RELIEF AND REHABILITATION NETWORK

10

RRN newsletter

All RRN materials are published in French and English.

In this issue...

Humanitarianism is increasingly under threat. This was the conclusion of two recent meetings held in London (February 1998), which will form the backdrop to a forthcoming RRN Network Paper (no. 25), due out in May 1998, and Paris (October 1997), reported by Action Contre la Faim, France, in this Newsletter (see page 30).

The threat seems to be twofold. The Paris meeting, organised by Action Against Hunger, examined the challenges to aid agencies of working in conflict zones, where food is increasingly being used as a weapon of war and where the political climate of sanctions and parallel economies combine to create disasters and jeopardise the evolution of effective relief operations. In these contexts, aid agencies face profound dilemmas. Can they continue to respect the principles enshrined in the Geneva Conventions and human rights law or is it inevitable that they will be manipulated by warring parties? In the face of abuse and belligerence should agencies withdraw or simply be pragmatic and do what they can, perhaps in a more coordinated way?

The second meeting, organised by the UK Disasters Emergency Committee, took a slightly different perspective. It sought to respond to the attack on humanitarian values and principles not only by warring parties, but the growing critique emerging from the western media, African governments, and parts of the development and foreign policy community in donor countries. Those present at the meeting were not uncritical of the state of the existing international relief system, but argued that the values and principles it strove for were fundamental and should be protected. A principal conclusion emerging from the debate was that the humanitarian community is currently being used as the scapegoat for wider failings of national governments and international political bodies, and that NGOs and others should be more pro-active in defining the values for which it stands.

That these two meetings should take place in such a short space of time is no coincidence. The sense of frustration felt is now palpable within sections of the humanitarian community following successive debacles in Zaire, continuing tragedy in Sudan, Afghanistan, Somalia, and the latest political and humanitarian confusion in Sierra Leone, to name but a few. In the coming months, it will be interesting to see whether by articulating more clearly common concerns regarding the future of humanitarian action in wartime, relief agencies will be able to mount a stronger defence of their values and enhance the coherence of their political advocacy.

There is still time to return your completed questionnaire before the **29th March**. Please take the time to fill it in – **your views make a difference**. *An additional copy is enclosed with this mailing.*

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Abstracts

'Reproductive health for displaced populations' *by Celia Palmer*

The provision of reproductive health (RH) services by humanitarian agencies to displaced populations is relatively new. Until recently, the needs of displaced people in emergency settings were often ignored. During the eighties, attempts were made to address the problem, and in the last few years increasing attention has been paid to these needs in emergency contexts. In particular, recognition of the major threat posed by STDs and AIDS and growing media attention to sexual violence among displaced populations has highlighted the importance of the RH agenda in emergency settings. Alongside changes in RH provision in stable settings, the move to implement RH services for displaced populations was accelerated after the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994. The Conference set reproductive health within a rights framework and highlighted the needs of displaced populations.

However, despite the increased recognition of RH concerns in emergencies, in reality the agenda has proved difficult to implement. Some aspects raise ethical and moral concerns to which humanitarian agencies have different attitudes. Bilateral agencies, non-governmental organisations and donors are grappling with difficult decisions as to what services they should provide and how to ensure services are safe and effective. This is also happening in stable settings. In the absence of good data on both the needs and impact of RH service provision in emergencies, much of the emphasis on safe provision falls to the judgement of field-based practitioners, with important implications for training and appropriate resourcing at that level. In this paper available information about reproductive health among displaced populations is presented. Policies of a number of actors are also described and examples of current RH programmes and the issues facing those attempting to implement them are explored.

Regional Initiative

Philippa Atkinson, the RRN's part-time Regional Representative for West Africa, has recently spent two weeks promoting the work of the RRN in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. Newsletters have been widely distributed and the feedback seems positive: those who are already RRN readers find our publications highly interesting and informative and many are interested in joining – if only they would complete and return their registration forms! Philippa concentrated particularly on encouraging members to contribute to RRN publications through comment and feedback and particularly by writing up their experiences for potential inclusion in the Newsletter. Philippa is the author of this edition's article on Sierra Leone (see article opposite) and of the Liberian Regional Update (on page 25). Should you wish to comment on these, or other aspects of the RRN's regional work, please contact Philippa via the RRN at rrn@odi.org.uk or directly on p-atkinson@msn.com.

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website

http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/

**The RRN website has recently been updated and improved:
now available on-line are back copies of all our Newsletters. We have also increased the number of newsletter articles that are available.**

We will continue to work to improve our website and if you have any suggestions that you would like to make in order to assist us in this task, please contact the RRN Coordinator, or tell us your thoughts via the 'feedback' page on the website.

Articles

Sierra Leone: an attack on humanitarianism

by Philippa Atkinson, RRN's part-time Regional Representative for West Africa

Western policy makers are ostensibly increasingly committed to intervening in African conflicts in a responsible and ethical manner. The protection and support of democratic and other human rights have become, at least in terms of rhetoric, the main objective of much foreign and aid policy, particularly in non-strategic areas. This has been demonstrated in Sierra Leone where the international community has acted in concert in order to promote the restoration of the democratically elected government, deposed in a coup last May. The complexities of the situation have, however, provided a serious challenge to the implementation of these new protection-oriented policies. The international community has found itself facing a real moral dilemma in Sierra Leone, concerning the efficacy of including humanitarian aid in a general embargo against the illegitimate junta. Aid agencies are worried that political considerations have been allowed to override the humanitarian needs of the civilian population and are now calling for an examination of the justification for the policy and a reaffirmation of basic humanitarian values.

...the international community has found itself facing a real moral dilemma in Sierra Leone.

Direct intervention in the conflict was delegated to ECOWAS, the regional grouping of West African states, and has been focused on an embargo against the junta which took power following the coup. Military action led by the Nigerian-dominated ECOMOG was attempted early on without success, although the recent offensive may finally achieve the desired result of dislodging the junta. Efforts at negotiations between the parties have so far produced only the ineffectual Conakry Accords, and for six months the embargo has been the weapon of choice.

Political considerations have been allowed to override the humanitarian needs of the civilian population.

UN authorisation of the sanctions was sought, and the Security Council approved a limited version on arms, fuel and travel by members of the junta. ECOMOG have, however, enforced an embargo on all goods entering the country, by sea at least, and the civilian militias on the ground have attempted to limit the passage of goods internally.

In practice, humanitarian aid became part of the sanctions. The cancellation by DfID of the majority of its funding to British NGOs, the restriction of UN operations by a top security rating, and the holding up of cross-border deliveries of relief goods due to 'administrative' difficulties, demonstrate the united stance of the international community on this issue. The inclusion of relief goods in the general embargo is thus widely perceived as a deliberate component of the attempt to dislodge the junta. While it violates both the UN resolution as well as international law more generally, this de facto embargo has been justified on the arguable grounds that food aid in particular could have an important impact on the conflict through strengthening the control or morale of the junta.

This view derives from analyses of other conflict situations including Liberia and Rwanda, where relief aid has been shown to have fuelled conflict by providing political and economic resources to factions. Criticism of earlier failed interventions as prioritising humanitarian concerns to make up for lack of political efforts, is also offered as justification for the policy choice in Sierra Leone, which appears as a complete reversal of earlier trends towards militarised humanitarianism, as seen in Bosnia, Somalia and Northern Iraq. Agencies are worried that lessons learned from other operations are being misinterpreted to suggest that there are problems inherent in humanitarianism, rather than in its implementation and in the coherence of other policy objectives. The short-sightedness of the humanitarian embargo, which may serve to undermine longer-term work focused on tackling the roots of the conflict, is a further contentious issue.

The humanitarian community involved in Sierra Leone has attempted to address the concerns of funders and diplomats. A guiding protocol for humanitarian operations has been developed covering

both principles and operations. Shared information systems, good technical and operational coordination, and relatively 'smart' and innovative programming, in part propelled by the high levels of local involvement in relief work, have all contributed to a potentially model humanitarian community. The neutrality of the purely humanitarian agenda of the agencies involved in Sierra Leone is unquestioned. Although it is difficult for agencies to provide actual guarantees as to the safety of their resources in such a volatile situation, it has been shown elsewhere that abuse of aid by warring factions can be minimised through careful and coordinated programming. Policies tried in Liberia such as restricting capital inputs and bulk food aid can be effective, and techniques to deal with factions on the ground have been developed in many countries.

Thus it is by no means certain that careful and neutral humanitarianism would have any major negative impact on the dynamics of the conflict, in terms of feeding the soldiers or legitimising the junta. Some observers believe that restricting the flow of resources itself contributes to the power of those in control, and embargoes have not been shown in other cases to be effective in toppling illegitimate regimes. Whatever the practical impact of the policy, however, the basic issue at stake is the calculated denial of the rights of civilians in Sierra Leone to receive humanitarian assistance. As the embargo has continued, conditions inside the country, even in areas accessible to remaining NGOs and assessment missions, have visibly deteriorated, with signs that even the resilient Sierra Leoneans may be reaching breaking point. The deadlock over the embargo begs the question as to whether there is some point of trade-off that might be reached, where the suffering of the civilian population would outweigh the political benefits of including humanitarian aid in the embargo against the junta.

Some agencies have attempted to lobby donors, with NGOs, UNICEF and WFP making public statements and representations, and continuing to work with limited funding and in-country resources. Following the recent ECOMOG and kamajor offensive and the intensifying emergency, agencies have released joint statements calling for immediate clearance for cross-border deliveries to be allowed to enter the country. Effective concerted action to promote the humanitarian agenda has however been constrained by institutional factors. The policy appears to have been sustained by a

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combination of diplomatic activity involving the UN in New York, and British and US diplomats. The direct precedence over UNDHA by UNDP, where deposed President Kabbah spent much of his career, at both field level and in New York, has effectively prevented DHA from playing a role as an advocate for humanitarianism. NGOs have been limited in their lobbying of DfID by their general reliance on the department for funding, and by the perceived lack of transparency, or willingness of the government to enter into dialogue on this issue.

The fundamental basis of humanitarianism, the rights of those in need to receive help regardless of political factors, as enshrined in the Geneva Conventions, appears to be under attack in Sierra Leone, and must be defended by those in the humanitarian field. As this article goes to press, the policy is in the balance. As ECOMOG and the civil militias gain control of Freetown and areas upcountry, deliveries of food and other relief goods are likely to be resumed. Agencies are worried that this will reinforce the precedent already set, of making relief conditional on political factors, and thus further undermine their independence from the donors. As well as lobbying vigorously for the separation of humanitarian aid from political agendas, agencies, both NGO and UN, must push for an examination of the impact of the policy, and of policy-makers' justifications, in order to avoid the setting of a dangerous precedent.◆

Conflict resolution training in another culture: lessons from Angola

by David Brubaker of Conflict Management Services, and Tara Verdonk, programme coordinator for the Michigan Supreme Court.

The setting

The November 1994 signing of the Lusaka Protocol began a long and tortuous peace process that continues today. Significant progress was made in April of 1997 when a government of national reconciliation and unity was formed after months of delay. Thousands of UNITA troops have now

...the rights of those in need to receive help regardless of political factors appear to be under attack in Sierra Leone...

been quartered and weapons turned in. The national armed forces now include over 10,000 former UNITA troops. Peace, however, still remains elusive. Large-scale fighting has stopped, but fear, mistrust, and the spread of rumours prevent the free movement of goods and people. Physically and emotionally, Angola remains a deeply divided nation.

In January 1997, the Centre for Common Ground (CCG), the Angola office of Search for Common Ground, began to organise two consecutive week-long introductory conflict resolution training sessions to take place in June. The goal of these sessions was to initiate the development of a network of Angolan mediators and trainers, that would eventually implement their own reconciliation projects.

Getting political agreement

One seminar was to be held in the capital, Luanda, and one in the relatively stable province of Kwanza Sul, where CCG had made some exploratory visits. In March 1997, CCG held a planning meeting for potential Luanda participants. Sixteen people attended, fourteen of whom went on to participate in the training. During the meeting, CCG discussed topics to be included in the sessions, gathered feedback from the participants on their expectations, and collected ideas for role plays and other exercises. CCG also showed a video it had co-produced about building bridges[2]. One of the participants associated with UNITA made some statements about UNITA's portrayal in parts of the video and a few days later CCG received a visit from two participants from the Communications Department of Luanda's provincial government. Enthusiastic about the training, they were concerned about its 'political nature' because of the inclusion of 'vocal' participants from UNITA. CCG staff explained that in order to conduct meaningful training about conflict and reconciliation, several viewpoints would have to be included. Organisers highlighted the opportunity to discuss sensitive issues in a diverse group, allowing participants to use the skills they were learning and the government officials seemed satisfied, returning in June to participate in the training.

There were two significant difficulties with the recruitment of participants in Kwanza Sul; the first involved recruitment of female participants and the second was in obtaining permission from UNITA for participants from areas under their control to travel to the government-held provincial capital of Sumbe to attend the training. Most of the organisations sent male representatives and in the end only three females participated. In contrast, the gender breakdown was almost even in Luanda, where women are more active in NGOs and public life than in the provinces. Although in Luanda several members of UNITA live and work in the national government or with the peace process and permission to travel was not an issue, several meetings with UNITA officials in Luanda had to occur in order to convince them of the value of the training in Sumbe and the value of them attending. Despite last minute efforts to convince the UNITA leadership in Quibala to attend, the Sumbe training went ahead without UNITA representation.

The sensitive nature of relations between the two sides in Angola dictated that CCG be in constant contact with officials from both sides and the UN about its actions. There could be no suspicion that we were undertaking anything subversive or we would risk ruining our chances of holding the training and carrying out other activities. CCG carefully explained training plans and other project ideas to appropriate officials before taking action. CCG also informed UN officials in the province to alert them to the possibility of travel by UNITA participants, and to ask them for possible assistance with security.

Learning in and from the training course

The Luanda session attracted 35 participants and the one in Sumbe 26 participants. One of the themes addressed was the difference between conflict and violence and, given the 30-year history of violence in the area, understandably some participants did not immediately make a distinction between the two. The participants were asked to design two scenes, one representing conflict and the second violence, which then became the object of group discussion. This led to a consensus about the importance of dealing with conflict before it escalates into violence.

> *...there could be no suspicion that we were undertaking anything subversive...*

A more difficult discussion for both groups, but especially for the Kwanza Sul participants who were closer to the fighting, was that of forgiveness and reconciliation. One participant asked pointedly if the trainers' agenda was to force forgiveness on Angolans. The trainers responded that their aim was to seek clarification of what the terms meant to the participants before using them during the week. After discussion, the participants seemed to agree that to forgive does not mean to forget, and that reconciliation is a process requiring at least two willing parties.

Participants were also asked to practise cooperative communication through a group discussion of 'the role of women in Angolan society'. Before giving their opinion on the subject, each speaker had to summarise the opinion of the previous one. Participants performed well in the paraphrasing exercise, particularly given the impressive diversity of views.

A prejudice reduction exercise was conducted by identifying the four major ethnic groups represented by participants, and asking those not of a given ethnic group to identify 'preconceitos' (prejudices) they had (or had heard expressed) about a group. For the sake of equity the trainers added 'Americans' as a group to the exercise. Each list of prejudices for the five groups filled a large flipchart (newsprint sheet), and were predominantly negative. The concluding suggestions for 'reducing prejudices' were excellent in both sessions.

One of the most interesting discussions was around Angolan models of conflict resolution. Despite their urban status, the Luanda group included many participants who clearly remember traditional models and shared them eagerly, resulting in an outline of steps in the traditional dispute-handling mechanism and of specific components of a decision-making process. Two important components identified were ritual and the significance of elders. The first emerged from a mediation demonstration in Luanda, where participants added the 'porta-voz do sobra' (chief's spokesperson) who basically cared for protocol during the process, while the second arose spontaneously in Sumbe, as the mediators decided to consult with the village elders after reaching an impasse in the role play mediation session. Such a 'mediation/fact-finding' process would be unorthodox in western models (at least for the mediators to fill both roles) but was deemed appropriate and necessary by participants in Sumbe. The Angolan model had fascinating parallels with the classic five-step western mediation model – the introduction, story-telling, issue-identification, problem-solving and agreement stages. Various outlines were presented by the Angolan participants, but the basic five-step process to resolve interpersonal conflict in a rural community consisted of dialogue, mediation by the parents, mediation/arbitration by e.g. maternal uncles or the

village chief, fines, forgiveness and reconciliation or punishment. The village chief would be the first to intervene as decision-maker where informal and neutral mediation had failed. Where one party had wronged another, a fine could be imposed by the chief and only if the offending party refused to pay the fine would punishment be imposed. Eliciting knowledge around conflict resolution practices and processes released greater energy and creativity from participants than many other learning exercises.

Follow-up

The sessions were followed up with a number of activities, while gradually also being extended to new participants. The training was quickly succeeded by two-day seminars on consensus-building and participants were later interviewed about how they had been able to apply their new skills. The report summarising these interviews contains ideas for future projects and training seminars, such as advanced mediation training, training of trainers and a seminar on developing peace education projects. One specific outcome is an Angolan manual on conflict resolution which is now being drafted under the leadership of a UNICEF staffer who participated in the Luanda training. The manual will gather proverbs, stories, songs, and ceremonies, that include themes of reconciliation and cooperation, as well as describing the traditional mechanisms to resolve conflict. Revealingly, many books on Angolan folklore and traditional culture were found in museums and university libraries in the USA, and sent to the group in Angola. ◆

Lessons learned

- there is no substitute for relationships – relationship-building takes time – trust and enthusiasm must be created as a basis for successful training
- follow-up is as important as preparation – someone must be responsible for the continuation of the group.
- of the many models available for such training, the most effective seemed to be a modified elicitive model – a presentation of basic Western concepts of negotiation, with structured opportunities to identify and apply conflict resolution models from local culture.

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Notes

1. quote from Mulato Pedro, participant in the Luanda training
2. co-produced with Ubuntu Productions of Capetown, and funded by USAID

A longer report of the Angolan experience can be obtained from Dave Brubaker, Conflict Management Services, 916 N. Cameron Ave., Case Grande, Arizona 85222, USA; fax: 00 1 520 421 2134 or email brubaker@casagrande.com. For information on Search for Common Ground in Angola contact SCG, 1601 Connecticut Ave. NW, Suite 200, Washington D.C. 20009, USA or email scgangola@igc.apc.org

Challenges to humanitarian agencies in the field: considering the options

Sylvie Brunel, Strategic Adviser with Action Contre la Faim, France, and lecturer at the Political Studies Institute, Paris

A recent international meeting hosted by Action Against Hunger in Paris looked at some of the challenges facing humanitarian agencies working in conflict, in particular the strategic use of famine as a weapon of war.

At this high-level meeting, a number of Action Against Hunger's field and HQ managers put forward their views alongside representatives of the UN, francophone NGOs, academics and politicians in a bid to emphasise the importance of cooperation and joint action in responding to the new and diverse challenges facing them in their humanitarian work.

Background

The crisis in the Great Lakes region has increasingly been used as a model to illustrate the ambiguities inherent in, and obstacles to humanitarian action faced by today's aid agencies. Examples of such ambiguities include the systematic abuse of the system by Hutu extremists in the refugee camps in the former Zaire, causing Rwanda to intervene in emptying the camps and the forcible grouping of populations in Rwanda and Burundi. Likewise, more recently humanitarian agencies have faced major obstacles to intervention on behalf of refugees in the forests of Eastern Zaire; Roberto Garetton (UN Special Envoy), hindered by both Mobutu and Kabila from freely carrying out his duties, commented that "no detailed survey on the human rights situation in the country is possible".

A 'new' type of conflict

The first signs of food shortages are now well known and humanitarian organisations have the technical knowledge and capacity to enable them to respond appropriately and in time to an identified need. In theory therefore, famine need no longer exist. Yet organisations continue to tackle such severe humanitarian crises with disastrous consequences for the most vulnerable populations in Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Burundi, amongst others.

What distinguishes these countries is the continued existence of conflict in forms which have evolved over the past decade, resulting in a situation where hunger is now no longer the result of conflict but one of its tools – one of the favoured methods employed by warring factions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, described by Philippe Peccatier (Action Contre la Faim, France's Director of Communications and Development), includes the destruction of crops, the forced displacement of civilian populations held hostage in towns where they are unable to gain access to food, and the widespread diversion and misappropriation of humanitarian aid. Worryingly, these methods seem to go unpunished and in some cases, even to meet with some success... one of the perpetrators of such tactics in Liberia, Charles Taylor, was elected President in 1997,

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Hunger is now no longer the result of conflict but one of its tools.

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with 70% of the vote. For fear of returning to civil war and famine, Liberians chose officially and 'democratically' to re-elect him. The view expressed by the Executive Secretary of the Global Coalition for Africa and Special Representative of the United Nations in Burundi, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, was that "we now live in an age of new autocratic rulers who starve their people to death with complete impunity". On the same subject, Jean-Christophe Rufin (Institute of International and Stategic Research, IRIS) stressed that "famines are now no longer a question of tactics, but of strategy".

The 'old' type of famine, whether it was the occupation of towns and cities or the burning of land, was aimed at eliminating the enemy (a method still being used in Sudan). Following the end of the Cold War, countless factions lost the sources of income from which they had reaped much of their power, as well as support from one or other superpower. These groups have since had to look elsewhere for resources to continue to control whole areas or fulfill their dreams of expansion. In many of today's conflicts, it is now a country's own population which is taken hostage by its warlords to help them achieve their goals.

Other sources of income and power include drug-trafficking in some of the poorest parts of the world and the 'plundering' of resource-rich mining or foresting regions. But it is the artificial creation of famine that is seen to be the most evil method of all. It allows factions or even armed groups to loot the belongings of particular groups whilst forcing them into a state of under-nutrition, which in turn arouses compassion among the international community and leads to an increase in the supply of humanitarian aid. That aid is then turned to

the agressors advantage, helping them to attain a high profile on the international stage as they inevitably become the donors' interlocutors – the first step towards diplomatic recognition and, consequently, new-found legitimacy.

Embargo

Within the context of the situation in Iraq, Bernard Granjon (Honorary President of the French organisation Médecins du Monde) offered comment on the disastrous effects of the embargo imposed on the civilian population by the UN, pointing out that this embargo was all the more devastating as the dictator deliberately made the population suffer by refusing to implement the "oil for food" resolution.

Mario Bettati, Lecturer in International Law and often considered as the 'founder' of the principle of intervention, also stressed the failure of the embargo – a catastrophe for the civilian population, but a 'godsend' to the governments targeted by the embargo as well as the countless traffickers whose businesses flourished within the black economies created by the embargo. One of the worst consequences of the embargo was that the Iraqi government could play the victim and demand the lifting of sanctions whilst at the same time strengthening its domestic legitimacy.

"We now live in an age of new autocratic rulers who starve their people to death with complete impunity."

What should be the international community's response in this minefield?

The question facing all NGOs now working in these situations is – does their intervention and implicit tolerance of such actions help legitimise criminal regimes? Their scope for action is seen as 'walking a tightrope': bringing aid to those in need without denouncing the true causes of their situation means that humanitarian organisations unwillingly become accomplices of the 'famine-makers', thus enabling them to continue their manipulation, yet standing up to their excessive demands means jeopardising the security of their staff or running the risk of being expelled from the country altogether and abandoning those they set out to assist. Jean-Luc Bodin, the new General Director of Action Contre la Faim, France, described the experience of working in South Sudan where uncovering the real cause of persistent malnutrition in the camps, despite food distributions, led to the organisation being immediately thrown out of the country.

"Famines are now no longer a question of tactics, but of strategy."

How, then, can humanitarian organisations continue to be efficient without being manipulated by aggressors.

A number of key points emerged:

- the importance for NGOs to take a joint position, as inconsistent negotiations make any attempt at taking a firm stance virtually impossible. Although stressed by Christian Captier, Director of Operations of Action Contre la Faim, France, many NGOs are in agreement on the same humanitarian principles – impartiality, freedom of access to victims, independence, integrity and the appropriateness of aid to correctly assessed needs, but their joint implementation in the field and the cohesion and cooperation of field-based humanitarian workers still need improvement. Despite the existence of the 1994 Code of Conduct (see RRN Network Paper 7, ODI 1994), it has not been signed by all NGOs, nor can it alone provide a satisfactory response to the strategy of those who deliberately starve their populations to death, or even at times to the possible 'hidden' interests of donors.

- although the right to life, and therefore the right to food and life-saving assistance, is enshrined in Article I of the supplementary protocols (1977) of the Geneva Conventions as well as all the Human Rights Conventions, without an international police force responsible for safeguarding these rights, international law remains almost meaningless in the face of malign intent on the part of certain regimes and warring factions.

- political or strategic interests also pose obstacles to the application of the law which helps to explain the reluctance of the UN Security Council to act in response to clear violations of the law as in Rwanda (a view expressed by Michel Rocard (President of the European Parliament Commission for Development) and former French Prime Minister. In this context, the creation of 'safe havens' in Rwanda, while ostensibly providing security for the victims, also sheltered the perpetrators of the genocide during the French operation 'Turquoise'.

- the need for an International Criminal Tribunal, a permanent and independent criminal court, to help to put an end to such impunity by translating this form of crime into law, and minimising delays caused by the cumbersome setting up of ad hoc Tribunals, was also discussed (see next RRN Newsletter (May 1998) for more extensive coverage of this issue).

In the absence of such a body, and in light of current inadequacies in the law, the commitment of humanitarian organisations, their duty to intervene and

testify against human rights abuses and 'mandate to act' are now more important than ever, even if they themselves do not always act without fault and cannot always deny being influenced by the deliberations of their own donors. As Olivier Longué, Director of Acción Contra el Hambre, Madrid, pointed out, NGOs therefore have to 'apply an ever stricter code of ethics to prevent self-indulgence and, above all being blinded by their own activities. This implies that they have to accept the idea that "it is not because it is some kind of humanitarian intervention that it is automatically a good intervention".◆

Notes

Action Against Hunger is comprised of Action Contre la Faim, France , Action Against Hunger, UK, Action Against Hunger, USA, Acción Contra el Hambre, Spain.

For more information on the Symposium hosted by Action Against Hunger, Paris, at the Sorbonne on 15th October 1997, please contact: Sophie Noonan, Action Against Hunger, UK on +44 171 831 5858, email: aahuk@gn.apc.org or Annie Blaise, Action Contre la Faim, France on +33 1 53808842, email: ab@acf.imaginet.fr

The recruitment of emergency personnel: different agency perspectives

by Francesca Taylor, freelance research consultant

Research conducted amongst a world-wide sample of organisations involved in emergency relief indicates that there has been, and will continue to be, an expansion in the numbers of locally based nationals employed in emergency operations and a raising of the field and management level at which they are being recruited. However, there are significant variations in current agency policy and practice in relation to the employment of local staff.

Fewer expatriates and more locally recruited staff working in emergencies

Findings from research presented at the Interagency Seminar on Emergency Personnel in Dublin, November 1997 (see RRN Newsletter 10, November 1997), suggest that overall there has been a decline in the numbers of people employed in humanitarian assistance. The research sample was composed of NGOs, the Red Cross and government and UN agencies involved in emergency operations, the majority of which are also involved in longer-term rehabilitation and development work. In 1994, over two-fifths (43%) of these agencies employed more than 100 people in emergency relief, but by 1996 this figure had fallen to just over a third (37%). Over the same time period, the proportion of agencies said to employ between 26 and 100 people in emergency relief increased from a little over a fifth (22%) to above a quarter (26%). And the number of agencies employing under 25 people remained at about 35%. This decline has been most pronounced amongst expatriate relief workers, whilst conversely the number of relief staff recruited locally has increased. In 1994, about a quarter (26%) of agencies employed over 100 expatriates in emergency relief and a third (33%) employed over 100 locally recruited staff. The equivalent figures in 1996 were 22% and 35% respectively.

> *"If we are not using southern nationals we are missing out on most of the talent at our disposal. I wouldn't say it's an ideological thing, it's more a question of effectiveness."*

Marked variations in agency policy

Also noticeable from the data is the sharp difference in agency profile as regards recruitment of local staff. In 1996, the majority of agencies (45%) employed less than 10 locally recruited relief workers, but about a third of organisations (35%) employed over 100 local staff. The difference in recruitment practice appears to mirror findings from in-depth interviews with agency representatives, which suggest that there are marked variations in agency policy and thinking concerning the employment of local staff. At one end of the spectrum are agencies which have put in place plans to actively increase the numbers of local staff they employ in emergency relief programmes or are intending to do so in the near future. However, the rationale behind the introduction of these policies differs quite markedly. The main reason expounded is that it enhances the effectiveness of an organisation's response to emergencies. There is an increasing body of qualified, knowledgeable and experienced southern-based staff located in the regions where disasters arise and who speak the local languages. In many ways it is argued, it is more effective to use these personnel than to employ expatriates. Others admit that the attraction of employing greater numbers of southern nationals is their relative cheapness. Some claim there is an ethical dimension to their agency's strategy on this issue, in particular that it

is a means of enhancing local capacity. A further argument put forward is that, given current difficulties in recruiting appropriately skilled and available expatriate personnel, broadening the potential pool of recruits to southern-based nationals, increases the likelihood of being able to fill all vacant posts.

"In my opinion we will have to work more and more with national staff. The reality today is economics. It's very much cheaper to employ national staff. This is the reality for similar results."

Arguments against employing local staff

At the other end of the spectrum are agencies which are reluctant to employ locally recruited staff to work in emergencies. The rationale most frequently expressed to explain this view is that recruitment of southern nationals may compromise the independence of an organisation, particularly if it is working in conflict situations or is involved in advocacy. It is felt it can also potentially endanger the safety of locally hired staff and others working on an emergency programme.

Most of the agencies actively recruiting southern-based nationals also share the view that employing local staff to work in their home country can sometimes pose a threat to the independence and safety of a relief programme, but believe you have to be aware of the cultural context in which you are working and make sensible and sensitive individual judgements in relation to each particular programme. Many circumvent the problem of security and neutrality by recruiting local staff to work in projects in countries other than their own.

An argument frequently used against employing locally recruited staff in country programmes other than their own is that the process involves taking a valuable human resource from one country and placing it somewhere else. Consequently a country is deprived of some of its best-quality personnel. Some would argue that this resource then returns to the home country at a later period with more knowledge and experience, but this is disputed by those who say that in practice what usually happens is that, attracted by the expatriate terms and conditions, these employees end up working for one of the large international organisations such as the UN.

Role of donors

Donors are also thought to play an active role in relation to the increased locally based recruitment of relief personnel. Some are said to be putting pressure on organisations to become more actively involved in both

"We haven't hired Zaireans to work in Zaire, you're just setting yourself up for problems of neutrality and objectivity. But we have had cases of Zaireans working in Burundi. There is a geographical distance, but there also may be an advantage because they know Swahili, the terrain and how to get things done."

working with local NGOs in emergency relief and employing more local staff. Conversely, others have a policy of only funding expatriates from their own country in order to ensure they effectively monitor how a programme is being run and funding spent, or to benefit from the good PR attached to their nationals being involved in a relief programme.

Problems experienced where expatriates report to local staff

Nonetheless, it is apparent that those agencies increasingly employing locally recruited staff are also, for many of the same reasons, more frequently recruiting these staff to higher-level positions including management roles. This has usually been done by transferring a local manager to run a relief project outside their home country, in order not to restrict their independence and *modus operandi*. Unfortunately, some agencies claim that they have had problems in situations where expatriates report to locally recruited managers. The expatriates appear to have been unable or ill-prepared to accept their own position and work constructively in this context.

The implication is that there should be improvements to pre-departure training within agencies employing more locally recruited staff in management positions. In particular, it is felt more could be done to multinationalise and multiculturalise training through involving both northern- and southern-recruited staff together in training programmes.

Emergency Personnel Seminar initiatives

The potential for interagency collaboration in terms of the recruitment and training of local staff was one of the issues explored by participants at the Interagency Seminar on Emergency Personnel. Several speakers described policies and mechanisms currently being introduced within their agencies to increase the level of North/South collaboration between themselves and

"In Bosnia, when they hear you are a local, they want to know whether you are a Serb or Croat or Bosnian or Muslim. So then you are part of the conflict."

articles

partner organisations. Some agencies have already established a global pool of relief workers, for example RedR in association with CARE Atlanta, Oxfam UK and UNICEF Kenya, with communication between world-wide members being facilitated by the web. Possible means to establish common terms and conditions for the employment of local staff and to recruit local staff to more senior management positions were also discussed. These issues will be considered further within the four working groups set up to take forward a range of collaborative initiatives arising from the Seminar.◆

News

Policy and practice: developments around aid agency security

Over the last few years a number of aid workers and human rights monitors have been killed or kidnapped during the course of their work – we call to mind the death of an agency staff member in a hostage release action in Tajikistan in late 1997, and the abduction of the UNHCR representative in North Ossetia in late January 1998. The feeling that aid agencies are increasingly becoming a target is putting the security of aid personnel high on the agenda.

Statistics available from both the ICRC and the UN indicate a serious increase since the early nineties in the number of incidents in which the physical integrity of aid personnel is threatened. The highest number of fatalities among UN staff has been among national recruits, but internationally recruited staff is at greater (statistical) risk of being kidnapped. Importantly, the ICRC analysis of security incidents reveals an increase to some 50% in the number of incidents that are interpreted as crime and banditry.

Simultaneously a number of aid agencies are facing court cases with claims for compensation from maimed personnel or the relatives of deceased aid workers. Some have denied responsibility on the grounds that aid workers failed to follow security guidelines. Where war insurance cover had been taken out, it often transpired that the cover was inadequate (see RRN Newsletter 7).

There remains a tendency among many aid agency managers to deny the reality of security risks. Classified explicitly as 'tragic incidents' or implicitly as an 'occupational hazard', no questions are raised about how professionally the agency manages security, and to what degree the agency itself may have contributed to threats arising or their impact being more tragic than should have been the case. Many security guidelines on the ground remain deficient (see RRN Newsletter 7). More security manuals for aid agencies are being produced, but a common weakness remains the inability to analyse threats and to develop a combination of security-enhancing strategies that are an appropriate response to different types of threat. Some aid agencies have sought help and advice from ex-military personnel, usually with rather mixed results. In the USA, for example, there has been a strong interest from the military in putting themselves forward as 'security experts'. One of the challenges is to consider different security-enhancing strategies and to produce from them a proper management tool. Essentially these challenges are: removing or reducing the threat by gaining increased acceptance; reducing the vulnerability of the aid agency with protective devices and protective procedures, or deterring the threat with a counterthreat, i.e. the use of armed protection by or for aid agencies.

The question of armed protection and of the role of UN peace-support troops in that regard remains controversial and in need of policy clarification. The Red Cross movement has been clarifying the conditions and purposes for which armed protection may be necessary (crime and banditry). The movement remains very weary however of 'military humanitarianism', an association

...the highest number of fatalities among UN staff have been national recruits, but internationally recruited staff are at greater (statistical) risk of being kidnapped...

it sees in the long run as increasing rather than decreasing risk. The UN also recognises that armed protection may be required. There is a tendency to use private security service companies which provide armed guards and which are fully insured and properly licensed. This solution conforms with a global trend towards a privatisation of violence.

Awareness raising and policy development

The security of aid personnel was one prominent theme at the June 1997 'Wolfsberg Humanitarian Forum' that was organised by the ICRC and that brought together senior humanitarian and political players[1]. In December 1997, the ICRC in Geneva also organised a one-day seminar on security for NGOs. The Swiss government in January 1998 convened the first Periodical Meeting of States Party to the Geneva Conventions on the General Problems of the Application of International Humanitarian Law, which brought together 133 States and 36 observers. One of the two general topics concerned the respect for and protection of the personnel of humanitarian organisations[2]. The meeting mainly increased awareness of the problem and the States generally insisted on the conduct expected of humanitarian personnel. For their own protection, it was necessary for them to adhere to the principles of humanitarian action and, particularly, to the Code of Conduct of the Red Cross Movement and International NGOs (see RRN Network Paper 7). An option that received marked support was to have organisations comply with certain criteria in respect of ethics and indeed efficiency, to make public financing subject to adherence to the Code, and even to establish a system of accreditation for the organisations. Also emphasised was the need for greater coordination, not only between humanitarian agencies, but above all between humanitarian and political organisations, such as the UN Security Council. On the other hand, some delegations stressed the primary responsibility of the States in ensuring the protection of humanitarian aid personnel. A number of cases exist where the whereabouts of suspected murderers of aid personnel are known, yet no action appears to be taken (see RRN Newsletter 9).

Following an informal consultation with some agency representatives (see RRN Newsletter 8), ECHO has developed a working document 'Security of Relief Workers and Humanitarian Space'. This will serve as a background to a communication[3] from the Commission to the Development Council of the EU. ECHO, jointly with the ICRC, are also organising a conference in Lisbon in March on 'Humanitarian Action: Perception and Security'. The conference will consider humanitarian action in relation to modern warfare, political factors and the media, but also the principles of humanitarian action and the issue of armed protection.

Information collection and analysis

There are currently no statistics available showing security incidents affecting NGOs, and NGOs generally appear slow in responding to altered working conditions on the ground. In the USA, a number of concerned aid workers have started the International Committee for the Protection of Aid Workers (ICPAW, see RRN Newsletter 9), while in Europe a few NGOs are taking a similar initiative under the umbrella of VOICE (see article on page 17). This should provide an opportunity for lesson learning from incident analysis. Either will have to make a strategic decision whether or not to engage in public advocacy over recent security incidents.

Legal protection

Two major instruments for the legal protection of humanitarian personnel are the Geneva Conventions and the UN Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel. A debate exists as to whether attacks on humanitarian personnel could be considered as war crimes or grave breaches of international humanitarian law, and whether they therefore come under the remit of the International Criminal Tribunal. A diplomatic conference is scheduled in Rome between 15 June and 16 July 1998 to agree on the status of such tribunal.

Institutionalising responsibility

A number of aid agencies have clarified their security management structure, and build-up capacity. Both the ICRC and the UN leave most of the security management to the country delegation, but also have a dedicated capacity at headquarters. For the UN as a whole, this is the office of the Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) in New York – both have recently strengthened their capacity. Other agencies, such as the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and UNHCR, also have dedicated security officers. The picture among NGOs is mixed, but generally, few appear to have staff dedicated full-time to security.

Training

However, a more professional management of security requires training, skill development, drill and staff discipline. This remains an area in need of strengthening. UNHCR is the UN agency with most staff in dangerous situations. The agency is running training courses, but probably not fast enough to cover its many staff within a reasonable time span. RedR in the UK has been offering two-day training courses on security and communication for almost two years now. In January 1998, InterAction, the umbrella organisation of US PVOs, with OFDA support, ran a pilot course for NGOs on the training of trainers on security[4]. The pilot revealed that it is unrealistic to try and train people on security and as trainers in a mere five days. It revealed areas in which

the curriculum should be strengthened. The strength of the pilot course lay in its comprehensive approach to security, including, among the more traditional topics of mine awareness and telecommunications, threat assessment, different security strategies and inter-personal anger defusing skills. A proposal is being put together to build on the experience. A modular training workbook could usefully be developed from the materials already produced, while future training courses should preferably be organised closer to the field.

These various initiatives are clearly complementary. Perhaps a multi-agency network and collaborative effort is now needed, to exchange experiences in the management of security, to develop the analysis of trends, threats and contributing causes, to develop standards for agency policy on security (a point made in the People-in-Aid Code of Best Practice in the Management and Support of Aid Personnel, RRN Network Paper 20), to advocate for broader legal protection and around policies of donors and political authorities, and to more clearly articulate their needs and views with regard to war insurance coverage.◆

Notes

1. *Obtainable from Mme. A. Cusinay at the ICRC*
2. *ICRC Preparatory Document for the first periodical meeting. Oct. 97; the Swiss government will report on the periodical meeting at the 27th International Conference of the Red Cross/Crescent.*
3. *Both the background paper and the communication will be available from ECHO information and on the ECHO Website*
4. *For more information: Jane Swan at InterAction on fax 1 (202) 667 8236 or email jswan@interaction.org*

Assistance strategy for Afghanistan: UN 'business as usual' or a new model of partnership in complex political emergencies?

In April last year, the UN's highest coordinating body, the innocuously named Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC), chaired by the Secretary General and including the Executive Heads of UN agencies, IMF and World Bank, met in Geneva for one of its regular six monthly sessions. It took a decision to select Afghanistan as one of two countries to serve as a testing ground for a new approach by the international community to complex political emergencies. Sadako Ogata, the High Commissioner for Refugees, was apparently instrumental in the choice.

The decision complemented existing efforts to review the way in which assistance was being provided in Afghanistan. Three months earlier, an extraordinary conference had been held in Ashgabad, Turkmenistan, bringing together UN member states, both from the region and from major western donor countries, with a range of aid actors, including the Bretton Woods institutions, UN agencies, international and Afghan NGOs, the ICRC and the Red Cross and Crescent movement. It resulted in the broad agreement to develop a holistic strategy for bringing sustainable peace to Afghanistan, recognising that "peace needs to be sought through political negotiation as well as built through support given to the population".

Both the Ashgabad meeting and the ACC decision took place against the backdrop of growing international alarm at developments within the country. The Taliban capture of Kabul in late 1996 revealed their own regressive policies and a number of ugly trends, including the country's growing importance as a source of 'drugs and thugs' and of regional political instability. By any social and humanitarian yardstick, Afghanistan merited a renewed injection of international concern. The fighting is in geographically limited areas, but could spread. After 18 years of war, the economy is in ruins, the environment degraded, infrastructure shattered, and land mines and unexploded ordnance litter the country. Up to one million people have been killed. There remain an estimated three million refugees and internally displaced people. The country has some of the worst social development indicators in Asia if not the world. Afghan authorities lack administrative resources, expertise and will. Abuses of human rights and humanitarian law abound. Women are denied the right to congregate and speak in public, have unequal access to health and education, and in urban areas are prevented from working. The psychological and physical suffering endured by millions of people and the long-term damage caused by an almost total dislocation of social and economic infrastructure are incalculable.

In September 1997, a high-level inter-agency mission arrived in the region led by Hugh Cholmondeley, the author of reports that prompted the ACC decision to develop a strategic framework approach. The mission, including representatives from UNDPA, UNDHA, UNDP, the World Bank and Oxfam, participated in a workshop with all assistance 'stakeholders', making trips into Afghanistan and meeting with a range of actors before preparing a draft Strategic Framework document.

The document assessed the nature of the problem facing both Afghans and the international community, reviewed

the assistance record, and assessed the international community's approach which, it said, had saved many lives, but lacked a unifying vision. It addressed the supply-driven nature of much aid planning and activity, the many overlaps and inconsistencies in programming, and the problem posed by absence of basic information about conditions on the ground to allow measurement of the impact of assistance efforts.

It proposed a new approach which is both radical and plain common sense. It suggested that immediate steps be taken to gain consensus among all those involved as to the nature of the political, economic, social and humanitarian problem. Principles should be identified to guide overall assistance efforts and the international community's relationship with the Afghans whilst effective means should be found to develop a coherent and coordinated assistance effort in which the respective competences of stakeholders – including countries in the region, donors, UN agencies, NGOs, Afghan authorities and communities – are recognised and their responsibilities made explicit.

In early November, the document was reviewed by the Afghan Task Force, a small 'home-grown' group consisting of donor, UN and NGO representatives, which meets regularly in Islamabad to provide a sounding board to the UN Resident/ Humanitarian Coordinator, Alfredo Witschi-Cestari. It recommended that the Strategic Framework serve as the basis of an assistance strategy for Afghanistan, and that this ASA as it has come to be known should be drawn up immediately to give greater operational flesh to the concepts in the Strategic Framework paper.

Meanwhile, reality for most Afghans continues to deteriorate.

A draft ASA was circulated in mid November, reviewed by donors and aid agencies in Islamabad, and presented to the Afghan Support Group of donors (14 countries plus the EU that between them account for the vast bulk of the response to the Consolidated Appeals for Afghanistan, formed after the Ashgabad meeting on the initiative of Dutch Minister Jan Pronk).

The Assistance Strategy set out three overall goals to inform the vision of sustainable peace in Afghanistan: that assistance must, at a minimum, do no harm and, where possible, help build peace; that all assistance must empower Afghans to build sustainable livelihoods; and that saving lives and reducing human suffering must remain a priority. As these priorities raise contradictions, it is acknowledged that they will need to form the focus of further discussion over the coming months. The strategy also proposed a number of principles to sustain international assistance efforts and urged that a means be found to ensure that the strategy supports, and is supported by, the international community's political efforts to seek a peaceful settlement.

These principles included upholding the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women; the presumption of the sovereignty of the Afghan state, transparency, respect for local traditions and customs, and commitment to securing Afghan involvement in and ownership of the strategy. The document proposed that a common programme be formulated and that programme-wide, independent monitoring and evaluation be initiated. It also proposed a common fund, setting out steps for the revision of the Consolidated Appeal to allow it to serve as a management tool for donors and assistance actors alike. The plan is that in future no projects will be 'stand alone', but will be attached to a programme or sub-programme which will in turn need to demonstrate that it has addressed a number of issues, including assessment of Afghan capacities; of external players' capacities; and impact on fulfilment of agreed principles. The idea is to enable donors to fund more intelligently, allowing them to support the integrity of programmes and not leave them second guessing whether gender concerns have been thought through, for example. Also, in future Appeals will include all funding information, even if donors continue to fund agencies directly.

The Assistance Strategy was warmly endorsed by donors in New York. One said that the only thing it had in common with other UN documents was the staple that held it together. The only major reservation concerns the common fund: that it might pose bureaucratic problems for donors, and that it is premature (because donors would like to see how common programming works before adopting common funding mechanisms).

Actors in the field are now faced with the challenge of translating the Assistance Strategy and the common programme into reality. Issued on February 4th, the 1998 Appeal for Afghanistan elaborated steps that might be used to build a common programme, including proposals for revamping the Appeal itself. The UN Coordinator's office, both in Islamabad and through its five regional coordination offices within the country, is systematically consulting all 'stakeholders' on how a common programme might be formulated, and what coordination is needed, and desired by them to make it happen.

A major effort is now under way to communicate the purpose and possible benefits of the common programme with both Afghans and agencies, whether UN or NGO, recognising that their attitude and commitment could make or break it. Generally speaking, NGOs are positive while healthily sceptical, not least about the UN's own ability to join in and staff a truly coordinated, needs-driven, logical and collaboratively

programmed initiative. These doubts are shared by many in the UN itself.

At the time of writing, individual UN agencies' positions are uncertain. While the merits of a common programme are recognised, there are seemingly inevitable suspicions about its compatibility with the mandates and much-prized independence of individual UN agencies. No clear signal has been given by UN agency headquarters on what position should be adopted, leaving the decision as to what attitude to adopt to local Heads of Agencies and their field staff . But donor commitment, the support being provided by the Afghan Task Force, and the moral and financial backing of three key UN entities – UNDP, UNDHA and the UN Department of Political Affairs – are providing support to drive the new approach forward.

Meanwhile, reality for most Afghans continues to deteriorate. There is greater activity on the international scene to find a political settlement, much of it catalysed by the Secretary General's Special Envoy Lakhdar Brahimi, but there are few signs that the warring parties, particularly the Taliban, are prepared to come to terms with each other. A major earthquake in February in northern Afghanistan which killed thousands served as an abrupt reminder of the miserable circumstances endured by vast numbers of people.

The fate of the process is in the balance. If it succeeds, it might herald a new approach to complex political emergencies, one characterised by a new partnership between donors, aid actors and beneficiaries. If it fails, it might be condemned as yet another experiment inflicted upon the Afghans, an effort doomed by the intransigence of the international community towards reforming 'business as usual'. But as a genuine effort at a collective approach to building peace and saving lives, it deserves to succeed. ◆

The Ottawa Convention and the Nobel Prize: two victories in the fight against anti-personnel mines

The use of anti-personnel mines did not become an 'international problem' until the early 1990s and it has been NGOs working in heavily mined countries that have raised the international awareness of this plague.

The mobilisation of civil society through the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)

The ICBL is a civil society movement composed of NGOs. Founded in 1992 by six organisations, it now has over 1000 members led by a Steering Committee consisting of: Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, Medico Internacional, Mines Advisory Group, Physicians for Human Rights, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, and Save the Children – Sweden, as well as the Cambodian Campaign, the Afghanistan Campaign, the South-African Campaign and the Kenyan Campaign for a ban on landmines. The ICBL provides information to the media, mobilised citizens and exerts pressure on national and international governmental authorities.

The objective of the ICBL is to see a total ban on anti-personnel mines as the new international norm. To achieve this objective, the ICBL proposes that States enter into a collective commitment, which at a national level is translated into laws and independent mechanisms of control. The ICBL also wants to see a greater commitment and improved technical and financial means to prevent mine accidents and increase de-mining.

The ICBL advocates the global acceptance and implementation of the Ottawa Convention on a ban against anti-personnel mines.

Over the past five years and in the face of growing public concern, States have been forced to clarify their position. Negotiations under UN auspices started in 1995 and 1996 to review the inadequate 1980 Convention on the use of anti-personnel mines. But no acceptable consensus could then be reached.

Following the failure of those negotiations, and given that the UN Conference on Disarmament was not an appropriate forum to ensure results, the ICBL has supported the so-called 'Ottawa Process'.

The 'Ottawa Process' has been a Canadian initiative, inspired by the proposals of the ICBL which, in December 1997, resulted in the signature of a 'Convention on a Ban on the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction'. With over 120 States having signed the Convention, the chances that this will become a global convention are great, and a total ban imposes itself now as the new international norm.

The existence of this committed core of States, will gradually attract other countries which want to conform with international humanitarian law. This will increase the reality of a total ban, and isolate those States whose military and industrial practices remain unacceptable.

Simultaneously with the signing of the 'Ottawa Convention', the Nobel Prize for Peace 1997 has been granted to the 1000 organisations that make up the ICBL. This honour clearly reinforces the ICBL in its efforts to convince other States to sign up to the 'Ottawa Convention' by the year 2000, and to respect its stipulations. However, the 'Ottawa Convention' and the Nobel Prize do not represent a complete achievement. The objective of the ICBL is the total elimination of all anti-personnel mines, on the one hand by the implementation of a total ban on their production, sale and deployment, but also through tangible support to populations who have to live with this deadly pollution.

States and intergovernmental organisations need to agree to a substantial increase in the practical aid to populations that are threatened or victimised by mines

The first step to take is that of accelerated de-mining. Increased and accelerated de-mining in mine-afflicted countries should be part of the international cooperation policies and, given the scope of the problem, the high cost of de-mining and the limited financial resources, it is vital to increase local capacity to prevent mine-accidents and to remove mines. Priority has to be given to a complete de-mining of inhabited areas, in line with the needs and priorities of a local population and its livelihood.

Secondly, the local capacity to integrate the victims of anti-personnel mines needs more support. Increased medical and social assistance is to be made a component of the reconstruction of war-torn societies, and the rehabilitation of their social services. This support needs to be part of broader public health policies, so that it benefits not only mine-amputees but all people with disabilities, and in a more general sense the whole population of a mine-infested area.

The financial resources for de-mining and for medical and social assistance should not come from already existing development funds.

Continued campaign work to achieve the total ban on anti-personnel mines

All States have to be convinced to sign the 'Ottawa Convention' and to implement the required legal and practical measures to ensure a total ban. The ICBL has to remain alert particularly to the following points:

signatories need to adopt national legislation to outlaw the development, production, stockpiling, sale, import, export and use of anti-personnel mines and their component parts. These measures have to be extended to the so-called 'sub-munitions' or explosives programmed to self-destruct, whose effects and impact are similar to those of anti-personnel mines.

governments have to ensure that their national business corporations comply with the legislation, both at home and in their overseas branches. Commercial companies relocating their anti-personnel mine business to third world countries, or becoming shareholders in foreign companies that produce such mines cannot be tolerated.

Governments have to ensure that the total ban on anti-personnel mines is introduced in all forms of training and instruction of their military. Moreover, acceptance of the ban on anti-personnel mines is to be made a condition of continued bilateral military cooperation. ◆

The European Platform on Conflict Prevention and Transformation

As attacks on humanitarianism grow and the spotlight has been turned on the role of NGOs in fuelling conflict, so NGOs are increasingly looking towards advocacy at the level of policy making as a means of addressing human rights abuses which they are powerless to tackle in the field. Set up following the European Conference on Conflict Prevention (February 1997) hosted by the National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development (NCDO) in Amsterdam, the European Platform on Conflict Prevention and Transformation seeks to coordinate NGO action and support for conflict prevention policy making at EU level.

The 1997 Conference resulted in the *Amsterdam Appeal,* an action plan for European leaders which highlighted key concerns for an effective EU approach to preventing conflict and outlined key advocacy issues for NGOs. The Appeal recognised the need for multiple actors and coalition building in strengthening pressure on EU governments. The Platform was a direct result of this expressed need, seeking to: facilitate networking; support the establishment and functioning of national platforms; encourage cooperation and exchange of information in advocacy and lobbying activities; and act as a catalyst for innovative activities. Three main areas of activities for 1998 are scheduled to include:

- identification of relevant actors, experts, publications and events in the field of conflict prevention and resolution – resulting in an updated version of the 1996 'Prevention and Management of Conflicts; an International Directory' first published by NCDO;

- the Directory, together with findings from basic surveys of prevention activities in the main international conflict areas, will be made accessible through a dedicated website which will also offer a monthly bulletin and calendar of events;

- education and awareness raising aimed at the public, media, formal education systems, NGOs and churches in the form of television documentaries, field trips for journalists and the development of an educational rapid response system; advocacy and lobbying, initially focused on the British Presidency of the EU.

The Platform is guided by a Steering Committee composed of representatives of the Life and Peace Institute, Sweden, Saferworld and International Alert, UK, Flemish NGO Consultation on Conflict Prevention, Belgium, German Network on Civilian Conflict Transformation / Berghof Research Centre, Germany, Centre for Applied Studies in International Negotiations, Switzerland, and the Foundation European Centre for Conflict Prevention, The Netherlands, and the secretariat is based at the European Centre for Conflict Prevention.

It will be interesting to see how the initiative develops – the recent focus on conflict prevention activities is still the subject of considerable debate, raising questions such as: whether the existence of conflict as a motor of change is always bad and therefore always to be prevented; how much donors are reaching towards NGOs to fill a gap in their own foreign and diplomatic policy without real analysis of their comparative advantage; and whether without real coordination, NGOs as peace-makers will confuse more than they clarify. However, the establishment of a forum for debate of such issues is perhaps encouraging if such questions are raised. The objective of providing concerted pressure on EU governments (and it is to be hoped the EU itself) is certainly to be applauded. It remains to be seen if such a wide coalition of interests can achieve the sort of coordination and cooperation necessary to make such an initiative work.◆

Prevention and Management of Conflicts:
An International Directory, 1996/ NCDO-Amsterdam

The directory is comprised of two parts. Part I offers an introduction to the subject with chapters contributed by K. Rupesinghe, P. van Tongeren, A.J. Jongman and A.P. Schmid and a typology of conflict prevention activities. Part II lists African, American, Asian, Australian and European initiatives and intergovernmental organisations and gives case studies of their work.

The European Platform on Conflict Prevention and Transformation, PO Box 18184, 1001ZB Amsterdam. tel: +31 (30) 253 7528, fax: +31 (30) 253 7529

Project for a humanitarian security network

In the course of recent years, security incidents on the ground have increased in frequency, complexity and intensity. Information on these incidents emerges in a relatively piecemeal way, and this prevents any attempt at compiling statistics, analysing cases in context, and learning from them. Nevertheless, information does exist, although it is difficult to access in the public domain. Security is a collective issue and can no longer be identified in a fragmentary way by each individual organisation. The processing, analysis and dissemination of information are key factors in guiding the decisions of the organisations not just on the ground, but also at the headquarters level and for the humanitarian sector overall.

This being so, an initial group of four humanitarian agencies (Action Contre la Faim, Disaster Relief Agency, Intersos and Medecins du Monde) has come together through the European NGO Consortium VOICE (Voluntary Organisations Cooperating in Emergencies) to reflect upon these points and to put forward some concrete proposals. This working group has set up a project aimed at compiling a database common to the humanitarian organisations, pooling information relating to the security of their staff. This programme aims to record, analyse and identify the principal trends in security incidents which should make it possible to identify patterns of violence and their appropriate response. Currently the project is completing the identification phase, and should now move into the design phase.

The implementation of the programme will be supervised by a Steering Group composed of a small number of voluntary organisations. These will be responsible for guiding and validating the various stages of progress. In order to allow more organisations to be involved in the project, an 'Enlarged Consultation Group' will be established. Its members will be kept regularly informed of the developments in the project and will be able to pass on their comments and remarks to the Steering Group.◆

The formation of these groups is currently being defined. Organisations wishing for further information on the project may contact Mr. Pierre Gallien, Action Contre la Faim, Paris. tel: (33) 1 5380 8814, fax: (33) 1 4565 9250, email: pgallien@club-internet.fr

SPHERE Project - progress to date

In Newsletter 10 (November 1997), we reported on progress made by the SPHERE Project sector managers and technical working groups on compiling agreed minimum standards. Since then, comments and experience in the five sectors of health, water and sanitation, nutrition, shelter and food security have been sought from an extensive range of humanitarian actors and the sector managers are in the process of preparing second drafts.

A reminder of exactly what the SPHERE Project is...

The Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) and InterAction launched the SPHERE Project – minimum standards in humanitarian response – on 1 July 1997. The one-year project involves front-line NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, interested donor governments, and UN agencies cooperating to develop a set of standards in core areas of humanitarian relief. These standards will help to improve the quality of assistance given in emergencies, and the accountability of agencies to their beneficiaries, their membership and their donors. The standards will derive from a charter of humanitarian rights – drawn from existing international law – relevant to all with a legitimate claim to assistance in disaster situations.

A recent Sphere Project Newsletter article listed those minimum standards of provision to which everyone should be entitled – for copies of that Newsletter, contact email: purdin@ifrc.org or tel: + 41 22 791 6202. Listed below are the principal areas for which standards are being developed and the working group members involved in the drafting process. In addition to the working group members, a further group of specialists are involved in a peer review capacity. The key to the initiative's success is inclusivity. If your agency is not listed as a member of either the working or peer review groups and you wish to have access to drafts for comment, please contact the relevant sector manager.

Water and sanitation:
water supply; excreta disposal; vector control; solid waste disposal; drainage.
Contact: John Adams: jadams@oxfam.org.uk
Working Group: ACF, CARE, ICRC, IFRC, MSF, UNHCR, RedR.

Nutrition:
mortality; morbidity; analysis; general nutritional support; support for malnourished persons; public health social/care environment.
Contact: L. Gostelow, A. Taylor: l.gostelow@scfuk.org.uk
Working Group: SCF-UK, Concern, UNICEF, WFP, ACF, MSF Int, LSHTM/ENN, OXFAM.

Food Security:
needs assessment; food provisioning; resource management.
Contact: H. Hale: hvhale@mindspring.com
Working Group: CARE, Food Aid Management, EuronAid, WFP, FAO, ADRA, CRS, World Vision, USAID/FFP.

Shelter and Site:
clothing; housing; household items; site selection; site planning.
Contact: P. Wijmans: wijmans-kalembo@wxs.nl
Working Group: CONCERN, LWF Field offices, RedR, ODI, IFRC, UNHCR, MSF.

Health Services:
assessment; health information system; measles programme; control of communicable disease; healthcare service delivery.
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Regional focus...

CAMBODIA

With less than six months to go until the next scheduled elections, a climate of extreme political uncertainty reigns across the country. Following the violent ousting of Prime Minister Prince Ranariddh by his coalition partner Hun Sen in July 1997, fighting between forces loyal to the two leaders has intensified along the Thai-Cambodian border. Rebel Khmer Rouge forces have rallied behind those supporting Prince Ranariddh resulting in a military stalemate while attempts by neighbouring countries to broker a diplomatic solution have so far been unsuccessful. In the face of Hun Sen's intransigence regarding an agreement that would allow Prince Ranariddh to return and contest forthcoming elections, the continuing viability of the internationally-sponsored peace process is more than ever in doubt.

The 1991 Paris Peace Agreements gave rise to UN-sponsored elections in Cambodia two years later which saw the winner Prince Ranariddh forced into a shaky power-sharing arrangement with his former enemy Hun Sen. With the latter effectively maintaining control over the administration and the armed forces, governing became a delicate task of cooperation and compromise. Despite much initial progress, in the absence of genuine reconciliation between the two parties the coalition began to break down.

With the stakes surrounding control of the government growing day by day as elections approached, both sides began to jockey for position by arming themselves and seeking alliances with other political groupings including the Khmer Rouge rebels. Using this as a pretext, Hun Sen's vastly superior military forces struck quickly in July 1997 seizing control of the government. In the aftermath of the fighting in Phnomh Penh, many of Ranariddh's FUNCINPEC party and government officials fled the country. The extra-judicial executions of key military leaders loyal to Ranariddh as well as the subsequent decision of other FUNCINPEC people who had remained in the country, to work with Hun Sen, have left the party deeply divided.

Most opposition politicians have now returned to Cambodia, though Ranariddh himself is faced with the prospect of a trial before an impartial court if he re-enters the country. While an official amnesty from King Sihanouk would clear his son's name, to ask for this would be an admission of guilt which Ranariddh so far has been unwilling to do. He has instead chosen to remain outside the country in the hope that international pressure can be brought to bear on Hun Sen. So far this strategy has shown few fruits in a climate of increasing international ambiguity over the peace process in Cambodia.
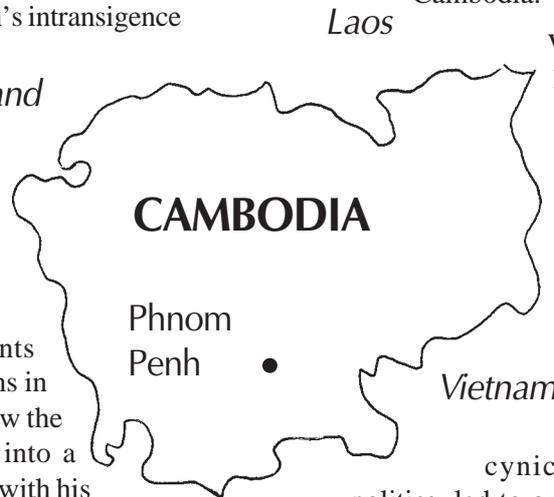
With few notable exceptions the 19 countries which were guarantors of the Paris Agreements seem to be opting for 'stability' over the principle of democracy in Cambodia. The failure of Ranariddh's people to live up to the vast expectations placed upon them when they entered the government has, in the climate of increasing cynicism regarding Cambodian politics, led to a hands-off approach to political developments there by the international community. While it is firmly behind the forthcoming elections and is providing significant funds to organise them, the international community has shown less concern as to whether the elections will be genuinely free or fair. The UN is urging the warring parties to agree to a ceasefire so that, as in the early 90s, all refugees can be repatriated before the elections. Underlying this approach is a dangerous assumption that elections represent a panacea for the country's political problems.

Few people, either donors or local politicians, are addressing the difficult question of how the government which emerges following elections – which will likely be another coalition – can avoid the same pitfalls as the previous one. Insufficient attention is being paid to how the country's weak political institutions can be strengthened. Outside Phnomh Penh it is likely that pockets of insecurity will remain across the country for a long time to come. While an ailing Pol Pot has effectively been marginalised within the Khmer Rouge,

Laos

Thailand

CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh •

Vietnam

those in power remain as ready as ever to protect the lucrative economic activities in their zones by military means.

Meanwhile the reconstruction effort continues despite the decision of one major donor – the USA – to cut all but non-essential humanitarian aid in an effort to place pressure on Hun Sen. While Cambodia has continued to receive record amounts of aid in the past few years, the recent political instability has led to a 'wait and see' attitude among many other major donors. The humanitarian needs in Cambodia nonetheless remain prodigious with the well-publicised case of some 60,000 refugees in Thailand overshadowing a much more substantive and intractable problem of internal displacement which is not being effectively addressed. With an estimated 50% of prostitutes and 8–10% of soldiers testing HIV positive, the country has another health, social and economic problem that will incapacitate it even if the fighting stops today.◆

CONGO BRAZZAVILLE

A five-month civil war ravaged Congo Brazzaville when in June 1997 forces from president Lissouba surrounded the residence of one of his main political rivals Denis Sassou N'Guesso. Indiscriminate shelling and bombing led to intense destruction in the capital, with some 650,000 people becoming internally displaced, and 40,000 taking refuge in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire). Estimates are of 5–10,000 killed. Residential and commercial and administrative buildings, including those of the UN and the national Red Cross, were looted, and there has been widespread violence against women.

Cameroon

Gabon

Central African Republic

CONGO BRAZZAVILLE

D. R. Congo

Brazzaville

In October the militias of N'Guesso, supported by Angolan troops, pushed inland, consolidating a military victory over Lissouba and another political rival, B. Kolelas. N'Goussa has proclaimed himself president. There remain pro-Lissouba troops in the area between the town of Dolisie and the Gabonese border.

Following a rapid interagency assessment mission in October 1997 the UN launched a Flash Appeal for US $17.7 million, which has received only limited response. The main humanitarian concerns were and remain food security and nutrition, health and shelter. Congo Brazzaville is a net food importer and the war had

disrupted commercial transactions. Most IDPs were hosted by relatives in their villages of origin, drawing on rural food stocks. Even though basic staples became available on the market again, high prices created problems of access. High levels of malnutrition among under-fives were reported. Aid agencies worked hard to provide emergency medical services and to get hospitals and health centres rehabilitated and resupplied.

After weeks of continued looting, the new president has moved to bring normalisation and his government appears relatively inclusive. Civil servants were asked to return to their posts and received two months of salary arrears. Militias were disarmed. By the end of November, most checkpoints in the capital had disappeared and administrative buildings were guarded. Due to the improved security, by January 1998 an estimated 70% of the population of Brazzaville had returned. So too had foreign companies like Elf, Electricité de France and the Lyonnaise des Eaux.

An analysis of the Brazzaville crisis needs to take into account several social, economic and political factors.

From an international perspective, some analysts have seen the Brazzaville crisis as a predictable domino consequence of the fall of Mobutu – the changes in Zaire have fundamentally altered the existing regional alliances and balances, and strengthened the position of Angolan president Dos Santos. There is little doubt that Angolan army's support of N'Guesso's militias has been decisive in the Brazzaville civil war. The position of Gabon, more in line with French policy, has been reserved. During the war Gabon has maintained a conciliatory attitude, but in the end it seems perfectly satisfied with the victory of the rebel movement.

In recent years however, the national economy of Brazzaville has been deteriorating, and the country is heavily indebted. Annual income per capita fell from US$ 1030 in 1992 to US $ 640 in 1994. With some 80,000 civil servants, Congo Brazzaville is one of the most extensively 'administered' African countries. The costs of this mediocre civil service weigh heavily on the budget. The intensive urbanisation (70% of the population of 2.6 million) has resulted in high unemployment rates even among educated youth. An 'armed militia' culture has been developing for some years in this seedbed of frustrations. Much of the destruction took place in the most deprived areas in the northern sector of Brazzaville city, where basic social needs were already high.
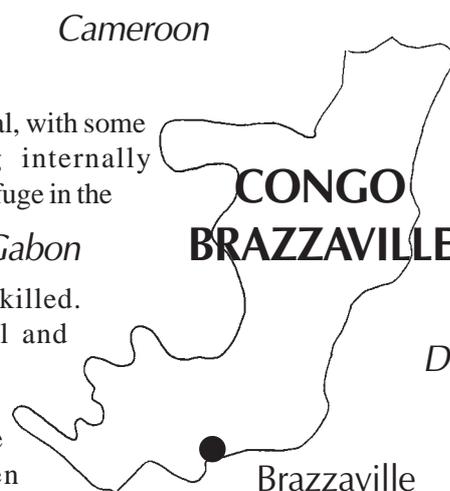
On the other hand, the beginning exploitation of the offshore oilfield of N'Koss, for which French and American companies have been competing, will fundamentally alter the parameters of the national economy. A debate has started on how best to manage the natural resources of the country.

Although the humanitarian emergency has subsided, the country is clearly far from recovery. The violence has caused deep social disruption, the economy and administration remain in need of reform and it must not be forgotten that the new government has been born from a military coup at a time when democratic elections were being prepared.◆

SRI LANKA

The conflicts in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka appear equally intractable: the aims of the opposing groups are too far apart; the minds are set on the past and not on the present and the future; and high emotions can quickly drown any rational analysis or proposal. When the People's Alliance government started peace talks with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the autumn of 1994, Sri Lankans made hopeful comparisons with Northern Ireland, where the IRA had then declared a ceasefire. The Northern Ireland talks remain under threat of renewed paramilitary violence, while full-scale war has been raging again in Sri Lanka since April 1995.

The prospects for a negotiated peace were significantly diminished when on 25 January three LTTE suicide commandos exploded a truck bomb just outside the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, killing at least 16 bystanders. The attack on this site of pilgrimage is contrary to international humanitarian law, which the LTTE in 1988 had promised to respect. The choice of the target – the Temple is the most sacred shrine of Sinhalese Buddhists – and the timing – the 50th Anniversary celebrations of Sri Lanka's independence were scheduled to be held in Kandy a week later send a clear message about how Tamil militants perceive Sri Lanka's failure to build a nation. The attack was also extremely provocative, sure to enrage hardline Sinhalese nationalists whose intransigence matches that of the LTTE.

In response the Government outlawed the LTTE as a political party, a step it had so far refrained from taking on the grounds that it would make peace talks illegal. Heavy fighting erupted again in the Vanni area, where the army since May 1997 has been moving slowly forward to capture the strategic landroute between

Vavuniya and Kilinochchi. Meanwhile and for the first time since 1983, local elections were held in government-controlled Jaffna, in which moderate Tamil parties participated.

The banning of the LTTE leads to renewed pressure by Sri Lanka on the UK government to outlaw the organisation and close its office in London. One of the standing counter arguments of the UK government to this demand had been that the LTTE was not banned in Sri Lanka. India banned the LTTE after it murdered Rajiv Gandhi in 1991. It recently in absentia condemned Prebakharan, the LTTE leader, to death for that assassination. The USA banned the LTTE in 1997.

Most Tamils, and surprisingly also the mostly Sinhalese UNP opposition party, have criticised the government's ban of the LTTE as leaving only a military option to end the war. The UNP however has also rejected the government's devolution proposals for a political solution to the conflict. The government needed the UNP support to get a two-thirds majority for constitutional reform. It is to be feared that the two major parties, the SLFP and the UNP, will renege on their agreement of 1997, and return to the partisan and 'winner-take-all' politics that has helped create deep fractures in the body politic and remained a major obstacle to peace.◆

LIBERIA

Following its first six months in office, observers are still very uncertain about the nature of the new Liberian Government – developmentalist or rogue state? Mixed signals from Taylor's administration in the key areas of security and the economy have left Liberians and outsiders wary of the new peace. An issue for policy-makers is how best to intervene in order to support and encourage efficient and responsible governance. Conditionality on aid flows is being introduced by both the US and EC, but its effectiveness as a lever remains to be seen. The real challenge lies in the kinds of programming funds are used for, as well as in the types of relationship that outsiders can develop with the new administration.

Early consolidation of the State security apparatus was to be expected from the Taylor government, and some of the accompanying tensions could also have been anticipated. The difficult situation in neighbouring Sierra Leone has been a major factor adding to the insecurity in Liberia, while grievances from the conflict are still unresolved at local levels and at the
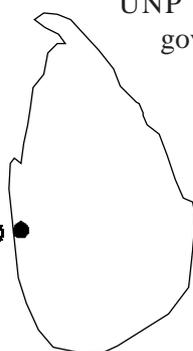
national political level. In spite of these real problems, the behaviour of the government so far has been worrying, with concern over the restructuring of the national army, the setting up and arming of special police forces, and continued harassment of the press and opposition.

The restructuring of the national army has been conducted independently by the government, who rejected provisions in the Abuja accord for ECOMOG assistance. Almost the entire higher command has been dismissed or retired, and one quarter of the ranks have been laid off, replaced with former NPFL generals and fighters. In the area of human rights protection and press freedom, the disappearance and murder of a prominent opposition politician and his family in December was one of a series of incidents that have included harassment of senior Krahn figures, and of members of the press seen as critical of the government.

Although Taylor's government has distanced itself from some actions, claiming the police have overstepped their authority, responsibility must ultimately lie with the cabinet and president. Representations have been made on these issues from diplomatic quarters, and from the Liberian human rights community, with clear messages from both donors and potential investors that such occurrences are unacceptable. It remains to be seen whether this type of pressure will prove effective, but the government's seeming commitment to rejoining international circles has led to some optimism. The failure of the international community to push for intervention on the restructuring of the army may however represent a missed opportunity to influence the composition and professionalism of the new army, both of which are now questionable.

Economic developments since the election have also been highly ambiguous. The appointment of serious professionals to key economic positions has been welcomed by international financial institutions, and progress is being made in balancing the budget, integrating the dual currencies, and rescheduling the large outstanding foreign debt. However, corruption continues unabated within the civil service, and private deals continue to play an important role in the exploitation of mineral and forest resources. This latter is particularly worrying, as the unequal redistribution of profit from Liberia's natural wealth, and its diversion from national development to private hands, was a major factor in creating the conditions that led to violent conflict in the first place.

This issue has been included in the list of conditionalities proposed by Minister Pronk, who is chairing the donor conference on Liberia in April, and such attention is welcome. The international financial institutions should ensure that any new financing or debt forgiveness is dependent on accountability and transparency in all aspects of the economy. In conjunction with the use of aid as a lever, however, donors should attempt to support positive indigenous efforts and mechanisms of change. Positive local capacities do exist, and must be strengthened wherever this is feasible. Indirect ways to promote accountability, good governance, and the protection of human rights in Liberia, from support of grass roots activists to direct capacity building within relevant ministries and government departments, may have as important an impact as direct conditionalities.

Some initiatives exist, including the new UN peace-building office which has a mandate to assist the government in renewing structures destroyed in the war, and to promote adherence to international standards of good governance. Other plans, such as a US initiative to provide specialist training for the restructured police forces, have been temporarily abandoned due to apparent lack of cooperation from the Liberian side. Support for the functions of the justice ministry and courts has also been minimal so far. Intervention in this area of national law enforcement is a delicate issue, but must at least be attempted. If approached in a sensitive way, capacity building could help to support those forces within the government that favour adherence to the rule of law, and to undermine those elements pursuing other objectives.

Efforts to promote peace-building and sustainable legitimate livelihoods at local levels, as NGOs are attempting through reconciliation and community development programmes, are also important and should be expanded. Undermining the negative forces in Liberia will be difficult, but can only be achieved through support for local mechanisms of accountability and conflict resolution. Pro-active and pragmatic engagement to encourage these mechanisms should thus constitute the most positive and ethical response from the international community, and should be employed alongside the negative use of conditionality and threats. ◆

KOSOVO

In recent months fears of an escalation of violence in Kosovo have increased. There have been widespread human rights violations, and in late 1997 students started taking to the streets. In November 1997 the Kosovo Liberation Army appeared for the first time. Its size, capability and strategies remain unknown, but with 70% of the population under 30 years old, and an unemployment rate of over half the population, these are many of the ingredients that make for an explosive mixture.

KOSOVO

Serbia

Macedonia

Albania

Kosovo is a province in the new Yugoslav republic, but does not have an equal status with Serbia and Montenegro. Some 90% of the population are Albanian-speaking, mostly Muslim, Kosovars, whilst the mostly orthodox Serbs constitute less than 10%.

In March 1989 Kosovo saw its autonomy seriously reduced and in the summer of 1990 it issued a 'declaration of independence'. For about six years now, Kosovars have been running a parallel education and health system from mosques, garages and flats, after policy changes blocked the use of the Albanian language – a system funded mainly from a 3% tax contributed by all Kosovars abroad. An agreement, brokered by the Sant'Edigio community, was reached in September 1996, but collapsed over different interpretations and when street protests erupted in Belgrade.

In September 1991 Kosovars held a referendum for independence and in the following May, semi-clandestine elections took place for a president and a parliament. The Democratic League of Kosovo, under its chairman Dr. Rugova, has been the strongest political party with a strategy of peaceful resistance. Dr. Rugova has been seeking the status of an international protectorate for Kosovo, and hoping for negotiations with Belgrade under foreign mediation. The government in exile under Prime Minister Bukoshi is however increasingly impatient with the non-violent strategy that is failing to bring results. There are indications that its alliegance is shifting to the Parliamentary Party of Kosovo, headed by Demaci, which is more prepared to adopt a strategy of civil disobedience and active resistance. The Serb Resistance Movement of Tajkovic in Kosovo has been opposed to the regime in Belgrade, but in recent weeks, Bozur, a movement of Kosovo Serbs supportive of Milosevic, appears to be newly active.

The international community has consistently voiced its concerns over Kosovo, most recently at the Bonn Peace Implementation Council's conference and in a statement from the International Helsinki Federation. Although the power of Milosevic in Belgrade has waned, and the 'democratic' opposition in Serbia disintegrated, Milosevic appears still to be the only authority that can negotiate an agreement on Kosovo. Encouragingly, the Yugoslav army has expressed its preference for a political rather than a military solution.

One of the problems for the international community is to find mechanisms to exercise pressure with incentives and disincentives. Yugoslavia remains affected by an 'outer wall' of sanctions, which exclude it from multilateral institutions such as the IMF, the World Bank, the UN or the OSCE. This cuts it off from vital capital flows, much needed in the face of high unemployment, rising foreign debt and trade deficits. Leverage then cannot be exercised through these institutions. Economic incentives and disincentives would have to come via private companies that supply gas and oil to Serbia, or that are involved in financial transactions and privatisation agreements. Unfortunately, the preconditions to the lifting of the 'outer wall' of sanctions are currently treated as one package: cooperation with the war crimes tribunal in The Hague, autonomy and full equality for ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, democratisation in Serbia, the completion of the division of assets among the successor states of the former Yugoslav republic, and the official recognition of the presidential elections in Montenegro. Unless these conditions can be dealt with separately, there is no flexibility and no room for manoeuvre.

At the same time, however, it is important that Kosovars develop realistic demands and expectations. The international community does not look favourably upon the creation of another state. The parallel education and health systems are not sustainable. Rather than looking only at Western models, Kosovars could benefit from greater exposure to the experiences in other East European countries.◆

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Kosovo: Koenraad Van Brabant, RRN
Please note that the views represented reflect only those of the author, and not necessarily of their organisation or any particular organisations mentioned.

REGIONAL focus

Letters

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

In this edition we look at how RRN material is used – please keep us informed of the ways in which you adapt RRN material to meet your needs!

In Sri Lanka the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (whose origins are described in RRN Network Paper 23, The Coordination of Humanitarian Action) have reproduced excerpts of James Darcy's paper on Human Rights (RRN Network Paper 19) in their bi-monthly Newsletter, while Good Practice Review No. 5 on the Counting and Identification of Beneficiary Populations has informed topical discussions. We are very grateful to the Consortium for carrying an informative note on the RRN in its January 1998 internal Bulletin.

A British relief worker – who will remain unnamed – used James Darcy's RRN Network Paper 19 entitled "Human Rights and International Legal Standards: what relief workers need to know", to prepare himself for a job interview.

Two RRN Network papers, those on the Red Cross/ INGO Code of Conduct and the People in Aid Code of Best Practice, were part of the resource materials for the participants in InterAction's training course on security.

Training courses

Working in Long-Term Conflict: Managing the Organisational Challenge, Oxford, 21-25 September 1998

This course forms part of INTRAC's 1998 Short Course Training Programme, with the aim of increasing the ability of NGO managers to think strategically about the development of their organisations' capacity to work in conflict situations. Fee: £785

For more details contact: INTRAC, PO Box 563, Oxford OX2 6RZ, UK. tel: +44 1865 201851, fax: +44 1865 201852, email: intrac@gn.apc.org

The Health Worker Abroad: A Survival Guide, Bath University, Thursday 23 April 1998

The day is organised by the Institute of Refugee Health Care Studies, part of the School of Postgraduate Medicine, and aims to help health workers make appropriate preparations in order to avoid the range of problems and hazards of working abroad. Fee: £40 for the day including coffee, lunch and tea.

For further information, please contact: Dr. Bruno Bubna-Kasteliz, St. Martins Hospital, Midford Road, Bath BA2 5RP, UK. tel: +44 1225 832383 ext. 4756

International Humanitarian Law and Current Conflicts 22-27 June 1998

At this week-long seminar, elements of international humanitarian law will be examined and discussed and in an interactive environment. Centred on current case studies, the seminar will be supplemented by background readings and information drawn from the experience of humanitarian organisations. The seminar will consist of up to 25 participants with field experience or positions of responsibility in humanitarian and HR organisations. Fees: US $1,300 for room, board, teaching and materials.

For details contact: P. Rosenblum, Harvard Human Rights Program, Harvard Law School, Pound Hall 401, Cambridge, MA02138 USA. tel: + 1 617 495362 fax: +1 617 4951110 or email: hrp@law.harvard.edu

H.E.L.P. – Health Emergencies in Large Populations

This course, an initiative of the ICRC and now taught in collaboration with various institutes, provides advanced training in the management of health emergencies. The course will cover priority areas in eight fields: planning, environmental health, health services, coordination, food

and nutrition, communicable diseases, epidemiology and international humanitarian law. Each course will take maximum of 25 participants.

Geneva, ICRC, 11-29 May 1998: course in English; registration fee CHF 2,000. Minimal living expenses in Geneva for three weeks amount to a further CHF 2,500.

Baltimore, John Hopkins University 6-24 July 1998 and Hawaii, John Burns School of Medicine 13-31 July 1998: courses in English; registration fee US $ 1,500. Minimal living expenses for three weeks, based on use of dormitory, amount to a further $ 1,500.

For more information contact the ICRC, H.E.L.P. 98 Geneva/USA 19 Avenue de la Paix 1202 Geneva, fax: +41 22 730 2223 email: ideslarzes.gva@icrc.org

Montreal, Université de Montreal, 1-19 June 1998: course in both French and English; registration fee, including bed and breakfast CAN $ 1,800. Minimal living expenses for 3 weeks in Montreal amount to a further CAN $ 650.

Further details from Canadian Red Cross, 1800 Alta Vista Drive, Ottawa, ON K1G 4J5, Canada, fax: + 1 613 7311411 email: plaberge@redcross.ca

Other courses scheduled this year will take place in Hong Kong between 6-24 July (English) and in Pretoria (South Africa) between 12-29 October (English). Details from ICRC, H.E.L.P., Geneva.

Impact Assessment for Development Policy and Project Appraisal: Environmental, health, social and gender impacts, Development and Project Planning Centre, University of Bradford, UK. 1 June – 10 July 1998.

Co-organised by the University of Bradford and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, this course concentrates on the assessment of the four major types of impact commonly associated with development policies and projects.

Designed for those with a responsibility for or an interest in development policy design and appraisal, project planning and impact assessment, course applicants must demonstrate that their future work will involve the application of the ideas and techniques from the course.

Fees: Full programme £4,125. Modules may be studied separately.

For more details contact: The Director, Impact Assessment for Development Policy and Project Appraisal, Development and Project Planning Centre, University of Bradford, Bradford BD7 1DP UK. fax: +44 1274 385280/383981

Masters in Humanitarian Assistance, University of Geneva, November 1998

As from November 1998, the University of Geneva will be offering a Masters in Humanitarian Assistance, which aims to examine the global and complex nature of humanitarian issues. A multidisciplinary approach is guaranteed by the participation of a variety of different faculties and institutes attached to the University. In addition, the participation of UN and humanitarian assistance organisations in Geneva (ICRC, MSF, WHO, HCR) means that the course will be relevant to the practice and reality of fieldwork on a daily basis.

The Masters consists of six thematic modules to be studied over one year or more:
• humanitarian assistance: origins and perspectives
• management of humanitarian crises
• ways in which humanitarian organisations operate
• humanitarian and social assistance
• crises and development
• dissertation

It is also possible to obtain a certificate in each individual module.

Entrance requirements: a first degree (or equivalent) and professional experience in the area of humanitarian affairs. Candidates should be fluent in French and English. Fees: CHF 15,000. Estimated living costs in Geneva: CHF 2,000 per month.

For more details contact: Multi-faculty Humanitarian Assistance Programme, Centre Médical Universitaire, 9 Avenue de Champel, 1211 Genève 4, Switzerland. tel: +41 22 702 5599 fax: +41 22 789 2417 email: ppah@cmu.unige.ch website: www.unige.ch/ppah

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Workshop on Media Issues, New York, U.S.A. 24 July 1997

The Thomas J. Watson Jr Institute for International Studies at Brown University held a workshop to launch a new set of training materials for humanitarian organisations on media issues in New York last year. Prepared by the University of Wisconsin's Disaster Management Centre and Interworks, the materials drew upon the Project's 1996 study, The News Media, Civil War, and Humanitarian Action by L. Minear, T. G. Weiss and C. Scott. UNDHA, the I.O.M., the American Red Cross and World Vision contributed to the preparation of materials and convening of the workshop.

Copies of the trainees materials and an instructor's package may be obtained from the Disaster Management Centre, 432 North Lake Street, Madison, WI 53706, USA. US $10 per electronic copy.

MA in Humanitarian Assistance, Tufts University, Medford, MA, USA, September 1998

Commencing September 1998, The Tufts University School of Nutrition Science and Policy (SNSP) and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy will offer a one year Master of Arts in Humanitarian Assistance. This course will be available to mid-career professionals and officials from government, international, and private aid/consulting agencies with significant field experience in the areas of famine, conflicts and complex emergencies.

There are four compulsory core courses:
- Humanitarian Aid in Complex Emergencies
- Applied Nutrition for Humanitarian Crises
- Independent Seminar in Humanitarianism
- one course selected from the other core courses offered by the programme.

The other four courses can be chosen from SNSP/Fletcher offerings. Students are asked to write a Masters thesis as part of the second semester requirement.

Candidates must have an undergraduate degree, have demonstrated leadership qualities and have a potential to make a substantial contribution in the field of humanitarian assistance.

For further information, please contact: Admissions Committee for Masters in Humanitarian Assistance, Feinstein International Famine Centre, Tufts University, 96 Packard Avenue, Medford, MA 02155, USA. tel: +1 617 627 3423 fax: +1 617 627 3428, email: jhammock@infonet.tufts.edu

Disaster Management Training for the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, Disaster Management Centre, Cranfield University 28 July - 3 September 1998

The 1998 Disaster Management Course is aimed at those with or anticipating disaster management responsibilities but who may have a limited knowledge of theory and practice. Participants will consider a number of areas, including governmental appointments, NGOs, military, emergency services, UN agencies and academics.

The course will be held in Oxfordshire and is fully residential. Some of the aspects covered will include: problem analysis and planning techniques, information management and early warning, complex emergencies and conflict resolution, recovery and reconstruction issues and gender and human rights issues.

Fees: £7,550 (£2,600 for full residential costs, £4,950 tuition fees); capacity is limited to 35 participants. Funding may be applied for from various sources.

For more details, please contact: The Administrator, Disaster Management Centre, Cranfield University, RMCS, Shrivenham, Swindon, Wiltshire SN6 8LA, UK. tel: +44 1793 785287 fax: +44 1793 785883 email: disprep@rmcs.cranfield.ac.uk

RedR Training Programme 1998

RedR offer a number of valuable and varied training sessions throughout the year. For a list of 1998 courses, please contact: Caroline Mitchell, RedR, 1 St George St, London SW1P 3AA, UK. tel: +44 171 233 3116 fax: +44 171 222 0564.

Conferences

'From rhetoric to reality: the role of aid in local peace-building in Afghanistan'

A Unique Forum to Discuss the Policy and Practice of Peace-Building, York, 12-15 January 1998

Haneef Atmar, Programme Manager, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA), Afghanistan Programme

This article examines the background to a workshop hosted by the British Agencies Afghanistan Workshop and Post-war Reconstruction and Development Unit (PRDU) at the University of York and assesses its value in terms of the integration of a diverse range of views and experiences. The responsibility for all views expressed in this article lies with the author.

Background

The York workshop brought together 66 policy-makers, practitioners and academics to discuss and exchange views on issues of peace-building and multi-faceted recovery in Afghanistan. The workshop grew out of concerns over the nature of aid and conflict in the 'complex political emergency' of Afghanistan, a country

that has known little but war over the past 19 years. The aid community's major concern has been the fact that, at worst, aid has been part of the problem and, at best, it has been a passive phenomenon without any real impact on peace-building at national level. The former featured throughout the 1980s when aid was as much motivated by the Cold War as humanitarian concerns, whereas the latter has characterised the humanitarian response to the Afghan crisis in the post Cold War era. In the post Cold War era, aid actors have either considered peace-building as too political or felt that there was little they could do about conflict and peace in Afghanistan.

The reality of Afghanistan has certainly posed strategic challenges to the aid community. The country is still suffering from a civil war which has claimed thousands of lives, made millions refugees internally displaced and homeless, and caused widespread destruction in urban centres and rural peripheries. The political top-down approach to peace-making mainly sponsored by the UN has never produced a durable solution to the conflict. Moreover, while most, if not all, aid agencies have cleared their political conscience of the Cold War era and factional power struggle, which would leave them constrained vis-à-vis peace-building in Afghanistan, their impact on peace is still invisible. The confused top-down versus bottom-up, community-based practice of peace-making and building has not had the desired results, partly because not all aid organisations have adopted a mandate for peace-building and are still uncertain about the consequences of their adherence to either of these processes. By supporting the political process of peace-making through advocacy and lobbying, agencies fear provoking resentment with negative consequences for their agencies' own survival. On the other hand, in the Afghan context, the community-based approach can never produce lasting peace if conditions conducive to peace do not exist at national, regional and international levels. At best, such an approach may support a localised peace, but this may still be vulnerable to the national process of conflict. In addition, such local activity might shift responsibility from the international community to local communities, whose war is as much sustained by the regional and international processes.

Despite the unpredictable nature of the Afghan conflict and aid agencies' strategic confusion in the past, the outlook is not as bleak as it may seem. The UN aid mechanism is taking the remarkable initiative of directing aid resources towards multi-faceted national recovery with the aim of building peace in Afghanistan through a 'Strategic Framework' (see article on page 13) and an 'Assistance Strategy' which require a concerted effort from all aid actors. What is needed now is for the amalgamation of UN political and aid

mechanisms to underpin this strategic process.

At another level, in part the result of an awakening process marked by the Norwegian Church Aid Afghanistan Programme workshop 'NGOs and Peace-building in Afghanistan' in 1994, peace-building has found its way onto the agenda and into the strategic thinking of some aid agencies. Several aid organisations are now taking steps to address localised tensions and violence by providing alternative livelihoods for combatants, restoring communications between opposing factions and revitalising the role of Afghan 'social capital' to manage the conflict. The time is now ripe to give community-based peace-building national and international political support. In this context, the need for a well-informed forum involving practitioners, policy-makers and academics working in Afghanistan was evident, providing them with the opportunity to examine past experiences and redefine their philosophy, strategies for, and approaches to, peace-building in Afghanistan.

The value of the workshop

The value of such a gathering depends upon (a) the participants and (b) the culture and methodology it adopts to deal with the challenges. The York workshop managed to bring together a gender-balanced group of policy makers and practitioners from donor, operational, international and national organisations working in Afghanistan as well as academics with a professional background in Afghanistan. In addition, the workshop benefited from the input of a group of practitioners and academics with experience from other conflict settings. This workshop was unique in that the concerns and expectations of all stakeholders from the aid community (donors, national and international agencies) were well articulated and deliberated by their respective representative groups. The active participation of Afghans in the workshop contributed significantly to the debates for a number of reasons.

Context sensitivity and appropriateness of the debates

The workshop found that even 'principle-based' approaches could do harm, if not properly sensitised to the Afghan context. It is therefore vital that strategies and policies are formulated through active participation of Afghans. Since they are the ones to be affected by such aid policies, the Afghans are best placed to know where, when and how intervention helps or hinders.

Agents from the Afghan communities

Afghan participation in the workshop should not be considered merely as token representation. In the absence of a national interlocutor to the aid community

for Afghanistan, the role of the Afghan NGOs and the Afghan employees of aid agencies as agents of civil society for recovery and peace-building is increasingly important. Twenty-three Afghans participated in the workshop, bringing with them a voluntary ethos, a high degree of professionalism and a commitment to the Afghan cause for peace and recovery. For them, the workshop served as an international forum to air the views of Afghan grassroots groups who, in spite of their enormous suffering, still go unheard internationally.

Moreover, such a forum can help the professional and political growth of future civil leadership in the aid environment of Afghanistan. It provides a unique opportunity to interact with international professionals and gain knowledge that is difficult, if not impossible, to gain in the non-particpatory environment of many expatriate-dominated aid organisations.

The York workshop was a remarkable event, advancing debates with the aim of enhancing the role of aid in the peace-building process in Afghanistan. A report summarising the debates and major findings of the workshop will be available from PRDU within the next couple of months. There are plans for a follow-up of the workshop debates in Afghanistan.

For a copy the report contact: Arne Strand or Sultan Barakat, Post-war Reconstruction & Development Unit, University of York, Heslington, York, UK YO1 5DD. tel: +44 1904 433 959, fax: +44 1904 433 949

Aid Programmes for Bosnia Seminar, London, 28 November 1997

Focusing on opportunities for European organisations in the International Reconstruction Programme for Bosnia-Herzegovina, this seminar held in London provided a comprehensive, authoritative and up-to-date briefing to companies. The Institute of European Trade and Technology invited senior representatives of major international donor agencies, UK officials and country experts to talk about their programmes and assess the prospects for the next two to three years.

Themes covered included:
- the latest development and project opportunities in Bosnia-Herzegovina;
- objectives and priorities of the main donor agencies;
- tendering procedures and operational practice;
- practical issues on the ground;
- how to track contract opportunities, find partners and much more.

To obtain a report, please contact: Mary Marshall, IETT, 29 Throgmorton Street, London EC2N 2AT, UK. tel: +44 171 628 9770, fax: +44 171 628 7692.

Conference on 'The Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Acute Crisis', organised by DFID and the Human Rights Centre, Essex University. London, 11-13 February 1998

The British government has repeatedly signalled the centrality of human rights to its approach to international relations as a whole. The aim of this conference was to stimulate discussion on the particular problem of protecting human rights in 'acute crisis' and to produce a set of policy recommendations for donor countries on how best to contribute to international efforts to promote human rights in crises. The complementarity between human rights law and international humanitarian law was discussed, and the importance of agencies involved in crises being sufficiently flexible to know what is most appropriate to a particular situation. There was also discussion of the differences between protection and assistance, and of whether or not assistance can undermine protection, though this was not resolved. It is clear that the humanitarian and human rights communities have some way to go before they understand each other and their respective roles in protecting human rights fully. Draft recommendations include: strengthening international accountability, the need for a pre-involvement strategy and for an ongoing strategic approach recognising the centrality of HR protection but does not attempt to substitute assistance for political objectives, and on improving HR field operations and their coordination with other actors. The recommendations will be part of an 'Agenda for Action' to be published in April.

For more information on the seminar and 'Agenda for Action' contact: Human Rights Centre, University of Essex, UK. tel: + 44 1206 872558 fax: + 1206 873627

Forthcoming Conferences

Principled Aid in an Unprincipled World: War and Humanitarian Principles, hosted by ODI and ECHO in London, 7 April 1998

The conference will be opened by Ms Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, and Mme Emma Bonino, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid, and all speakers have extensive experience in the practice and policy of humanitarian assistance.

The aim of the conference is to clarify understanding of humanitarian principles and provide a forum in which their incorporation into practice can be discussed. It will include keynote papers and case studies and conclude with a discussion panel on which key actors from the humanitarian community will take this issue forward.

Any further enquiries regarding invitations can be addressed to: Forum Europe, tel: +44 181 8708969, fax: +44 181 8745302, email: kbj64@dial.pipex.com

4th Annual Meeting of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC), Oslo, 8-9 May 1998

The conference will explore issues in civil-military cooperation in peace operations, the role of humanitarian organisations in peace operations and the training of soldiers and civilian police. Any institutions that would like to be members of the IAPTC are invited.

More details can be obtained from Mrs Tryggestad or Mrs Harket at the Norwegian Institute for International Relations, Oslo. fax: +47 2 2177015 or by email at TorunnL.Tryggestad@nupi.no or website www.cdnpeacekeeping.ns.ca/iaptc.htm

Who Wins Wars? The Human Cost of Conflict, London School of Oriental and African Studies, 14 March 1998

This conference, organised by Oxfam and Cooperative, is the culmination of a series of seminars run in London to provide a forum on conflict-related issues. The conference brings together key decision makers, experts in the field of conflict, campaigners and members of the public to debate conflict-related issues.

The programme will run from 10am to 4pm and a sandwich lunch is provided. There will be a range of speakers, seminars and a Question Time panel discussion.

Places must be reserved in advance and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

For further information, please telephone Alison Willis, Oxfam Campaigns Department on +44 171 931 9330.

5th Annual Conference of the International Emergency Management Society (TIEMS), Washington, DC, 19-22 May 1998

TIEMS was founded in 1993 as a non-profit organisation for the purpose of bringing together users, planners, researchers, managers, response personnel and other interested parties to exchange information on the use of innovative methods and technologies to improve our ability to avoid, mitigate, respond to and recover from natural and technological disasters.

The theme for the TIEMS 1998 Conference will be 'Disaster and Emergency Management: International Challenges for the Next Decade', reflecting the fact that the current decade is the International Decade of Natural Hazard Reduction. The conference is intended for disaster and emergency leaders, planners, managers, researchers, educators and practitioners from the international community.

For more information, please contact: The George Washington University, Conference Management Services, 2029 K Street, NW, Suite 501, Washington DC 20006, USA. tel: +1 202 973 1110 fax: +1 202 973 1111 email: cms@admin.dup.gwu.edu, or visit the website at www.gwu.edu/~cms/tiems/

6th Annual International Conference on Conflict Resolution – Sharing Tools for Personal and Global Harmony, St Petersburg, Russia, May 8-18 1998

A multidisciplinary and multicultural conference focusing on conflict resolution. Presentations will explore conflict resolution within diverse contexts, including: arts and creativity, education, gender, global conflict, economics and business, health and healing arts. There will be hands-on training and dialogues on theory and perceptions of conflict and resolution, and networking and collaboration. The programme consists of six days of all-day institutes, workshops, round tables and community meetings.

For more information please contact: Steve Olweean or Sandra Friedman, Common Bond Institute, 12170 South Pine Ayr Drive, Climax, MO 49034, USA. tel: +1 616 665 9393, email: solweean@aol.com or visit the website at ahpweb.org/events/98russia

Publications

Conflict Transformation. Strategies and Experiences. A comparative review of some reports.

The proliferation of small arms, civil war and warlordism are symptoms of the so-called privatisation of violence. Simultaneously, in recent years there has been a notable trend towards the privatisation of diplomacy. Track one approaches to conflict, ie. diplomatic and military initiatives by state actors, are complemented by a growing number of track two approaches: interventions by private actors – individuals, but especially NGOs – and attempts to build peace 'from below'. These various publications document a variety of conflict transformation experiences and it is possible to discern some fundamental structural themes that can be grouped under the peace process, the peace accords and a sustainable peace.

Key actors in the process of peace are the violent power brokers, indigenous civil society groupings and outside mediators. Of central importance in any peace process are the different and shifting constellations between them. Regional groupings of governments may try to bring about an end to violence, such as the Contadora group in Guatemala[2] or the Economic Community of West African States in Liberia[1]. Individual governments may also try to play a constructive role as was the case with the Italian government in Mozambique[3], and the Norwegian and Spanish governments in Guatemala[2]. Surprisingly, in Liberia, the US as a potentially very influential player engaged in a very low key manner[1]. Conflict transformation initiatives may be undertaken by the UN, often through a Special Representative of the Secretary General, but the report of a conference that brought many of them together[12] focuses on post-conflict peace-building and does not review activities at the mediation phase. In a number of instances however, it is non-state initiaves that come to play an important role. The Lutheran World Federation was an important actor in the peace process in Guatemala[2], as well as in the San Egidio community in Mozambique[3].

The evaluation of the role and experience of International Alert in Sri Lanka is mixed, while the organisation, after having played a major role in obtaining proper recognition for the RUF in Sierra Leone, became the object of sharp recriminations following the military coup that initiated a new cycle of violence[11]. Fascinating are the in-depth accounts of the role of T. Rowland of the multi-national Lonhro, in brokering the peace between Frelimo and Renamo in Mozambique[3], and of K. Lode, a former resident representative of Norwegian Church Aid in Mali, in enlarging the space for Malian civil society to carry the peace process[6,7].

A strategic question for outsiders attempting to transform a conflict is that of working with the

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1. **The Liberian Peace Process 1990-1996. ed. by J. Armon and A. Carl. (1996)**
2. **'Negotiation Rights: the Guatemalan peace process'. ed. by J. Armon, R. Sieder and R. Wilson (1997)**
3. **The Mozambican Peace Process in Perspective. ed. by J. Armon, D. Hendrickson & A. Vines (1998)**
   All three are available from Conciliation Resources, London. Fax +44 171 837 0337 or email accord@conciliation.gn.apc.org
   Articles of the Guatemala report will be published in Spanish in Cuadernos de Debate. Contact Dr. R. Poitevin, FLACSO Guatemala, Apartado Postal 263-A, 01009 Ciudad de Guatemala, Guatemala. Fax +502 3326 729 or email flacso@concyt.gob.gt. Each report contains the texts of major accords, a chronology of major events, an overview of key actors, and analytical articles putting the war and peace process in context.
4. **Evaluation of Norwegian Assistance to Peace, Reconciliation and Rehabilitation in Mozambique (1997)**
   Evaluation Dpartment Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PO Box 8114 DEP, N 0032 Oslo. Commissioned by the donor.
5. **Synthèse du Processus des Rencontres Intercommunautaires du Nord du Mali (1995-1996), by K. Lode (1997)**
   Misjoneshogskolens Forlag, Stavanger, Oslo, Norway.
6. **Civil Society takes Responsibility. Popular involvement in the peace process in Mali, by K. Lode (1997)**
   Peace Research Institute, Oslo, fax: +47 22 5477 01 or email info@prio.no. The Mali report is an insider account by a key protagonist in the peace process.
7. **Norwegian Church Aid's Humanitarian and Peace-Making work in Mali (1997)**
   Evaluation Department, Norway. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PO Box 8114 DEP, N 0032 Oslo. Commissioned by the donor.

political-military leaderships and/or of attempting to strengthen and support a constituency for peace at the grassroots level. In either case, people need to begin to consider their fundamental and longer term interests. The more broad-based a peace process, the more chance there appears that it will be sustainable. In Liberia[1] and in Guatemala[2] civil society groups found themselves increasingly marginalised from the peace process and the peace accords were concluded above their heads. In Somalia, the UN and Ethiopia initially attempted a top-down approach to peace making, and then shifted gear with the creation of intermediary district and regional councils. One of the problems that has ensued however is that subsequently donors and international agencies

8. **Peace building in Macedonia. Searching for common ground in civil society. by M. Lumsden (1997)**
   Peace Research Institute, Oslo, Norway. fax: +47 22 5477 01 or email info@prio.no. The Macedonia report an external consideration of the strategy of Search for Common Ground in the context of multiple tensions in the republic.

9. **Learning Conflict and Teaching Peace in Former Yugoslavia (1998) by P. Jarman & J. Oberg**
   Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, Lund, Sweden. fax: +46 46 14 45 12 or email: tff@transnational.org
   An account of a series of workshops in the Balkans that provided a first opportunity for people of different groups to meet and discuss the violence that has swept the region. With comments and reflections on the role of facilitator.

10. **Building the Peace. Experiences of collaborative peacebuilding in Somalia 1993-1996. (1997)**
    Life and Peace Institute, Uppsala, Sweden. fax: +46 18 693059 or email: lpi@algonet.se
    A commissioned study to draw lessons from the years of involvement with community based, bottom up, peace building in Somalia.

11. **NGOs in Conflict. An evaluation of International Alert. by G. Sorbo, J. Macrae & L. Wohlgemuth (1997)**
    Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway fax: +47 5557 4166 or email: cmi@amadeus.cmi.no
    A comprehensive evaluation that apart from the three case studies also discusses International Alert's organisational management. It contains a number of relevant articles in annex as well as International Alert's reply to the evaluation.

12. **Winning the Peace. Concepts and lessons learned of post-conflict peacebuilding. by W. Kuhne (1996)**
    Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik D 82067, Ebenhausen, Germany. fax: +49 8178 70312 or email: Keuhne@swp.extern.lrz-muenchen.de
    The report of a conference in July 1996 that brought together several SRSGs, UN force commanders and other UN personnel, World Bank and NGO representatives. The report summarises key issues from post-conflict peace building experiences in Mozambique, Haiti, Angola, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, Liberia and El Salvador and summarises a number of thematic discussions, one of them being the authority and resources of a SRSG.

have generally not been very forthcoming in supporting or recognising these institutions.[10] In Sri Lanka, International Alert works with groups of parlimentarians and in Burundi with networks of members of the national elite and in both countries the organisation has also been working with national media representatives[11]. Search for Common Ground after some initial abortive attempts to work with national elite members in Macedonia has found a niche and a strategy at intermediate level, with a major focus on the media and education[8]. The Mozambican Catholic Church played an important role in the peace process, when such a role became acceptable to both warring parties[3]. When in Mali the warring parties were prepared to make peace, they created a space for civil society involvement in the process. K. Lode and his Malian colleagues facilitated the mobilisation of that civil society through a whole series of community-level meetings[5,6].

The mission of UN troops in Macedonia constitutes the first deployment to prevent conflict. Revealingly however, the objective of the mission is limited to preventing 'spill-over' of the tensions with the Albanians in Kosovo and the violence in Albania itself. It does not address the tensions of Macedonia with its neighbours, nor the potential internal conflict between mostly urban Macedonians and rural Albanians in the country[8].

There are two important aspects to peace accords: their quality and their transparency. By publishing key agreements, Conciliation Resources hopes to contribute to lesson-learning for the negotiations and drafting of future peace accords[1,2,3]. The more ambiguity they contain, the more issues remain unaddressed and the greater the risk that the peace accords will collapse. Peace accords should not simply contain measures to end a war, but be specific about post-conflict peace-building arrangements. Peace accords also need to come in the public domain. The 1991 Tamanrasset accords were not available to ordinary Malians which fuelled suspicions and allowed the signatories to renege on them[6]. The publication and dissemination of peace accords among the people concerned is therefore itself a step in the peace process.

Peace accords may lead to a cessation of hostilities, but do not by themselves guarantee a sustainable peace. The

question is whether or to what degree peace agreements have addressed the root causes of war. In Mozambique the main cause may have been the regional destabilisation policy of the South African 'apartheid' regime, but in many other countries the violence is rooted in political, social and economic injustices. A sustainable peace requires the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of fighters, the return and reintegration of refugees, political integration and power sharing, and trauma healing and reconciliation. But it also requires economic reconstruction, equal human development opportunities, and social justice. The peace agreements in Liberia seem to have rewarded the warlords for their violence[1] while the peace accords in Guatemala remain at the level of a political elite. They do not open the way for a broad-based participatory democracy. There is more recognition of the rights of the indigenous Maya population, but the injustices in land ownership and land use have not been addressed[2]. Amnesties appear inevitable in ending wars as diverse as those of Mali[6] and Guatemala[2], but there remains strong debate in Guatemala about the naming of those responsible for gross human rights violations - the Commission for Historical Clarification has been given a mandate and a time frame that render it ineffective from the start. Reconciliation is explored as a theme in the Balkans[9]. Although people on all sides have suffered, there are instigators and victims of violence, and there are those that have gained and those that have lost from the war. Most may accept to again share one living space, but genuine emotional reconciliation may take generations. Demobilising fighters and collecting small arms is often a difficult and incomplete process and should receive more donor support[4]. Former fighters may reintegrate socially, sometimes as in Mozambique, with the effective use of traditional healing rituals[3]. The major challenge however is one of economic integration. Where that does not happen, as in Mali, there may be an increase in banditry and in regional arms trafficking[7]. Peace agreements and elections can lead to more political and social inclusion, but they do not bring development and equal economic opportunities to all. Unfortunately, often international attention and aid fizzle out once peace agreements have been signed and elections held. Mozambique, the north of Mali and Guatemala continue to struggle with the same poverty and underdevelopment as before the war, conditions that are only aggravated by high debt and structural adjustment programmes that are imposed for the sake of economic growth without much consideration of their impact on a sustainable peace.

Making Peace Work: the Role of the International Development Community, *Policy Essay No. 18, ODC, Washington DC, USA, 1997 (pp. 120, A5).*

Post-conflict reconstruction/peace-building form the focus of much recent attention by the international community. Since the end of the Cold War, donor governments have increasingly been called upon to support transitions to peace. This 18th in the series of ODC (Overseas Development Council) Policy Essays offers a digestible (A5, 120pp) set of recommendations for policy makers engaged in maintaining and consolidating peace in countries emerging from conflict. The essay is based on six case studies examining the peace processes in Cambodia, El Salvador, Mozambique and Nicaragua, drawing lessons for international support to political, institutional, social and economic structures in 'post'-conflict societies.

The authors recognise that the role of donors is to help host governments and the international community to prioritise action in the four phases of peace-building: negotiation, cessation of hostilities, transition and consolidation. Six key lessons in developing appropriate policies are identified from the case studies. The authors distinguish between priorities for immediate action, i.e. those areas where it is felt that adequate information exists to identify priorities for support, including: coordination within the international community, recommending the appointment of a UN resident coordinator (or World Bank coordinator) for peace building activities to help minimise turf battles; the need to be transparent with host governments as to the level of financial assistance they can expect; the need to involve all combatants in a collaborative forum of negotiation; and those areas where there is a need for further research such as the need to lengthen time frames for peace-building beyond the current 1-2 year phase before multi-party elections are held.

The essay is well laid out, with chapters on common features of countries in conflict / 'post'-conflict phases. It is written in clear language with lessons and case study examples drawn out in boxes for rapid perusal; the authors know their target audience well.

The principal shortcoming seems to be the somewhat limited attention to the complexity of influences on the donor. Essentially the authors focus on the role of donor aid departments and their relations with host governments and combatants. There is little discussion of relations between aid departments and their trade and foreign policy or defence counterparts, more often than not the source of confused messages to unrepresentative regimes. There is little advice on how to tackle the

question of groups and factions who have an economic interest in sustaining war.

However, in the short space accorded the discussion it would be difficult to cover all this ground – perhaps more of the same will be forthcoming.

NGOs and complex political emergencies.
David Hulme and Jonathan Goodhand; Working Paper 1, University of Manchester (IDPM) and INTRAC, 1997 (33pp, A4)

This is Working paper 1 of a two year study funded by DFID to explore the potential contribution of NGOs to peace-building in complex political emergencies. This first paper begins with a review of current literature on conflict and NGOs and presents a conceptual framework for analysis of case study material. It will go on to draw on comparative case studies of NGOs in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Liberia. The authors seek to add to research which has gone before or is currently under way in its use of two distinct methodological tools: by conducting the study from the viewpoint of the community rather than the more familiar international and national perspectives; not least because 'conflict entrepreneurs' (not a pleasant term) or organisers of violence have a sophisticated understanding of community level dynamics and are able to exploit this knowledge. In order therefore to tackle their hold on societies, peace-builders must have the same tools. Second, the authors have taken case study material from Central and SE Asia to broaden the basis for comparison outside the traditional African conflict context.

Chapter 1 offers tentative definitions of terms such as peace-building, conflict, NGOs and peace in a bid to bring clarity to the debate by providing a common point of departure, and thus contribute to a set of 'programmable' definitions. The authors subscribe to the view that conflict is an inherent part of change in a society and that peace is not merely the absence of conflict but of structural inequity. It follows therefore that the key issue is not how to prevent, but rather how to manage conflict and that simplistic dichotomies between peace and conflict only serve to cloud the real issues. There has been a tendency for NGOs to use the term peace-building rather loosely, often unhelpfully subsuming elements of prevention, alleviation and resolution of conflict; where there does seem to be consensus however is on the fact that the term implies more than simply relations with warriors, including attitudes and socio-economic circumstances of the society and that peace-building is not a single event but refers to the pre-, during and post conflict phases.

Less familiar terms such as 'predatory social formations' (Crisp 1995) are identified as an important feature of CPEs, drawing attention to the role of vested interests such as drug warlords in Afghanistan in continuing uncertainty and conflict. NGOs too are considered, for example the relationships between external, formal organisations and local, informal ones which may either build or undermine peace efforts. Some also distinguish between relief, development and peace-building roles.

Chapter 2 looks at causes and mutations of conflict, acknowledging that conflict itself can change conflict, so that the original causes are no longer those which sustain the conflict. The authors also consider the question of social capital and the equation 'increased social capital = reduced conflict'. If social compacting is considered to be an appropriate tool for peace-building, the next question is can it be enhanced by external intervention given the complexity of social structures? Is social capital always positive? Is there an anti-social capital which excludes certain groups or is exploited by 'conflict entrepreneurs' – Ku Klux Klan?

Their conceptual framework begins with a breakdown of NGO roles along a sort of worst case scenario to best case spectrum: fuelling conflict, a holding operation and peace-building. Against this they consider a table of indicators to measure the impact of NGOs, and finally explore issues relating to the framework – 1. social capital as peace capital, 2. local leadership and institutional analysis – e.g. Taleban in Afghanistan 3. Peace auditing NGOs – ensure NGOs are realistic and don't overclaim their role in peace building.

The authors also look at types of intervention – direct e.g. Aid to purchase arms, capacity building, advocacy.

Whether you agree or not, clarity is a starting point – its quite an extensive study aiming to cover – how donors identify which NGOs to support, how to channel funding to enhance NGO performance and accountability and how NGO responses are related to and integrated within a wider response. Each could form the subject of a single research project and on top of it all from community perspective. How will they do it?

It is a fair point that without framework and systematic analysis we cannot tell how successful or not NGOs are at peace-building or any means of comparison – through a peace building lens darkly? Expect to come up with different sets of recommendations, tailored to specific types of NGOs working in specific conflicts at particular levels at particular phases in these conflicts. Will this lead to less 'department store' off the peg programmes to more boutique/niche NGOs with customised programmes to suit specific contexts? Presumably Volume 2 will include comparative case study material.

publications

This issue is dedicated to forcibly transferred populations, a process for which the terms ethnic cleansing and deportation are often used. The flight of entire populations is not a result but a driving objective of conflict and a such, raises not only humanitarian needs but also human rights questions about the right to remain, freedom of movement and residence within a territory, and the right to return. Close cooperation between relief agencies and, for example, the UN Commissioner for Human Rights and the Subcommission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities is required. The situation poses particular problems for aid agencies as repatriation becomes a highly charged political question. Return must be accompanied with conflict resolution and reintegration, but alongside are questions of restitution and compensation for the loss of property. Inevitably, as UNHCR has experienced in the course of its work in the Commonwealth of Independent States for example, aid agencies are drawn into the political work of conflict resolution.

Beyani's article explores the interplay between political and legal problems, highlighting gaps in international law especially with regard to the acquisition of internal territory by means of ethnic cleansing. His case studies include the Former Yugoslavia, Abkhazia, Palestine and Rwanda. Nahajlo's article is an insightful overview of the history of population transfers and deportations in the Soviet Union under Stalin, and of renewed ethnic cleansing in Central Asia and the Transcaucasus after the demise of the Soviet Union. Dale's article is a detailed case study of the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict which remains unresolved. The journal also includes reports and presentations by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights dimensions of population transfers, including the implantation of settlers and settlements, an overview of relevant international law instruments and the states party to them, and a select bibliography.

This excellent publication highlights the challenges for humanitarian and human rights work that have characterised the arena in Eastern Europe and the CIS. It should enrich humanitarian aid paradigms that have been shaped by African cases which, until the Great Lakes crisis, focused on Cold War ideological conflicts, insurgency against repressive governments, war-created famines and predatory warlords in collapsed states.

These are two publications sponsored by Handicap International in the context of the Global Campaign for a Total Ban on Antipersonnel Landmines. The first booklet provides a brief and clear overview of the issues. It traces the reasons for the proliferation of antipersonnel landmines, and their consequences – which are not limited to the death or physical disability of individuals. Landmine victims suffer psychological trauma and also require socio-economic support to reintegrate themselves back into their communities. Minefields endanger and impede rural livelihoods and mine casualties pose a heavy burden on the health structure. A humanitarian response to the problems of mine victims is necessary but insufficient. There is a need for accelerated and, for civilian purposes, complete clearance of existing minefields and for a total ban on the production and deployment of new antipersonnel mines to prevent the problem reoccurring. It is the limitations in existing international treaties, and the reluctance of military establishments and political leaders to commit themselves to a total ban on antipersonnel mines that has given rise to the global action of non-governmental organisations. The report concludes with a recommendation for total transparency and unilateral action of states. The second publication provides an overview of major companies that produce and export antipersonnel mines, and of the position of countries worldwide towards production and export. The loopholes in existing international treaties are then highlighted and the ways in which the arms industry tries to exploit these. The main part of the study is a detailed review of official statements by the French government, followed by an inventory of French companies and their 'network-organigramme', and the mines they produce. This inevitably raises the question of the political control and enforcement of governmental policy over private sector activity. The report concludes with a call for specific French legislation and a tighter international convention.

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.

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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, ECHO, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland and the Department for International Development, UK. 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   ECHO

Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland   Department for International
                                                                        Development (NEW LOGO!)