to reap the economies of scale of multilateral aid. National programmes should largely be phased out.◆

Copies of the report and a Working Paper by the same authors (Food Aid and Food Security in the 1990s: Performance and Effectiveness) are available from ODI, Portland House, Stag Place, London, SW1E 5DP, Tel +44 (0)171 393 1600, Fax +44 (0)171 393 1699, Email: [publications@odi.org.uk](mailto:publications@odi.org.uk)

## 4th Annual Meeting of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC)

7-9 May 1998, Oslo, Norway.

The IAPTC, now with a diverse membership of peace-keeping training centres, universities, national missions to the UN, NGOs and multilateral organisations, met in Oslo in May to exchange information on training, education and research methods and modalities in peace-keeping.

“Peace-support” operations have come to be seen as a new, sometimes primary, role for military forces. There remains internal debate within the military whether this is an appropriate role, and how to combine this with a traditional ‘defence’ role. Yet there is significant investment in the development of doctrine, training and practical arrangements for peace-support, certainly in the North Atlantic region, and incipiently in Southern Africa. The Zimbabwe Staff College, for example, has become a regional centre for peace-keeping training.

The main institutional framework for multilateral peace-support operations is the UN’s Department for Peacekeeping Operations. NATO’s Partnership for Peace, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Western European Union figure far less prominently. Within the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Military and Civil Defense Unit provides a support service for the effective use of national and regional military-civilian defense assets.

There is growing recognition that peace-support operations may require military-civil interaction in a so-called ‘new peace-keeping partnership’. On the civilian side, this includes the civil police, government and non-government agencies dealing with human rights and humanitarian assistance, diplomats, the media and organisations sponsoring development and democratisation programmes. The deployment of civilian police under a UN logo (UNCIVPOL) is becoming better organised, and there has been active engagement with civilian organisations called upon for human rights and election monitoring. There remains significant debate about the role of the military in humanitarian assistance: should they provide humanitarian assistance themselves, should they only provide resources to the humanitarian sector or should they restrict themselves to providing security for the humanitarian operation? The ICRC, for one, has had a long involvement with the military for the dissemination of the Geneva Conventions, yet is very reserved about ‘military humanitarianism’.

There has been a complex relationship between the military and NGOs. Many NGO staff have more or less implicit reservations about any use of violence, and may be suspicious of the politics that shape the mandates of peacekeepers. The military seem to have a ‘dual image’ of the NGO sector. On the one hand, it is recognised that NGOs may have been in-country for a longer period of time and are likely to stay on when the military have pulled out, and that they generally have more information and a better understanding of the situation. On the other hand, the NGO scene often appears chaotic, with no clear chain of command within agencies and no effective coordination among agencies. NGOs do not appear bound by rules or operate by identifiable procedures. Moreover, unlike the military, they do not come with a clear ‘mission’ to a particular situation: their actions appear shaped by a mixture of responding to needs, funding flows and opportunism.

Various countries such as Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and the Ukraine, have established centres to train the military, and sometimes police, for peace-support operations. Interestingly, there has been much more systematic curriculum development than in the NGO sector, and probably in the UN as well. The better curricula offer general and mission-specific training prior to deployment. The general training will cover topics such as UN peace-keeping, the UN system, command and staff duties for UN missions, international humanitarian law, human rights etc. The mission-specific training will look at the conflict, its evolving dynamics, the protagonists and their capabilities, the specific mandate and role of the UN troops, media policy, the political, social and cultural environment. Specific skill development, such as safe driving, map reading, personal conduct for safety and security, stress management etc. is also incorporated. Simulation exercises are often used.

There is a willingness among the military to engage more with civilian organisations. Research centres on international relations, human rights and conflict-resolution organisations have responded more eagerly so far than the humanitarian agencies. There is scope however for increased dialogue and constructive interaction.◆

The 5th Annual Conference of the IAPTC will take place 22-26 June 1999 at the Pearson Peacekeeping Centre in Nova Scotia, Canada, where the IAPTC secretariat is housed.

For further information: fax +902-638-3344 or Email: [Iaptc@ppc.cdnpeacekeeping.ns.ca](mailto:Iaptc@ppc.cdnpeacekeeping.ns.ca). The IAPTC publishes a Newsletter and has a Website: [www.cdnpeacekeeping.ns.ca/iaptc.htm](http://www.cdnpeacekeeping.ns.ca/iaptc.htm)

## Aid Policy and Post-Modern Conflict

23 September 1998, ODI, London, UK

A seminar funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) took place at ODI on 23 September based on a paper by Mark Duffield: 'Aid Policy and Post-modern Conflict' (summarised in the May issue of the RRN Newsletter). Attended by representatives from DFID, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the UN, academics from the fields of humanitarian assistance, social and development policy and human rights, ICRC, IFRC, and NGOs, the seminar aimed to highlight specific issues raised by the analysis of the dynamics of conflict presented in Duffield's paper. It also aimed to identify potential practical lessons for aid policy.

Two discussants gave presentations – Sue Lautze of Tufts University and Raymond Apthorpe of the Australian National University and there were responses from Mark Duffield and four panelists from DFID, the Foreign Office, the ICRC and an NGO. Bruce Jones, now part of OCHA's Policy Development Unit in New York, contributed a complementary paper refining, and in some cases, countering Duffield's security and conflict analysis.

There was general agreement that the analysis of post-modern conflict as described in Duffield's paper was "*a challenging, ambitious and sustained analysis of international relations and humanitarian aid*" and raised important issues with serious implications for aid policy. Concern was expressed however, about:

### 1. *The general applicability of the model:*

Duffield had posited that warlordism is not an irrational and anarchic venture, but an innovative adaptation to the new globalisation, especially in the periphery, and that one should differentiate between warlords with, or without, "state projects". But there was a feeling that the range of different warring parties embraced by the paper was so great that there was bound to be some over-generalisation, especially when it came to warlord strategies.

### 2. *The accuracy of the description of conflict resolution programmes and philosophy:*

The portrayal of the underlying assumptions on which conflict resolution activities are based was felt to hold for some less experienced agencies but to bear little reality to what practitioners in this field actually base their work on. The fluid nature of conflict situations and the need to adapt and take opportunities was stressed.

### 3. *Humanitarian aid/developmental relief:*

It was conceded by one speaker that developmental relief may have been a mistaken policy. The lack of tangible results from the attempt at developmental relief was raised.

### Trying to influence policy

Significant efforts are being made to improve communication between all actors to consider its implications for aid policy.

#### 1. *The power and importance of words and their different interpretations:*

There were many references to the use of words including a warning about "the tyranny of words", "the dangers of slogans" and the susceptibility of policy makers to them. Doubt about whether the "right vocabulary" was being used to get ideas across to policy makers was expressed. The interpretation of concepts such as "good intentions" was questioned - this could range from concern about human rights in an affected country to safeguarding jobs in the donor country. Concern was also expressed that the word 'neutrality' had been misused. Even in the seminar it was observed that the term 'humanitarian' had been used loosely.

#### 2. *The relationship between aid and politics:*

There was general agreement that aid is political, but in exactly what sense, and therefore how to manage this, varied. It was felt that "we must politicise aid not allow it to be politicised" and that "aid needs to be politically informed not politically

## RRN Conference Reports

### Website

We are finding that the number of valuable conferences, seminars and discussions that are taking place is on the increase. In order to share the information with you, in the future we will be featuring conferences and book reviews of particular relevance to RRN readers on the RRN Website. From this Newsletter, more detailed reports on the 'Aid Policy and Post-Modern Conflict' Seminar and the 'Peace and Relief Seminar: 'Do No Harm'' will be on the website.

[www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html)

### Your Conferences

If you are holding a conference that we can feature in our 'forthcoming conferences' section, or if you are attending a meeting that you may like to write a short note on, please let us know.

driven". Concern was expressed that the emphasis given to the decline in the influence of ideology at the end of the Cold War, meant that ideology as a factor in conflict tended to be ignored, contributing to over-simplification. The challenge therefore was to deal with "emerging political complexes rather than complex emergencies".

3. *Erosion of the value of International Humanitarian Law (IHL):*

Many felt that, despite the decline in the influence of the nation state, IHL continued to be a vital code of conduct for all players, a check on the "slippery slope" of the politicisation of aid. There was a danger "of throwing principles out of the window" when they should still provide an ethical framework.

4. *Lack of information: is this really the main problem?*

Questions were raised as to whether there was a misunderstanding or a lack of understanding on the part of policy makers. Practical issues were raised such as the time available for them to understand new issues and the fact that field level sources of information, particularly national staff, were a valuable but under-utilised information source. Rather than a lack, there was insufficient analysis of existing information. It was felt that decisions are often taken on the basis of the media's interpretation of events, frequently superficial, and that the media's influence on policy makers was negative. Decisions are being taken simply to get problems "off TV".

5. *Gaps and problems in the flow of information:*

The difficulty of transferring a more sophisticated analysis, either to decision makers needing a quick fix, or to stakeholders also with limited time and little exposure to the subject matter, was a commonly recognised challenge. While it was recognised that during the afternoon "the debate was inching forward", there was concern that this was the speed of a group of informed people with the time to invest.

6. *Different perceptions as to what motivates aid policy:*

Assumptions voiced included that foreign policy makers "were generally motivated by good intentions", "by a complete lack of understanding rather than misunderstanding", or reacted so as to cover up "embarrassment felt about failure at the global level". It was suggested that NGOs might also not always be informed in their policy formulation because "they are looking at their own agenda".

7. *What to do now?*

While much of the criticism was incisive and rang true, there was a lack of clarity about what should now be done. Even with a good grasp of a complex

situation, it is often not clear what the policy should be.

Questions remain regarding the process of trying to use research to influence policy:

- As communication is so crucial for spreading ideas resulting from research and exposing the true motivations behind certain actions, where does the responsibility lie for establishing common terminology and ensuring clarity?
- How can information be better packaged for busy decision makers, while at the same time avoiding the many pitfalls of 'media technique'?
- How much responsibility do decision makers themselves have for making sure they access current thinking?
- How can better use be made of local information sources for understanding the complex dynamics of specific situations in a participative way, suitable for the context and carrying no risks for the individual concerned?

### Pointers for future action

While the seminar did not succeed in identifying potential practical lessons for aid policy, the attempt to achieve that aim produced valuable results. It highlighted important issues concerning the process by which "insightful and thought-provoking" research, such as Duffield's paper, influences, or does not influence, aid policy. Problems with, and opportunities inherent in, the process were identified and the way these can be perceived differently by different actors.

Nonetheless, it would seem that Duffield's analysis needs to take greater account of perspectives beyond those of the humanitarian community. It could usefully be subjected to yet further, and a wider, testing among political scientists, international relations experts and sociologists. Additionally, more attention needs to be given to how the findings of research such as Duffield's can be communicated in an effective and timely way to those making the decisions and influencing policy.◆

Copies of the discussion paper "Aid Policy and Post-Modern Conflict: A Critical Review" by Mark Duffield published as an Occasional Paper in July 1998 can be ordered from the University of Birmingham, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 121 414 5009. Copies of the other background papers available at the seminar can be obtained from the RRN. E-mail: [rrn@odi.org.uk](mailto:rrn@odi.org.uk)

## Peace and Relief Seminar ‘Do No Harm’

28 October 1998, Oxford Brookes University, UK

This one day seminar hosted by Oxford Brookes University focused on the theme of NGOs, peace-building and humanitarian aid with presentations from ‘partnership-oriented’ international NGOs such as Christian Aid, CAFOD and World Vision (UK), an in-depth case study about managing conflict around disaster response in Wajir, Kenya, lessons from Latin America and preliminary insights from the research project on NGOs and Peace-building in Complex Emergencies (see RRN Newsletter 10). Central however was a critical exploration of the Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) project presented by Mary Anderson, author of “Do No Harm”.

The premise of LCP is that aid is inevitably drawn into dynamics of conflict. Research reveals that in conflicts most people have warlike but also non-warlike attitudes. Conflict pushes to the foreground what divides people, but there remain symbols, values, interests, relationships that continue to connect people and groups. These are ‘local’ and internal capacities for peace. Aid offers resources and the way in which it is delivered also sends often implicit ethical messages. Unintentionally, these can confirm and exacerbate existing divisions.

The LCP project, extensively using workshops with aid workers, has been exploring these realities and seeking examples of aid practices that try to strengthen what ‘connects’ people. Its message is that there are always options, and that aid workers should be more consciously attentive to the alternative impacts of their work. Aid can build on existing ‘capacities’ for peace, by creating a space for people to talk about peace, thereby helping to create a constituency for peace. It can also help to give that constituency a voice, to oppose the manipulations of ‘conflict entrepreneurs’. And it can help people disengage from conflict by offering alternative employment.

Concerns were raised about what appears to be underplayed or overlooked in LCP. These included:

- the central role of power brokers and conflict entrepreneurs and why politicians, conflict entrepreneurs and fighters choose to use violence;
- the economic rationale for continuing conflict, and the role of private companies in war economies;
- IHL and human rights treaties that support the mandates and mission of aid agencies;
- the responsibilities that state authorities, and opposition leaders, have for the protection and well-being of populations; and,

- the regional politics of instability and protracted conflict, and the role of international powers in what appear as ‘internal’ civil wars.

Other obstacles for more peace-conscious aid work are the policies and requirements of governmental and non-governmental donors. Investing in analysis, adapting programmes to context and supporting local initiatives that may or may not lead to a more active disengagement from and opposition to war requires flexible programming, longer-term funding commitments and patience about results. Building on local capacities for peace does not fit well with the short-term results-driven perspective of project-centered donors with rigid financial rules.

‘Do no harm’ has received more attention than building on local capacities for peace. The project and its ‘Hippocratic Oath’ sound-bite attracted attention at a time when the media turned critical of humanitarian aid. The notions that ‘aid does more harm than good’ and ‘fuels conflict’ have become common perceptions, for which the LCP project has been seen as a justification if not ‘proof’.

Figures indicate that global expenditure on aid as a proportion of GDP has fallen dramatically. Although development aid has also been affected, humanitarian aid has taken a bigger cut, reflected in the declining response to UN consolidated appeals. The net result may be that increasing numbers of people in acute need do not receive any aid. One factor that may have contributed to the greater reservations about humanitarian aid have been the criticisms from development agencies. Another, however, may have been the perception that ‘aid does more harm than good’ which can become a justification for donors to ‘do good’ by withholding aid – an attitude that UK agencies feel they begin to perceive in the UK’s DFID, regarding Sierra Leone and Afghanistan.

Confronted with these concerns, Mary Anderson clarified that the LCP project drew attention to the fact that aid becomes part of the conflict dynamics, but does not put aid at the centre of the problematic of violence. She emphasised that LCP is a learning project and while it has focussed on the role of aid in conflict, it has not looked at all the factors in and levels of conflict, nor did it claim to do so. Recognition of the macro-level dynamics of conflict and the larger flows in war economies should however also not distract from the contributions that agencies can make on the more local level where they have a certain influence. ◆

CENDEP of Oxford Brookes University will produce a report of the seminar: for details contact Schools of Architects and Planning, Gipsy Lane Campus, Headington, Oxford, OX3 OBP, UK, Tel +44 (0)1865 483413. See also the RRN website for a fuller report.

# Publications



**‘Triumph of the Lack of Will. International diplomacy and the Yugoslav war’**, by J. Gow (1997), London, Hurst & Co.

**‘Honest Broker or Perfidious Albion? British policy in Former Yugoslavia’**, by J. Sharp (1997), London, Institute for Public Policy Research

**‘Srebrenica. Record of a war crime’**, by J.W. Honig & N. Both (1996), London, Penguin

Gow provides a detailed analysis of the attempts of the Western political powers to ‘manage’ the Yugoslav War of dissolution. Particular attention is paid to the positions of France, Germany, the UK, the US and Russia as the situation developed. It is a sobering account of the realities of foreign policy decision-making.

The fundamental incoherence and lack of decisive action of the ‘international community’ is traced back to differing analyses and objectives among key actors. Irrespective of the attitudes of the Serbs, Croats and Bosnians, those differences jeopardised the military intervention in which UNPROFOR played the central role, and the peace plans that were put forward. The fora for and the leadership of the international effort shifted from the European Community to the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (EU and UN) to NATO and then the five Nation Contact Group under US leadership. Throughout, preserving the Western alliance in its various institutional expressions was as important a consideration in the political decision-making as influencing the situation on the ground. The failure of the US to effectively treat Russia as an equal partner and interlocutor gradually led to a divergent and more nationalistic shift in Russia’s foreign policy.

In the final analysis, Gow believes that force played a critical role in leading to the acceptance of the Dayton agreements. Key elements here were a greater readiness in UNPROFOR to use air power, the deployment of the French/British Rapid Reaction Force in support of UNPROFOR, and the effective military actions of the Croats and Bosnians against the Bosnian Serbs, following the strengthening of the Croat army with US support. The pivotal element was a shift in the US position from a principled outrage but without readiness to take on responsibility for action on the ground, to a more determined involvement. The US had made a

commitment to provide a protection force in case UNPROFOR would be withdrawn. It was only when that prospect was imminent, that enough political will was mustered to take more decisive action. Gow however blames the US for having torpedoed the Vance-Owen plan in 1993. This not only prolonged the war but resulted in the Dayton Plan which Gow in many respects sees as poorer than the Vance-Owen plan. Although the Serbs have been frustrated in achieving their primary war aim of establishing a state entity with new borders, they have achieved territorial contiguity and ethnic purity.

Sharp takes a closer look at the UK’s foreign policy at the time, which is strongly criticised as ‘pusillanimous realism’. Throughout, the UK government’s awareness of the possible negative consequences of proposals for more assertive actions led it to obstruct these in the various international fora. Over-cautious, it was only ready to agree to symbolic and half-measures, and gave the impression to the Bosnians that they simply had to accept defeat. The Tory Government’s analysis of the conflict in terms of ethnic animosity with deep historical roots rather than as a contemporary war in which the main opponents have different projects for statehood, is criticised as flawed. Questions are also raised over possible Serb lobbying of the Conservatives through Ian Greer Associates and Serb contributions to Tory election campaigns.

The author also examines the role of Michael Rose and Rupert Smith, consecutive commanders of the UK forces in UNPROFOR. Smith started searching for a new strategy for UNPROFOR and adopted a more assertive interpretation of its mandate and rules of engagement. The controversial reticence of Rose is ultimately traced back to an impossible mandate that required consensual peace-keeping in the middle of a war. One recommendation to the new Labour government is to review the peace-support doctrine and the complex transformations between peace-keeping, containment and peace-enforcement. Another is to deal with the more fickle US through the EU and not to rely on the ‘special relationship’ the UK has long claimed.

Honig and Both start out with a detailed account of the attack on Srebrenica and the massacre of some 6,500 Muslims. They then consider the political process leading to the declaration of ‘safe areas’. Political compromises watered down an imposed ‘safe haven’ to a designated ‘safe area’, only symbolically protected

by lightly armed UN troops with a mandate to monitor the situation, but to use force to protect civilians. The 'safe area' concept adopted by the Security Council therefore was very different from the one originally proposed by the ICRC which required consent by all warring parties and demilitarisation. In fact, the Bosnians continued to carry out raids from Srebrenica, as they did from Bihac. The Dutch government, like others, wavered between a desire for tougher action and an unwillingness to run risks, but for a variety of reasons, eventually agreed to deploy Dutch troops to Srebrenica. The authors see this as an act of political naivete that failed to take into account that the US had supported 'safe areas' to distract attention from its rejection of the Vance-Owen plan. In fact, there had never been any political will, in the US or elsewhere, to effectively implement and protect them. Although the Bosnian government tried to use the "safe areas" as a way to become more acceptable to the international community more, ordinary Bosnians saw it as a Muslim ghetto in a de facto camp. The Dutch troops themselves became totally dependent on the encircling Serbs who control the supply lines. That Srebrenica and Zepa were overrun and Muslim men massacred was well anticipated by those who understood the military vulnerability of UNPROFOR and the war aims and strategies of the Bosnian Serbs.

**'The War Next Door: A study of second track intervention during the war in ex-Yugoslavia'** 1998 by J. Large, Hawthorn Press

Packed with excerpts from source material, including testimonies, newsletters and examples of NGO and local activity, Judith Large's book "The War Next Door" is an extensive and comprehensive exploration of what second-track diplomacy meant in the context of former Yugoslavia. Based on field research in Bosnia, Croatia, Eastern Slavonia and Serbia during the period 1992-1996, Large analyses the merits and flaws of the "non-official response...both solicited and imposed" to the crisis unfolding in that region, as opposed to the traditional but failing first track diplomacy. By examining all categories of interventions by international groups and agencies offering support to local communities, from humanitarian aid, communications and human rights advocacy, to conflict resolution training and capacity building, the book systematically presents the overlapping nature of the effects of these various approaches.

Large examines the relationship between first and second track intervenors, urging better education about the purpose and methodology of both levels. She also argues strongly for the empowerment of indigenous leadership and activity rather than the importation of pre-packaged

solutions, citing the alienation locals can feel after outside trainers conduct rigid and pre-planned workshops.

Given its length and compact style, many will not have the time to read the text from cover to cover, but it warrants attention not only for its convincing argument that external groups should interact more with local strategies for preventing the escalation of violence but also for its detailed references and rich bibliography.

**'Return of Guatemala's Refugees: Reweaving the Torn'** 1998 by C. Taylor Temple University Press, Philadelphia

Against the backdrop of the brutal civil war resulting in 50,000 disappeared, 150,000 killed, 250,000 forced into exile, 1,000,000 displaced and 450,000 widowed, this book is about the challenges faced by returning Guatemalan refugees from Mexico. Focussing on the experiences of the mainly Maya indigenous people of Santa Maria Tzeja, a remote village in northern Ixcán region of Guatemala, Taylor documents the various stages of their complex reintegration process. Based on visits and interviews over a 10 year period, Taylor outlines the peace process which led to a series of organised, collective and voluntary returns starting in May 1994 and the social, economic and cultural difficulties that faced them upon arrival.

Using the analogy of fabric, the book traces how the community of Santa Maria, with a population of 170 families, was torn in half by violence and terror but with tremendous determination succeeded in "reweaving the pieces" despite the "clash of patterns". Similar to other violent conflict situations, one of the predominant issues for returning refugees was coping with tensions between those who had stayed (and had been living in fear of the army and conditioned by military authorities to be suspicious of the human rights concept) and those who had fled (and had been "inundated with information and training regarding their rights" by international human rights groups). Trying to resolve how the civilian population should deal with the threatening army which pit neighbour against neighbour was another major challenge: as a result some communities often formed strategic alliances with the guerillas. An additional strain was the juxtaposition of traditional customs and modern behaviour imported from Mexico.

Taylor rightly places great importance on the promotion of human rights, through tools such as theatre groups and education campaigns, as a major factor in the "reweaving process", despite continued selective military intimidation. Given the lack of a functioning judicial system, Taylor highlights the past, current and future role of local groups in trying to create grassroots democracy and a political space allowing "progressive

change to develop from the base". In the last chapter, and backed up by his case study material from Santa Maria, Taylor offers recommendations for future returns as well as pointers for international groups on the next steps and how to get involved.

**'La gestion des sorties de crise. Actions civilo-militaires et operations de reconstruction'**, 1998, Fondation pour les Etudes de Defense, Service Publications, 27 Rue Damesme, 75013 Paris

This is a record of a 1997 conference that brought together representatives from the defense and the private sectors, as well as from governmental and non-governmental organisations in France. The conference originated from the realisation that France is good at managing the height of a political conflict but has no coherent strategy in the post-conflict stage. Although the priority of implementing peace agreements and building peace is recognised, the conference, in a refreshingly open way, focussed on the economic opportunities that present themselves in the reconstruction phase, and the possible roles of the state, the army and the private sector.

There is a pervasive feeling that, having played a central role in UNPROFOR in Bosnia, France failed to position itself as an equally important player in the reconstruction phase. There is a call for a forum of inter-ministerial coordination, but also for a wider forum to involve non-state actors in developing a more pro-active strategy. Most interesting are the discussions about CIMIC, the civil-military coordination concept and institution. CIMIC is seen as a useful mechanism not only for operational coordination during the height of conflict, but also as a potential entry point for business enterprise in the reconstruction phase. Reserve troops, with their knowledge of both the private sector and the army, are seen as a key resource to that effect.

**'Understanding Vulnerability'** 1998, Eds John Twigg and Mihir R Bhatt, Duryog Nivaran & IT Publications, Sri Lanka & United Kingdom. Email: dnnnet@itdg.lanka.net

This book takes a look at vulnerability issues from a South Asian standpoint and presents its findings in the form of case studies and essays by contributors from India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The final essay is a thought-provoking discussion of the ways in which vulnerability issues may be understood by learning from vulnerable people. The lessons found in this book will be of value to development and disaster planners and managers not only in South Asia, but in other regions where vulnerable people are faced by natural hazards.

**'Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations'** 1997, Joint Warfighting Center, Building 96, Fenwick Road, Ft. Monroe, Virginia 23651-5000

A source book for the Task Force commander and senior staff of a US peace operation, this handbook covers items specific to a military mission, such as Joint Task Force organisation and staffing, command and control, intelligence support, public affairs and media and legal responsibilities. But relevant for non-military readers is the discussion about mission analysis, mission creep, the predominance of political goals and political decision-making, and the recommendation to define an end state and plan for transition, draw down or handover. Coordination to achieve unity of effort and the civil-military operations centre receive much attention.

The book contains a briefing on the ICRC, key UN agencies, relevant extracts from the UN Charter and a summary of Presidential Decision Directive 25 referring to US support for, and participation in, UN peacekeeping operations. The diversity of NGOs is mentioned and the professionalism and the value of their roles markedly emphasised. Explicit attention is paid to cultural sensitivity. The handbook could provide senior UN and NGO staff being deployed to complex environments with essential references.

**'Small Arms Management and Peacekeeping in Southern Africa'**, 1996 UN Institute for Disarmament Research, UN Sales Section, Palais des Nations, CH 1211, Geneva 10

This report provides a convincing argument that demobilisation and effective disarmament should be a more central concern in peace-support operations. Demobilising fighters *per se* is insufficient. Unless ex-fighters are reintegrated, in a new national army or in productive civilian life, the temptation remains for a return to violence, particularly where limited disarmament leaves easy access to weapons.

The report compares the mandates of peace-support operations in Namibia, Mozambique and Angola (UNAVEM I/II) as well as the resources and authority given to UN personnel tasked with demobilisation and disarmament, and finds serious weaknesses at all levels. Ineffective demobilisation and disarmament has facilitated renewed war, for example in Angola, illegal regional arms flows leading to a rapid increase in armed crime, as in South Africa, and political violence. The transformation of the Front-Line States grouping into the Association of South African States (ASAS), the political branch of SADC, may stimulate regional cooperation in peace-keeping, but does not stop the erosion of civil society by crime and banditry.

**‘The State of the World’s Refugees 1997-98. A humanitarian agenda’**, 1997, Oxford Univ. Press/UNHCR, Geneva

**‘Masses in Flight. The global crisis of internal displacement’**, 1998 by R. Cohen & F. Deng, Washington, Brookings Institution Press

**‘World Refugee Survey 1998’**, Washington, U.S. Committee for Refugees

**‘Internally Displaced People. A global survey’**, 1998 London, Earthscan

**‘The Forsaken People. Case studies of the internally displaced’**, 1998 by R. Cohen & F. Deng, Washington, Brookings Institution Press

Together, these publications provide an up-to-date overview and analysis of the state of forcibly displaced people in the world, and of the resulting policy questions for the international community. The World Refugee Survey and the Global IDP Survey provide country-by-country overviews with some introductory essays. ‘The Forsaken People’ offers more critical and extensive case studies of 10 countries, among them Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan, Liberia, Tajikistan, Peru and Colombia. ‘The State of the World’s Refugees’ and ‘Masses in Flight’ highlight the policy questions caused by an ever-growing number of forcibly displaced people worldwide. The reality is that the rights of forcibly displaced people are often ignored given a preoccupation with containing, rather than managing, migration flows. Refugee rights are under attack, and the right not to be displaced and therefore to remain, can become an excuse for further restricting asylum. Western countries that founded UNHCR and mainly responsible for drafting the 1951 Refugee Convention are more and more setting a bad example for developing countries whose hospitality to refugees has often far exceeded that of richer nations.

The consequences of an increasingly negative attitude to asylum are highly problematic: it precludes an objective consideration of the possibility of resettlement in a third country, of good practices or innovative approaches such as the granting of temporary protection for many Bosnians. It prevents genuinely endangered people from reaching safety, and leads to less voluntary ‘refoulement’ of displaced people into insecure areas. Finally, it increases the mingling of genuine asylum seekers with illegal economic migrants, who, forced to go underground, are more vulnerable to human trafficking and criminality. Questions regarding stateless people and protection from gender-related persecution remain unresolved.

Aid agencies are urged to take a stronger human rights perspective and to re-emphasise protection for forcibly displaced people. Protection is ultimately the responsibility of states who have the right to manage migration flows, but that sovereignty also imposes a responsibility to uphold and protect the rights of displaced people. There is a debate about the desirability of creating a special category of ‘internally displaced people’. Whatever one’s views on that, it is undeniable that they have special needs and that the internal community has to show greater concern and exercise greater responsibility towards them.

‘Masses in Flight’ reviews the legal instruments applicable to internally displaced persons and their gaps, the institutional developments around internally displaced people within the UN system, and the perceptions and practices of NGOs in their regard. Both ‘Masses in Flight’ and the ‘Global IDP Survey’ print the new ‘UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement’ that set out the rights of IDPs and should become the reference for all those involved.

**‘Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban’**, Maley, W. (ed.) 1998 London, Hurst & Co.

**‘The Taliban. War, religion and the new order in Afghanistan’**. Marsden, P. 1998, London, Zed Books/Karachi, Oxford University Press

It can be argued that Afghanistan never had more than the contours of a nation-state and that, since it acquired its present form, it has been experiencing the ‘crisis of modernisation’. Long-standing historical tensions over the nature and authority of the state, the role of religion in society, and over the balance of power between different ethnic identities prevail. The Cold War period in the 1980s and the subsequent regional proxy-war in the 1990s are yet another complicating layer.

These two books complement each other in providing a rich and multi-faceted analysis of the complexities of the Afghan conflicts. In trying to listen to and understand the Taliban, Peter Marsden adopts very much an anthropological outlook. He essentially examines the Taliban as an Afghan Islamic movement that draws strongly on the ‘ulema’ or religious scholars, rather than on the rural tradition of tribal leaders and mullahs, or the political ideology of the Islam of earlier ‘mujahedin’ parties. The Taliban are compared and contrasted with other Islamic movements, notably the Muslim Brotherhood, the Wahhabis and that which led to the Iranian Revolution. The difficulties between the Taliban and aid agencies and the broader international

community are understood in the light of fundamentally different views about what an 'ideal society' would look like, and an individuals' rights and obligations therein.

The volume edited by W. Maley does not contradict this analysis, but explores in far greater detail the multiple dimensions of the Afghan conflicts. This includes the role and attitudes of Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Russia, the Central Asian republics and the USA. It highlights the geo-economics and Afghanistan's strategic position in providing access to, and an outlet for the Central Asian markets, including their oil and gas resources. Other chapters trace in detail the Rabanni government and its failings, the rise of the Taliban and the evidence for Pakistani involvement in their military success. It also devotes more detailed attention to the growing role of ethnicity in the Afghan conflict, that is increasingly a confrontation between the Pushtun Taliban and the non-Pushtun Northern Alliance.

UN efforts to broker a political end to the conflict are criticised for being based on a poor analysis of the multiple dynamics that are at stake, and of the historically problematic relationship of the state with Afghan society. Finally, both books devote a chapter to the Taliban's gender policies, and the difficulties for international actors in finding, simultaneously, a balance between respecting Afghan traditions and international norms.

**'Small Arms, Wrong Hands. A case for government control of the small arms trade.'** Oxfam, 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ, UK.

Research commissioned by Oxfam has identified some 120 UK companies involved in the production or sale of small arms, many of them to countries experiencing high degrees of tension or open conflict. The report identifies them and contains a sharp critique of the unacceptable secrecy surrounding the UK's involvement in the global arms trade. Detailed information is not available, parliamentary scrutiny is evaded, arms trade fairs are sponsored with public money, and the fact that the Department of Trade and Industry, charged with promoting British exports is also responsible for controlling the arms-export licensing, constitutes an untenable conflict of interest. Improving the detail and the accessibility of the data, the creation of an autonomous and single arms-control agency and an obligatory Development Impact Evaluation by DFID for each arms sale to countries in conflict are some of the recommendations. Also recommended is a tight EU Code of Conduct on arms sales, adherence to which should be a condition for new membership in the EU.

**'Peace Support Operations'** 1998, Joint Warfare Publication, Ministry of Defence, Northwood, UK

This document articulates the basic concepts and principles underlying military involvement in peace-support operations. Written as a guide on how to plan for and implement peace-keeping and peace-enforcement operations, the issues discussed make it highly relevant reading also for civilian organisations. The report elaborates on distinguishing features between peace-keeping and peace-enforcement, the transitions between the two, the need for coherence between political and military action and the fundamental requirement of credibility. It reviews the institutional framework and process for UN mandated peace-support operations. It discusses the relationship between mission planning towards a desired end-state, situational analysis and mission analysis. It examines questions of impartiality, neutrality, consent, consent-promotion and consent-enforcement. Among the tasks of peace-keepers considered are confronting human rights abuses and providing security for humanitarian relief.

Cross-cutting themes are coordination and the integration of the strategic, operational and tactical levels in peace-support operations. Finally, attention is also paid to civil affairs, and civil-military cooperation (CIMIC), community relations, information control and dissemination, negotiation and mediation.

**'Living with disasters'** 1998, Ed. John Twigg, Intermediate Technology, Tel +44 (0)1788 661100, Fax: +44 (0)1788 661101, email itdg@itdg.org.uk

In this booklet, people who are affected by disasters are given a chance to speak for themselves. Ten people from five countries – Bangladesh, Colombia, Peru, the Philippines and Zimbabwe – describe the impact of natural hazards such as earthquakes, cyclones, droughts and floods on their lives; and they explain the measures they are taking to make themselves more secure in the future.

Disasters are particularly severe on the poor who, for a variety of reasons, often live in exposed locations and lack the resources to protect themselves adequately or to recover from calamity. The accounts reveal that community projects are helping to build up individuals' capacity to withstand future hazards.

The stories are taken from accounts recorded for a series of four ten-minute videos (also available for purchase) made by Intermediate Technology and Television Trust for the Environment, which were released in 1996.

**‘Towards Effective Training for Field Human Rights Tasks’** 1996 by Karen Kenny, International Human Rights Trust, Tel/Fax 44 115 978 9339, email 106347.3500@compuserve.com

More operational deployment of human rights monitors is a recognised need. This well-written booklet examines the use of rosters and current training practices and finds room for improvement. It contains proposals for better recruitment and selection not only of human rights officers, but also of management and field interpreters. It proposes the development of a common substantive curriculum, informed by critical reflection of past and ongoing experience. Furthermore, it recommends that such training should then be delivered in a practice-oriented manner prior to and during the assignment. One annex reviews the training of OSCE human rights officers and CIVPOL in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

**‘The Humanitarian Affairs Review’**, ECHO/ Forum Europe contact Julie Bolle on +32 2 738 7592 or email: julie.bolle@forum-europe.com

The Humanitarian Affairs Review is a quarterly journal published by Forum Europe with the support of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and of the Brussels-based Voice (Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies) which groups some 80 major European NGOs.

Published in English and French editions, the Humanitarian Affairs Review aims to provide the world’s aid specialists – both donors and recipients – with a global forum for debating policy issues and best practice.

The Humanitarian Affairs Review’s 10,000 readers include political leaders and parliamentarians, senior government officials worldwide, the international press, top executives of companies involved in aid programmes, NGOs and international aid organisations.

## RRN Staff Changes



### Laura Gibbons

**Former Coordinator**

The summer period saw the departure of Laura to pastures new. Moving to Conciliation Resources, an NGO based in London working on conflict prevention and resolution issues, Laura will be using her skills and knowledge to edit a series of publications entitled “Accord – An International Review of Peace Initiatives” ([www.conciliation.org](http://www.conciliation.org)). Laura will be missed by the RRN and we all wish her well in her new venture.

With six years experience working for WFP and OCHA in Rome, Angola, Geneva and Tajikistan, Sarah Longford has been appointed ‘**Acting Coordinator**’ until December 1998.

### Philip Winter

**Former Regional Representative in Horn of Africa/Great Lakes Region**

Having spent a year promoting the RRN in what has proved to be an impossibly large geographic area to cover, Philip has stepped back from playing such an active role in the RRN. His input into the RRN’s work and his local knowledge have proven invaluable. We particularly thank Philip for his contribution towards the reshaping and continued improvement of the role of Regional Representatives. We wish him well.

## Request for an RRN publication in Spanish...

I am writing on behalf of AVRE, acronym for Corporation to support of socio-political violence victims pro-emotional recovery. AVRE Corporation is an NGO founded in 1991 by a group of psychiatrists at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. The purpose of this letter is related to your article “The Impact of War and Atrocity on Civilian Populations : Basic Principles for NGO Interventions and a Critique of Psychosocial Trauma Projects” (**Network Paper 14**). We are presently preparing a publication with its central theme being a debate about humanitarian assistance, internal armed conflict and psychosocial projects currently being implemented by both national and international NGOs and some state offices. We consider the paper highly relevant and with a deep interdisciplinary insight. It just tackles the right issues in an extremely documented and sensitive manner.

*Marcela Salazar Posada, AVRE, Colombia*

# Letters



*Please send us your comments on RRN publications: omissions, corrections, additions, views or just encouragement!*

“Human Rights and International Legal Standards: what relief workers need to know”  
by James Darcy

19

Welcome to Paul O’Brien of CARE, currently based in Uganda who discovered the RRN via the website:

Useful... Useful??? You should have seen my reaction. I mean I’m sitting here in Uganda, working by myself, and my chances of finding resources like this are... well I’ll leave it to your imagination. Thanks so much not just for sending me this great article (**Network Paper 19**, “Human Rights and International Legal Standards: what relief workers need to know” by James Darcy), but also for responding so quickly. One feels so cut off here sometimes, that as one is trying to make a useful contribution in the humanitarian field, an e-mail such as yours can really make a big difference.

The Norwegian Refugee Council has been using James Darcy’s **Network Paper 19** on Human Rights and International Legal Standards as training resource for their headquarter staff.

“Counting and Identification of Beneficiary Populations in Emergency Operations”  
by John Telford

5

I picked up a copy of **Good Practice Review 5** concerning statistical evaluation of refugee populations. It is an impressive document.

*Rupert Douglas-Bate, Finance Officer,  
Christian Aid, East Congo*

**Newsletter 11** has just come to hand. As usual it has weighty material. Of particular interest is “Aid Policy and Post-Modern Conflict: a critical review”. We greatly value the newsletter, most of all our Welfare Director, Mr Ruben Gomes who is directly connected with Disaster Management...

*Jeffrey S. Pereira, Executive Director,  
CARITAS, Bangladesh*

“The Food Economy Approach: a framework for understanding rural livelihoods”  
by Tanya Boudreau

26

Some of us in southern Africa are trying to draw together the main approaches in livelihood analysis and vulnerability assessment (one, more micro, and the other more macro) to make the information generated by the different methods more accessible to local development agencies and organisations involved in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. (**Network Paper 26**) is one of the clearest documents we’ve seen written on the subject.

*Alisia Holloway, Project Coordinator,  
Disaster Mitigation for Sustainable  
Livelihoods Project, University of Cape  
Town, South Africa*

I have a research assistant seconded to WFP/Lokichokkio to examine the ‘trade/exchange’ slice of the food economy model. Her preliminary findings indicate, as we suspected, that this is insufficiently represented in the model (**Network Paper 26**) and that our limited understanding of the way trade and exchange works may be skewing the determination of food economy zones.

*Sue Lautze Feinstein International Famine  
Center at Tufts University, USA*

visit the RRN website

[www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html)

# DEAR reader...

## Some structural changes

Over the last few months, the RRN has been reviewing its functions and staffing requirements. As a result, a couple of structural changes will take effect in the New Year. Essentially, the RRN Coordinator position will become an ODI Research Fellow position and will be tasked with developing the network conceptually and ensuring the quality, outreach and impact of its publications. This post will be advertised early 1999. The Coordinator will be supported by a Deputy with primary responsibility for the Newsletter and monitoring and evaluation. The two other positions remain unchanged: with the Administrator responsible for publications production, website development, finance and general administration, and the Administrative Secretary responsible for membership administration, publication sales and marketing.

## Reaching out

We are doubling our efforts to get RRN publications circulating more at the field level, both within national and international organisations. We have therefore decided to expand the outreach programme beyond Central, East and West Africa, and focus over the next months on developing new contacts with agencies/individuals with programmes in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan.

## What can you do?

We are eager that RRN publications maintain a high standard and are stimulating and relevant in your work. We also have to maintain the right balance to achieve our objective of **stimulating the exchange of information and of learning** between agencies, countries, policy-makers, practitioners and analysts. To do this, we need your help and suggest below some practical ideas.

### *You can contribute....*

- Information on important conferences or advocacy initiatives from within your region.
- Ideas or contacts for a country/regional update for the RRN Newsletter.
- Details about a programme whose approach you find innovative or an example of good practice.
- Good cartoons or black/white photographs to liven up the Newsletter.

### *Give us feedback.....*

- Let us know if you have found a particular RRN publication inspiring (or not!), or used one of the RRN papers for policy or programme discussions, decisions or design, in a training course or in any other way. We would particularly welcome more feedback from field-based staff and from nationally recruited field staff.

### *Help with dissemination.....*

- If you are headquarter-based, could you help us get the RRN to your field offices?
- If you are field-based, is the RRN accessible to all your colleagues?
- Is there an active government department, UN office and/or agency coordinating body in your area, that could help make the RRN more accessible to more agencies working in your environment?
- Is there a training centre near you that could use RRN materials as resource documents?
- Should we send you a small supply of RRN leaflets and Newsletters for local distribution?

## One last thing!

For all publications ordered by non-RRN members, we are including a questionnaire to help us with our internal monitoring. Please fill them in and send them back!

Any other suggestions and ideas are more than welcome. Many Thanks.

# AND finally...

## The RRN Team

The RRN forms part of the Humanitarian Policy Programme, a wider group within ODI focusing on research into and evaluation of humanitarian policy.

Sarah Longford, **Acting RRN Coordinator** (until December 1998).



Koenraad Van Brabant, **RRN Policy and Development Officer**.



Sarah Geileskey, **RRN Administrator**.



Caroline Dobbing, **part-time RRN Administrative Secretary**.



...with additional support, advice and assistance from John Borton, **Research Fellow** and Philippa Atkinson, **RRN Regional Representative**, West Africa.

...**AND finally** the RRN congratulates Sarah Geileskey (née Scott) on her marriage to Adam over the summer. We wish them both much happiness.

# RRN

## Background

The Relief and Rehabilitation Network was conceived in 1993 and launched in 1994 as a mechanism for professional information exchange in the expanding field of humanitarian aid. The need for such a mechanism was identified in the course of research undertaken by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) on the changing role of NGOs in relief and rehabilitation operations, and was developed in consultation with other Networks operated within ODI. Since April 1994, the RRN has produced publications in three different formats, in French and English: Good Practice Reviews, Network Papers and Newsletters. The RRN is now in its second three-year phase (1996-1999), supported by four new donors – DANIDA, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland, the Department for International Development, UK and SIDA, Sweden. Over the three year phase, the RRN will seek to expand its reach and relevance amongst humanitarian agency personnel and to further promote good practice.

## Objective

To improve aid policy and practice as it is applied in complex political emergencies.

## Purpose

To contribute to individual and institutional learning by encouraging the exchange and dissemination of information relevant to the professional development of those engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance.

## Activities

To commission, publish and disseminate analysis and reflection on issues of good practice in policy and programming in humanitarian operations, primarily in the form of written publications, in both French and English.

## Target audience

Individuals and organisations actively engaged in the provision of humanitarian assistance at national and international, field-based and head office level in the 'North' and 'South'.

The Relief and Rehabilitation Network is supported by:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
DANIDA



Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland

