



# RRN newsletter

*Improving aid policy and practice in complex political emergencies*

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## Editorial: Mapping Gender Violence

In Sierra Leone, rebel forces rape women and girls as spoils of war and to punish them for their perceived support of opposing forces. In Pakistan, women victims of sexual violence face serious bias if they take their cases to court: laws and those who apply them devalue women's testimony and expose them to prosecution for illicit sex if they cannot prove rape. Not so long ago, these problems would have gone without notice. Rape in war was treated as an inevitable, if unfortunate, facet of war; women were blamed for sexual violence, and husbands were excused for beating their wives.

More than 50 years after the Universal Declaration on Human Rights promised respect for human rights to all people, activists have forced governments to acknowledge the pervasiveness of violations of women's rights and their own duty to stop them. Just in the past year we have strengthened the standards that prohibit abuses of women's rights and seen them applied. The July 1998 statute creating an International Criminal Court, negotiated by member states of the UN, explicitly confers on the court jurisdiction over rape, sexual slavery, and other forms of sexual violence. Another landmark came in September 1998 when the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda punished sexual violence in a civil war and denounced rape as an act of genocide for the first time. In March 1999, governments at the UN Commission on the Status of Women created a means of enforcing the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women – women will finally be able to report violations of their rights and demand inquiries into abuses.

These advances are worth celebrating, but the articles in this Newsletter show how

far there is to go. Governments excel at proclaiming their commitment to women's human rights while pursuing policies that undermine women's rights. Thus, while governments have condemned the use of rape in war they fail to investigate and prosecute rape as a war crime. States also neglect the threat of sexual violence against refugee women. The physical design of camps forces women to search far afield for firewood, thus risking attack. Moreover, policies governing rations reinforce women's subordinate status by handing out supplies to male heads of household only. Women dependent on men for basic food and supplies may be trapped in abusive relationships or forced to exchange sex for food.

The articles that follow show why it is crucial to imagine how much better it could be. Sexual violence in war or against displaced and refugee women has serious health consequences for women injured or exposed to sexually transmitted diseases. Many women still do not enjoy reproductive and sexual autonomy; their choices are controlled through violence, coercion and discrimination. And women seeking economic opportunity find themselves working in slave-like conditions that profit only their 'owners' and the local police.

Change requires action on many fronts: dismantling the structures that reinforce women's inequality, responding to the immediate concerns of women, and crafting remedies that meet women's real needs. Almost five years after women demanded action in Beijing, it is past time to make improving women's lives a priority.

*Regan Ralph, Executive Director, Women's Rights Division, Human Rights Watch, Washington DC, USA*



# Markets, Migration and Forced Prostitution

Madeleine Rees, UNHCHR, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

As head of a peace-keeping mission which is 97 per cent male, I cannot turn my back on the subject [trafficking] and I cannot be so naive to think that my staff are not visiting brothels which hold women in slavery.

*Elizabeth Rehn, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in a speech to the Council of Europe, March 1999*

This article illustrates how peace-keeping and the free market – in particular its application in countries in transition – impacts on the lives of those who have no alternative but to survive within these frameworks. The focal point is Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), but the scenarios that follow have already become part of the history of other countries in transition and, moreover, are a permanent feature of many developing nations.

## From the Global to the Local

Many of the definitions used to explain society, politics, economics and our relation to them frequently allow us to ignore the meaning and effect of these terms on those who do not control them. In particular, concepts such as peace-keeping, the free market economy, economies in transition, and voluntary migration are seen as positive in the hands of those who have economic and physical hegemony. For those not of the privileged group the impact and reality of such concepts is apposite.

At issue is the kidnap and transportation of human beings for the purpose of forced prostitution, and of voluntary migration which leads to debt bondage, conditions of slavery, and rape. Men are trafficked; so are young boys. But the majority of those affected are female and the age of this group is reducing as fear of HIV/AIDS causes ‘users’ to seek ever more, apparently virginal, receptacles.

The advantage of a free market is that the entrepreneur can assess demand and seek to exploit it. It should come as no great surprise that the arrival of more than 30,000 peacekeepers in BiH created a potential market for sexual services. There has been no shortage of entrepreneurs seeking to exploit this.

## Definitions of Trafficking

The term ‘trafficking in human beings’ is the one most often used to describe migration leading to forced prostitution. It has been described by the International Organisation for Migration as:

A multi-dimensional structural phenomenon linked to poverty and unemployment in the countries of origin, and to exploitation of this situation by organised crime in both the countries of origin and of destination.

While this is in part true it is not only organised crime which participates; there are many who simply take advantage of the vulnerability of those who migrate illegally and place them in conditions which amount to slavery and forced prostitution.

The issue of prostitution causes considerable conflict. There is substantial difficulty in finding a definition of trafficking which serves the purpose of protecting all rights (including freedom of movement, and social and economic rights) without differentiating because of a moral or political stance on the issue of sex work. Thus far there has been no internationally accepted legal redefinition of trafficking since the 1949 Convention. This censures all migration for the purposes of prostitution, whether voluntary or involuntary.

It is inaccurate to state that most women voluntarily – in the true sense of the word voluntary – migrate to work as prostitutes. It is more realistic to state that they choose prostitution as a method of addressing appalling economic and social conditions. Such conditions are particularly difficult for women in many countries in transition. While this transition is seen as a positive move towards capitalism by the West there are appalling consequences in terms of economic protection for those unable to participate. In the Ukraine, for example, female unemployment runs at over 80 per cent despite relatively high levels of higher education. As a result many women are faced with little choice but to migrate in an attempt to improve their living standards.

## The Case of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The women who arrive in Bosnia and work as prostitutes can, theoretically, be divided into two categories: those who have been kidnapped and forced into prostitution, and those who came voluntarily but who subsequently found themselves in conditions which amount to debt bondage or slavery. The outcome for both categories is the same: they are held in brothels against their will, do not have access to their passports, and are victims of rape and other assault.

In BiH there are no reliable statistics on the number of trafficked persons, mainly as a result of the indifference to the issue while it was taking root. The Council of Europe, with the assistance of

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OHCHR, held a conference in December 1998 in Tuzla (see later report) which involved the ministries of the interior of both Entities (the Republica Srpska, (RS), and the Federation which, as a result of the Dayton Peace Agreement, makes up the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina), representatives of NGO members of the international community, and a representative of the Ukrainian foreign ministry. The conclusions were confirmatory: it was clear that both Entities were fully aware that a problem existed but, initially at least, wanted to claim that it was a problem in the other Entity. When evidence showed that this was untrue

the blame was in part accepted but in part transferred to the international community – the peacekeepers them-selves. Again there is truth in this assertion, but it is not the whole truth. It is known that there are two rates, 100DM for inter-nationals and 40DM for locals. It is also the case that the majority of brothels are in areas where there is the highest concentration of peacekeepers.

The women usually answer adverts in the press to work as waitresses, dancers or hairdressers and think that they are going to Italy, Greece or Germany. They then meet designated individuals who take their passports from

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***The health consequences of such a system, which is being ravaged by privatisation, are enormous.***

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them, cross the border by car, ultimately cross into the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), and thence to the easiest crossing point

into BiH, Bjielina. The women then either remain here for a while or are taken to the area known as the Arizona market, not far from Brcko, where they can be purchased for 2000DM.

An example involves the arrest of a young Hungarian woman for prostitution by the Zenica police. She told them that she had had ‘sex’ with over 80 men in one week. Based on such a figure the lucrative nature of the business is clear to even ordinary men who may have not previously considered the possibility of using women in such a way. The profit margin is enormous since the women are paid around 200DM per month, if they are lucky, and most owe their purchase price to their owners.

It goes without saying that the health consequences in the context of such a system, which is being ravaged by privatisation, are enormous.

Since then the pattern has become clearer and more women have come to the attention of the international community by seeking assistance. This was so in December 1998 when four women from the Ukraine managed to escape from a brothel in RS and reported to the police in Sarajevo. The reaction of the police was to send them back to the RS to collect their passports.

Fortunately IPTF (the International Police Task Force, sent under the Dayton agreement to monitor human rights and to work closely with the local police to improve their policing) was informed and managed to prevent what would have been the women’s return to their owners.

This ad hoc arrangement is unacceptable. Cases in Zenica canton illustrate that the domestic courts use the full power of the state to prosecute women in this situation. For example, six women, five from the Ukraine and one from Hungary, ostensibly worked as waitresses in a local cafe. All were accused of prostitution and none were given legal advice or asked relevant questions as to what had actually happened

to them. In short, under cantonal law, they were fined and removed from the canton. This meant that they were taken to Dobož (an area notorious for involvement in organised crime) and from there to the Arizona market where they were re-sold. Apparently all are now back in Zenica.

## **The Need for Legal Change**

Evidently there can be no issue that women who are kidnapped/trafficked and forced into prostitution must have their rights protected. Women who have decided to migrate and seek work – in the sex industry or otherwise – have the right to make this decision and must also have their human rights respected and protected subsequently. In reality, mention the word prostitute and effective legal protection evaporates. As women who are trafficked are usually working in the sex industry they are subject to the same form of legal discrimination; in BiH, all sex workers are subject to criminal law.

The black market and hence a large part of the sex industry is largely dominated and controlled by organised crime. The dilemma therefore is what can be done when the local laws are inadequate and in fact ensure the prosecution of women rather than ensuring assistance, the culture considers prostitution a ‘pathological’ condition, and many of the local police are too closely connected with organised crime for there to be confidence in their integrity.

Despite this, a concerted and committed effort is being made to tackle the problem: a coalition between peacekeepers, local NGOs and the network of women’s organisations in the countries whose economies are in transition is being built. In brief, there is now a system in place which, if a woman seeks assistance then something will be done. At present it is limited to ensuring that the woman is not prosecuted and that she is safely out of the conditions which she has sought assistance to leave. If she decides to return home then assistance will be provided to ensure that she does so in safety and without any legal sanction. So far, 10 women have been able to return home.

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***In reality, mention the word prostitute and effective legal protection evaporates.***

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The OHCHR is now working to ensure that this system is expanded so that each woman can have a safe place to stay, healthcare, counselling, and legal advice. She must also have the opportunity of obtaining legal redress if she chooses, and the next part is to

ensure that the discrimination laws are repealed and that the laws which give protection and redress are enforced.

There is a long way to go but the minimum required for change is the following: market forces which pull in the opposite direction (those responsible for controlling the demands of that market must ensure that they are controlled!) education, information, and economic recovery. A serious attempt to end trafficking must address all of these.

For more information contact the author at UNHCHR on <reesm@un.org>

# Gender, HIV/AIDS and Emergencies

Lyn Elliott, HIV/AIDS Policy Advisor, Research & Development Unit, Save the Children Fund UK

**H**IV/AIDS is often neglected in emergency and displaced situations where agencies concentrate on providing basic needs, shelter and the treatment of disease. However, from the war zones of Rwanda, Bosnia and Sierra Leone to the stigmatised migrant communities of the industrialised North, there is a body of evidence linking war and forced migration to the spread of HIV/AIDS.<sup>1</sup> The impact of this is particularly acute on women and children as they make up the largest proportion of refugee and displaced people.

## HIV Prevalence and Gender Issues

While there are a number of modes of transmission, sexual intercourse and intravenous drug use account for the majority of HIV infection globally. Estimates available at the end of 1997 show that over 30 million people are living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. Although almost every country in the world is touched by HIV the virus spreads very differently in different regions of the world; 90 per cent of people living with HIV are in the developing world. Due to limited access to counselling and testing nine out of 10 people who are HIV positive do not know their status.<sup>2</sup>

For every four men infected with HIV, six women are infected. While women and young children are physically more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, it is now recognised that HIV/AIDS is a wider social and economic issue firmly rooted in power imbalances in gender relations in all social classes.<sup>3</sup> These power imbalances are more acute in resource-poor countries and regions.

## Gender and HIV/AIDS in Emergency and Displaced Situations

Equally, these power imbalances become more acute when women and children lose their social and economic base and access to basic needs and services in emergency situations throughout the world. Factors that contribute to the spread of HIV in emergency situations with a particular gender emphasis are:

- sexual and gender-based violence;
- breakdown in social and community structures and lack of physical and legal protection;
- lack of health infrastructure;
- lack of basic needs and economic opportunities;
- lack of education and skills training;
- para-military, combatants, military and peace-keeping forces (related to sexual and gender-based violence; also use of intravenous drug use by these groupings as a coping mechanism).

## Sexual and Gender-based Violence

There are various forms of sexual and gender-based violence, rape being the most common.

In complex emergencies sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war, for example in Bosnia, Mozambique, Rwanda, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and more latterly Kosovo. Although data are not available for many conflicts, elevated rates of HIV infection followed the wars in Mozambique and Angola. During the war in Bosnia 30–40,000 women were raped where it was a deliberate policy to rape young women to force them to bear the enemy's child.<sup>4</sup>

In the camps in Tanzania research with women in 1995 indicated that an increasing number of pregnancies were occurring among young women and many girls who lived without the protection of their parents. In addition, the frustrations and idleness of refugee men in the camp environment and their drinking habits contributed to more violence and sexual abuse against women. Most of the populations in the camps in Tanzania were from Rwanda where HIV rates were high prior to the conflict.<sup>5</sup> Many refugee women sold sex to people outside the camps and many refugee men visited local sex workers. Yet HIV/AIDS was not prioritised as an issue and very few interventions were developed.

Sexual violence also occurs in complex emergencies when refugees and displaced people move from one location to another. Girls and women are raped in this context and in camp situations where 'marauding groups' sexually

abuse them; this includes those who are supposed to be guarding them.<sup>6</sup> In such situations, although the military are aware of the dangers, many do not use condoms as protection against HIV/AIDS.

There are a number of measures that can be adopted in the short term and long term in camp settings to offer protection and support to women and children.

## Lack of access to basic needs, basic services and economic opportunities

In complex emergencies the majority of refugees leave home with very few possessions. The first priority then is food, shelter, treatment for any illness or disease, and tracing family members. Under these circumstances with few resources and little money, refugee women and girls often will exchange sex with the military or combatants for money, food, shelter, water, fuel and protection.

Refugees and displaced people need access to gender sensitive education on HIV/AIDS, the means to prevent it and access to services for the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS. In the camps in Tanzania, refugees who were HIV positive presented with green cards provided by support services in Rwanda for care, and asked to live in the hospital (and not the tents) and for better food. NGOs were unprepared for this and were unsure how to respond.<sup>7</sup> The response in the camps of Tanzania is possibly one of the better documented on providing prevention and care for HIV/AIDS. The African Medical Research Foundation

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*There is a growing body of evidence linking war and forced migration to the spread of HIV/AIDS.*

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(AMREF) was providing STD treatment within one month of the camps being set up. CARE responded with HIV/AIDS prevention, and AMREF, CARE and two other agencies set up a home-based care project for people living with HIV/AIDS.<sup>8</sup> However, with the exception of AMREF, the responses were after the event, virtually no agencies had integrated HIV/AIDS into their needs assessment before developing an intervention, and few of these interventions acknowledge the gender dynamics that are so fundamental to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

### The military

An HIV positive member of the military in Uganda suggested that the military and combatants should be kept as far away from civilians as possible.<sup>9</sup> In a complex emergency this is difficult to achieve. It is also difficult when combatants either live in communities or when the military are the guardians of refugees and displaced people. There needs to be specific thought about how this can be achieved in different situations and whose role it is to negotiate this.

Possibly the most reasonable solution for members of the military, including UN peace-keeping forces, would be to:

- provide information and education on HIV/AIDS;
- create awareness of human rights instruments and the violations that are particularly pertinent to sexual abuse and exploitation;
- provide condoms and regular STD screening, treatment and care.

## The Response: What Can Agencies Do?

### Appropriate needs assessments

It is imperative that the issue of HIV is addressed at the needs assessment stage of any agency response. In general, lack of preparedness makes it more difficult to set up a relevant response and obtain funding for it. The issue of gender needs to be addressed within this context to reflect the fact that the majority of refugees are women and children (75 per cent of the 40 million refugees and displaced worldwide), and women and girls are particularly vulnerable to HIV both biologically and socially in an emergency context.

Three activities should be carried out immediately prior to any assessment in any new refugee situation (including emergency):<sup>10</sup>

- guarantee availability of free condoms;
- enforce respect for universal precautions against HIV/AIDS transmission in healthcare settings;<sup>11</sup>
- identify a person responsible for the coordination of activities.

As a general rule field staff should act on the assumption that sexual and gender-based violence is a problem unless they have conclusive proof that it is not the case.

The needs assessment should include the collection of information on the following issues:<sup>12</sup>

- the prevalence of STDs and HIV in the host and home country, area, region;
- specific risk situations within the refugee settlement which should be targeted for various interventions;

- the cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices concerning sexuality, reproductive health, STDs and HIV/AIDS through formative (qualitative) research using focus groups and interviews;
- are intravenous drugs used and if so, by whom?
- what forms of gender-based violence are occurring? In what circumstances? Who are the perpetrators?
- do women, children and young people have the opportunity to develop skills and educational opportunities? Are there any ways of earning an income except by exchanging sex for money and resources?

Other important factors to consider include questions on the status of women in the host country; the physical layout of the camp in terms of accessing food and water; how many female protection officers are in camps; how many agency members are familiar with guidelines on HIV/AIDS and sexual violence; how many medical staff are trained on HIV/AIDS and sexual violence; are there same sex staff available in services; are post-coital contraceptives available; are girls treated differently from women and do they need a specific response?

### The need for a holistic response

To avoid the escalation of HIV/AIDS in emergency and displaced settings it is necessary to have a holistic response and address all the factors that contribute to the spread of HIV in emergencies. Unless the problem is dealt with comprehensively by addressing causal factors, agencies are simply dealing with the symptoms. Core to this holistic approach is a multi-sectoral response involving the:

- protection, legal rights and human rights issues for women, girls and boys;
- gender-sensitive camp layout and access to food, water, fuel and resources;
- provision of reproductive health services, including gender sensitive HIV/AIDS education and condom distribution, and care for people living with HIV/AIDS;
- education, skills training and social and economic opportunities directed at women, children and young people;
- separation of the military and combatants from civilian populations where possible;
- adoption of universal precautions against HIV/AIDS.

### Staff training

Agency staff need to be aware of HIV/AIDS, how it is transmitted, the need for protection, and the specific vulnerabilities of all refugees and displaced people to HIV/AIDS but in particular those of women and girls. Agency staff need relevant guidelines and policies within which to respond; they also need to be aware of the role played by the military, combatants, camp leaders and guardians in possible violations of protection. Staff also need to be aware of their own personal vulnerability to HIV/AIDS as many posts are unaccompanied, sexual relationships are quite common, and staff may be dealing with contaminated blood and equipment.

If all these factors are addressed in emergency and displaced settings then it is more likely that the transmission of HIV/AIDS will be challenged significantly in these situations, and that women and girl's vulnerabilities will be recognised and responded to.

## Notes

1. 'Migration & HIV: War, oppression, refugee camps fuel the spread of HIV' in *The Bridge* no 5, 3 July 1998, pp 4–5.
2. Current Status of Epidemic and Global Response, USAIDS progress report 1996–1997, pp8–9, USAIDS, Geneva.
3. Ibid 2
4. Ibid 1
5. 'Community Participation in a Refugee Emergency – focussing on community mobilisation, women and youth', a report from the Rwandan camps in Kagera Region of Tanzania, Radda Barnen, Swedish Save the Children, Stockholm 1995.
6. Ibid 1
7. Personal communication MSF Switzerland, Kagera, Tanzania, 1995.
8. Report of the Seminar on NGO Action, UK NO AIDS Consortium, London, October 1996.
9. Maj. R Rurunga, Joint Clinical Research Committee, Uganda. The Military & Guardians in Report of the Seminar on NGO Action, UK NO AIDS Consortium, London, October 1996.
10. *Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations: An Inter-Agency Field Manual*, 1995, UNHCR Geneva.
11. Specific detail on this is available in the Guidelines for HIV Interventions in Emergency Settings, UNAIDS/UNHCR/WHO, 1996, UNAIDS, Geneva.
12. Taken from a combination of *Reproductive Health in Refugee Situations: An Inter-agency Field Manual*, 1995, UNHCR Geneva, and *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*, 1991, UNHCR, Geneva.

For the full article, visit: <[www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html)>. This includes a gender-related needs assessment of HIV/AIDS with displaced people living in camps in Kasese District, Uganda. RRN Network Paper 30, *Protection in Practice*, also deals with this issue.

## Resource List on Gender Issues in this Newsletter

- **Captive Daughters**  
<<http://www.captive.org>> is a non-profit organisation dedicated to ending the trafficking of girls, based in Los Angeles.
- **Coalition Against Trafficking in Women**  
<<http://www.uri.edu/artsci/wms/hughes/catwdhughes@uri.edu>> The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women is a feminist human rights NGO that works internationally to oppose all forms of sexual exploitation.
- **ECPAT International**  
<<http://www.rb.se/ecpat/>> is a global network to protect children against commercial sexual exploitation.
- **Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women**  
<<http://www.inet.co.th/org/gaatw/>> GAATW was formed at the International Workshop on Migration and Traffic in Women in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in October 1994. It aims to ensure that the human rights of trafficked women are respected and protected by authorities and agencies.
- **Global Fund for Women**  
<<http://www.globalfundforwomen.org/>> is an international organisation which focuses on female human rights. It supports issues as diverse as literacy, domestic violence, economic autonomy, and the international trafficking of women, among others. It supports women's groups based outside of the US.
- **Human Rights Watch**  
<[www.hrw.org/about/projects/womrep/](http://www.hrw.org/about/projects/womrep/)> HRW's Women's Rights Division monitors state-sponsored and state-tolerated violence against women and sex discrimination in all regions of the world. In particular see 'Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide' available soon on the website.
- **International Human Rights Law Group**  
Contact: 1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 602, Washington, DC 20036. Tel (+1): 202 822 4600 Fax: (+1) 202 822 4606 Website: <[www.hrlawgroup.org/](http://www.hrlawgroup.org/)> Email in BiH: <[ihrlgbih@bih.net.ba](mailto:ihrlgbih@bih.net.ba)>
- **SAWNET: South Asian Women's Network**  
<<http://www.umiacs.umd.edu:80/users/sawweb/sawnet/index.html>> is a forum for those interested in South Asian women's issues.
- **UNAIDS**  
<[http://158.232.21.5/Revised/Cube\\_frame.html](http://158.232.21.5/Revised/Cube_frame.html)>
- **UNHCHR**  
<<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/10/c/women/womcam/htm>> is a special section of the website devoted to the Global Campaign to End Violence Against Women.
- **UNIFEM**  
<<http://www.unifem.undp.org>> within the UN Development Fund for Women. Alternatively look on the Internet at <<http://www.un.org/womenwatch>>
- **Gender and Development**  
An extensive resource list in Oxfam's Journal, *Gender and Development*. On Migration: Volume 6, No.1 Resources Section; On Violence against Women: Volume 6 No.3 Resources Section. <[Sales@carfax.co.uk](mailto:Sales@carfax.co.uk)> or <[www.carfax.co.uk](http://www.carfax.co.uk)>

# The Role of Savings and Remittances in Unstable Situations: Reflections after Hurricane Mitch

Thalia Kidder, Advisor on Microeconomics and Gender, Oxfam UK, Managua, Nicaragua

**H**urricane Mitch was the worst disaster to hit Central America in over 200 years. The economies of Nicaragua and Honduras have been set back at least 20 years and even if external debt is totally erased, these countries can never survive economically as they are. The financial systems of Central America have likewise been devastated. In Nicaragua, an association of 14 non-conventional financial institutions, ASOMIF, estimates US\$6–7m in losses. What lessons can this tragedy offer to microfinance practice?

## Microfinance Institutions' Perspectives

After Mitch, microfinance institutions (MFIs) grappled with three issues: damage to their infrastructure and communications, liquidity problems, and problems related to managing their loan portfolios.

Demand for credit is usually high at the end of the year, and for the harvest and holiday period. After Mitch this coincided with needs for emergency credit. Users in heavily affected areas withdrew deposits from savings cooperatives and MFIs experienced many late payments, higher operational costs, and lost interest on income. New funds and lines of credit were slow to arrive as institutions prioritised humanitarian relief. Few MFIs had any or adequate reserve funds; several had proposed reserves in prior years but donors had turned them down.

A priority for MFIs was to analyse rapidly their loan portfolio and carry out visits to borrowers' projects to assess damages and renegotiate loans. MFIs worked to respond to the demands for emergency credit, for short-term commercial credit which helps liquidity, and for agricultural production in less affected areas to improve food supplies. MFIs also met together to set common policies for negotiating with affected borrowers, produce reports based on common standards, and announce a joint 'no loan forgiveness' policy (ASOMIF, 1998).

## Lessons for Credit Policy

Hurricane Mitch hit countries with relatively well-developed MFIs that had between five and 25 years experience and capital of hundreds of thousands to millions of dollars. This discussion therefore concerns how established MFIs deal with crisis rather than whether or how microcredit is a response to crisis.

Mitch was a 'rapid onset' emergency; it was also the 'worst disaster'. It reinforced awareness that for Central Americans, crisis is a common occurrence: in recent years communities have suffered not only natural disasters but

also military interventions, civil war and genocide, monetary devaluations and macroeconomic crisis. Instability is therefore the norm.

Good practice models of microfinance, however, are based on assumptions of relative economic and social stability (McGeehan, 1999). Microfinance prioritises income promotion – credit for production and microenterprise – in which users receive sums to invest and expect to repay from future, higher income flows. Good practice recommendations include ways to identify stable, growing sectors, select low risk borrowers, and establish efficient follow-up and collection procedures.

But instability and crisis mean inability to predict the future (especially when emergency preparedness programmes are inadequate). Today's strong economic sectors may not always be stable, future income flows not always higher, nor current best borrowers always 'low risk'. High repayment may not be a function of efficient systems. Good practice may depend more on reducing vulnerability and protecting income.

There is much to learn from how families and economic projects survive disasters. In addition to large events, families cope with many smaller crises – local crop failure,

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*Few MFIs had any or adequate reserve funds; several had proposed reserves, but donors had turned them down.*

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illness and death, market changes or job loss – on a fairly regular basis. Families save (build reserves) in assets, animals or cash and manage their vulnerability by diversifying livelihoods. An agricultural family may also receive income from a brother in the US, bicycle repair services, migrant harvest work, cultivating cut flowers, or from a daughter working in the maquila industry (assembly for export factories in free trade zones). The risks of poverty and deprivation are therefore distributed geographically and between various family members. At times family crisis is managed through reciprocal contributions between neighbors and relatives. Enterprises and people cope with disasters through extensive informal networks to transfer resources from place to place.

These strategies are based on protecting income and smoothing consumption through crisis. In addition to the 'credit' aspect of these informal systems, a guiding principle is to use parts of current income (savings, transfers and solidarity: social insurance) to build up resources to respond to unexpected expenses in the future or big drops in income. It should be noted that survival strategies during disasters are gendered and warrant a much longer discussion than space permits. In general, women participate more than men in reciprocal networks and informal social insurance and savings. Where MFIs offer deposit services, a majority of account holders are women.

## The Advantages of MFI Collaborations

Only a few MFIs in the region have developed savings, insurance or money transfer services, partly because of legal codes and stringent requirements for financial institutions accepting deposits. URAC, a regional peasant's union in Mexico, has built a microfinance system based on the savings of more than 7,000 campesinos. Among other services they have a special fixed-term deposit account for childbirth and for school fees. Member cooperatives of the Honduran association of small coffee producers (CCCH) have also developed savings systems for the young, and CCCH is researching harvest insurance mechanisms. FEDECACES and CARUNA, federations of savings and credit unions in El Salvador and Nicaragua respectively, have money transfer systems. FEDECACES has established a family remittance agreement with institutions in the US linked with members' savings accounts in rural El Salvador.

***Good practice models of microfinance are based on assumptions of relative economic and social stability.***

Since men migrate more for work more than women do in Central America, providing low cost accessible remittance services becomes a women's issue.

These financial services played an important role in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch. CARUNA and FEDECACES reported that users with deposits found themselves better off than their neighbours as they were able to use savings to handle immediate family needs for food, medical care and transportation. Both institutions needed to provide for unexpected savings' withdrawals to maintain members' trust. Significantly, they were able to do so precisely because they were federations: internal agreements allowed cooperatives in heavily damaged areas to access funds from the national institution or from cooperatives which were not so affected. An advantage of associations of MFIs is that they manage and distribute risks during crisis.

Remittances have played a key role in rebuilding livelihoods after Mitch. Since the hurricane, thousands more Nicaraguans have joined the (estimated) half million migrants working in Costa Rica. In December 1998 the presidents of the Nicaraguan and Costa Rican Postal Services announced a system of money transfers between the two countries directed at this population. The service fee (5 per cent of the amount transferred) is half the average fee of commercial services and banks which expect to handle a combined US\$8–10m this year. Although the FEDECACES US remittance service was new, the number of transfers tripled in the month after the Hurricane.

## Conclusions

An analysis of instability points to several arguments in favour of MFIs developing savings and transfer services:

1. Improving local savings mobilisation will allow MFIs access to intermediate local capital without being so dependent on external resources. The potential of MFIs as financial intermediaries and not simply credit providers needs to be emphasised.

2. Such services help to protect investments in diverse economic projects even when certain areas suffer crisis or certain livelihoods are not viable in the short term. MFIs should identify more clearly the range of risks that families and borrowers face, and promote mechanisms to ameliorate these risks. Linking together savings, transfers, risk distribution mechanisms and credit protects users' income and thus enhances institutional stability.
3. Savings, transfers and risk distribution mechanisms should not only be considered 'hedged' against loan default. For certain people, these services may be more appropriate or effective means to accumulate and access sums for economic and social uses. Three specific recommendations include:
  - i. Carry out surveys to understand the target population's current savings and social insurance practices.
  - ii. Explore mechanisms to lower the transaction costs for individuals and institutions of small cash deposits.
  - iii. Research families' use of money transfer mechanisms – formal and informal – between rural and urban areas and across national borders.
4. Finally, microcredit alone may not respond to key issues of poverty reduction. Poverty reduction, a main rationale for many MFIs, is not only about promoting income but about lowering the risk of periodic poverty and deprivation. Savings and transfers smooth consumption and reduce vulnerability. This is especially important for women, since gender relations heighten women's risk of sudden deprivation such as that caused by abandonment, undesired pregnancy, and domestic or street violence. Sen and others affirm that the threat of falling into poverty can be as constraining and disempowering as the impact of occasional deprivation. Reducing these fears can be an efficient outcome of MFIs (McGeehan 1999).

On a larger scale, MFIs need to build reserves and develop creative mechanisms for distributing and managing risks between and across institutions. Fundamentally, MFIs' challenge of reconstruction and recapitalisation in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch is about building institutions that recognise that we are now preparing for the next 'mitch'. Instability is the norm. Microfinance good practice must address the needs to reduce vulnerability, protecting as well as promoting income. As part of this vision, savings, reserves and transfers play a critical role.

## Notes

### References

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- McGeehan, Sarah (1999 working paper for ACORD) *Credit and Savings Schemes in High Inflationary Contexts*.

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## Protection in Practice: Field-level Strategies for Protecting Civilians from Deliberate Harm

by Diane Paul

The term ‘complex humanitarian emergency’ refers to emergencies which affect large numbers of civilians due to a combination of factors. These include armed conflict, population displacement, the loss of shelter and community, food shortages, and disease. The term is often a euphemism for what, in reality, is the massive and deliberate violation of human rights. The crises in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Chechnya, Sierra Leone and elsewhere are considered ‘complex’ in part because the traditional response to humanitarian crises – meeting needs for water, food, medicine and shelter – doesn’t get at the crux of the matter: the need for physical safety; for protection from deliberately inflicted harm.

It may seem obvious that human rights abuses (or more correctly when armed conflict is involved, violations of humanitarian law) are at the core of these emergencies, but the protection of civilians from attacks and/or persecution is not at the centre of most humanitarian action. Instead, most humanitarian assistance seeks to alleviate the suffering after the abuses have occurred or while they are occurring. This creates dilemmas for relief organisations and others. Governments have used humanitarian assistance as a way to avoid more difficult interventions, giving rise to the term ‘humanitarian alibi’, and the less genteel reference to the ‘well-fed dead’.

While the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), considered the ‘guardian of the Geneva Conventions’, has a specific protection mandate, the organisation cannot adequately provide for the many protection needs of populations in complex emergencies. During armed conflict, and in the periods which precede and follow conflict, a field-level ‘security gap’ often exists where civilians are protected by no one. This problem is particularly acute for internally displaced persons or those at risk of displacement and whose governments are unwilling or unable to assist them. While refugees have UNHCR to address their legal protection needs, the internally displaced have no specific agency watching over them. Even when there are intergovernmental or regional missions to address human rights concerns, in the past these missions have not had a mandate to seek to prevent abuses except through legal or traditional means, which often take a long time. Monitoring and reporting does not meet the immediate protection needs of people under threat. Peacekeepers and civilian police monitors stress that protection is not their job – it is the job of the local authorities. But while the responsibility does and should rest with the local authorities they may not be able to address violations due to resource or other constraints. In many areas where abuses are widespread or where a particular group is at risk, the local authorities are the very ones committing or condoning the abuses.

This paper holds that those international organisations present in areas where violations occur have an obligation to act in ways which will enhance protection (or at minimum will not undermine protection). It is believed that an integrated approach to protection is required; one which builds a strategic, field-level response based upon the complementary strengths of various actors without requiring them to act outside their mandates or mission or to take risks they do not feel comfortable taking. For this approach to be successful it is necessary to identify a ‘focal point’ for protection (perhaps called the ‘protection facilitator’) in every crisis. The protection facilitator would conduct analysis of protection problems and provide information to other organisations on protection matters, in full consultation with ICRC and UNHCR out of respect for their protection mandates. The protection facilitator’s role would not be to coordinate the protection response but to raise the profile of protection, ensuring its place on the international community’s agenda and pressing for decision-making which takes protection into account. A strategic approach to protection, which incorporates tactics used in other situations to mitigate and prevent abuses could be developed through an in-country, multidisciplinary *protection working group* linked to an advocacy protection working group at the policy level. This paper offers examples of specific strategies and tactics which have been used in the field to prevent or mitigate abuses and could be adapted for use in other situations.

It is fully acknowledged that humanitarian relief workers, human rights and civilian police monitors and others present in the field cannot hope to address effectively violations of international humanitarian or human rights law if there is a lack of political will to stop abuses and hold perpetrators accountable. But by their actions across conflicts they have, thanks to their courage and ingenuity, saved many thousands of lives.

# News

## Refugees and Reproductive Health

This year marks the fifth anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, which challenged relief agencies to meet the historically neglected right of refugees to reproductive healthcare (RH). As part of the process of the 'ICPD+5' review, agencies involved in providing reproductive healthcare for refugees have focused on assessments of country level experiences in translating ICPD recommendations into real action. The ICPD Programme of Action defines RH as:

A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so.

The reality, however, could not be more different.

Legally, rape is one of the most violent crimes that can be committed against a person (second only to murder), yet society tends to punish the victim more severely than the perpetrator. Women who survive rape in the context of a complex emergency suffer triple trauma: the trauma of war, the trauma of rape, and the trauma of social stigma. Programmes to address rape and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence are a component of comprehensive RH services for refugees. Other components are: safe motherhood including emergency obstetrics, family planning, and the prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases.

### Action Taken

The Reproductive Health for Refugees (RHR) Consortium was established in 1995 in response to the ICPD Programme of Action. It is committed to promoting comprehensive reproductive health programs for all refugee women, men and adolescents. The RHR Consortium is active in the UNHCR/UNFPA-sponsored InterAgency Working Group on Refugee Reproductive Health and USAID's Reproductive Health for Refugees Working Group. Agency members of the consortium provide RH services in more than 30 refugee settings worldwide. The consortium has developed training modules and needs assessment tools, established an advocacy group of refugee women from around the world, and implements a small grants program. Currently in development is a set of monitoring and evaluation tools for RH in refugee settings.

The RHR Consortium's five-day 'Training Program for Health Personnel on Reproductive Health Service Delivery in Refugee Settings' is now available from CARE. (Contact

Dorothy Ngalame on <ngalame@care.org>). There is currently no charge for production or shipping but, as supplies are limited, priority is given to organisations currently implementing or planning to implement RHR projects in the field. Dorothy should also be contacted for copies of the one-day 'Introduction to Reproductive Health Issues in Refugee Settings' produced by the consortium in 1998.

The RHR Consortium's small grants program is intended to contribute to the consortium's goal of institutionalising comprehensive reproductive health services in refugee settings worldwide by supporting local NGOs which address RH issues. Institutionalisation activities might include testing approaches to assessment, design and implementation; providing reproductive health services; advocacy; developing protocols, manuals or training materials; performing in-service training; conducting evaluations; and organising regional or national conferences or meetings. Proposals are accepted for review on an ongoing basis. For specific criteria, email Meriwether Beatty on <meriwether\_beatty@jsi.com>.

### The ICPD Review

The RHR Consortium, along with programme and donor countries, the UN system and representatives of civil society, other NGOs and the private sector, is currently reviewing progress on the ICPD Programme of Action. A series of activities are underway which will culminate in the UN Special Session in June.

Last November UNFPA sponsored a technical meeting in Rennes, France on 'Reproductive Health in Crisis Situations'. It was noted that, although a great deal of effort has led to progress on this front, a greater amount of work is still needed: while agencies are active, information dissemination is not widespread. Greater priority must be given to dissemination strategies in order to share lessons learned.

In February, assessments of (non-crisis) country-level experiences in translating ICPD recommendations into programmes and actions were discussed at a forum in The Hague. At that meeting delegates noted that education and reproductive health programs remain underfunded. The UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD) also held a preparatory meeting for a Special Session of the General Assembly from 22–30 March where UN member states and representatives of civil society considered a draft report of the Secretary General on the further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. The draft report contains key future actions in the areas of population and development.

The author, Susan Purdin, is the Global Technical Advisor for the RHR Consortium. Contact Susan via the American Refugee Committee, BP 4997 Conakry, Guinea. Fax/Tel: (+224) 42 20 27. Email: <sjpurdin@aol.com> or <susan@irkenya.org>. Also, Kate Burns, Senior Programme Officer, Reproductive Health, UNHCR: <burns@unhcr.ch> For information on the ICPD Programme of Action: <<http://www.icpd/>>

# Women's Rights in Bosnia

The International Human Rights Law Group's Women's Rights Advocacy Project has just published a national report on women's human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The following is based on the Introduction to this report.

BiH is party to the Women's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (the Women's Convention) by virtue of having signed the Dayton Peace Agreement. In addition, the Federation Constitution (in its Annex) directly incorporates the Women's Convention among a list of 21 international documents similarly incorporated into Federation Law. As part of its obligations as a signatory to the Women's Convention, the Federation is required to submit periodic reports to the Convention's supervisory body, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Law Group's Women's Rights Advocacy Project developed a set of guidelines to assist women's NGOs in the creation of alternative, 'shadow' reports which CEDAW welcomes as a complement to the official national report.

Although BiH is not due to submit an official report to CEDAW at this time, the Law Group believed it would be worthwhile to begin a process of discussing women's human rights and gender-based analysis with women's NGOs, and to collect information, however general, about the status of women in BiH. The many reports on the human rights situation in BiH have generally not included detailed (or even general) accounts of women's rights concerns. Neither has gender-specific information or gender analysis been included in sections dealing with particular issues of concern to human rights, such as violence against women.

Among the objectives of creating an NGO report on women's human rights, therefore, were the opportunities that such a report would create for public scrutiny, confronting government at all levels with an evaluation of the protection of women's rights in law and practice based on international human rights standards. At the same time the report sets out the need that clearly exists for the government to collect and provide appropriate data on the situation of women.

The Law Group initiated this process in late 1998. It did this through leading a three-day training workshop focusing on women's human rights and gender-based analysis. Resources and time required that the report focus on only a few areas of concern. These were: economics and employment, education, violence against women, health and reproductive rights, and public life and politics. The group split into five to collect information on each of the identified issues. At their individual meetings each group also discussed the nature and objectives of the gender-related recommendations that should accompany the report.

Two follow-up meetings – in January and March this year – served to finalise the report, though many other meetings were held inbetween. There was also input from a Croatian

NGO that had written a shadow report to its state's official submission to CEDAW.

In addition to the overall objective of presenting the BiH government with an account of its obligations under international and regional human rights instruments, the report set out to:

- assess and describe governments' accountability with respect to those rights in terms of domestic laws and practices;
- draw attention to those areas where *de jure* and *de facto* violations exist so that they may be addressed effectively and changed;
- serve as a tool to monitor government actions to honour its commitments.

The recommendations in each section thus establish benchmarks of governments' commitment to, and progress towards, ending violations.

As well, the report is directed towards the wider (international) community in the sense that this community can and does play a significant role in moving the government to a position of greater responsibility to enforce and protect human rights.

The report notes that, under existing conditions in post-war BiH, NGOs and international agencies carry much of the burden in obtaining and analysing data, and providing services and resources to meet the needs of women. The responsibility for these activities rests ultimately with the government and, at the very least, the government should acknowledge and support the role of NGOs.

For more information, or for a copy of the report, contact the International Human Rights Law Group, Bosnia Project, Marsala Tita 8, II, Sarajevo 71000, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tel/fax: (+387) 71 205 319. Email: <ihrlgbih@bih.net.ba>.

*This report was produced in association with the following women's NGOs:*

- Antonija - Liga Zena Glasaca (Bugojno)
- Lijepa Zena - La Bella Donna (Srpsko Sarajevo)
- Biro za Ljudska Prava (Tuzla)
- Buducnost (Modrica)
- Centar za afirmaciju ljudskih prava i sloboda (Livno)
- Lara (Bijeljina)
- Liga Zena Glasaca (Banja Luka)
- Liga Zena Glasaca (Sarajevo)
- Li-Woman (Livno)
- Medika-Infoteka Projekat (Zenica)
- Srcem do Mira (Sanski Most)
- Udruzenje Gradanki Zene Zenama (Gorazde)
- Udruzenje Gradanki Zene Zenama (Sarajevo)
- Udruzenje Zena Bosnjakinje-Brcko (Brcko Maoca)
- Zenska Akcija Vidra (Banja Luka)
- Zena BiH (Mostar)

# Early Warning and United Nations Reform

Over the past two years, and particularly within the last 12 months, the UN has taken steps to develop significantly an effective, system-wide capacity for conflict early warning.

From 1987 to 1992, the UN Secretariat centralised its early warning analysis in the Office for Research and Collection of Information (ORCI). After ORCI was merged into a consolidated Department of Political Affairs (DPA) in 1992, early warning systems were taken up by the new Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA). By 1995, a Humanitarian Early Warning System (HEWS) had been established by DHA. As a database, HEWS primarily collected quantitative information on a range of countries of concern, focusing on those which had the potential to escalate to the level of humanitarian crisis. But with very few staff to maintain and update the system, HEWS was largely unable to expand its information gathering capacity into the qualitative areas most central for conflict early warning: political, human rights, military and societal factors.

In taking stock of these efforts to develop an early warning capacity within the UN headquarters, it is apparent that further progress will depend on two broad requirements: the need for standard methods for decentralised analysis, and the need for greater inter-departmental coordination.

OCHA has now ended any further development of HEWS as part of a broader reassessment of its humanitarian information strategies. In the coming months, as part of this internal reorientation, OCHA instead intends to develop a methodology for inter-agency humanitarian contingency planning within the UN agency.

The current process of UN reform, which began with the arrival of Kofi Annan as Secretary General in January 1997, has opened up new opportunities to make effective connections between improved early warning and preventive action. One of the primary reasons for this has been the initiation of new Secretariat working practices to deal with actual and potential crisis situations. Notable among these was Annan's decision to establish two executive committees, one for peace and security (ECPS, convened by DPA) and another for humanitarian affairs (ECHA, convened by OCHA). The executive committees ensure inter-departmental consultation and joint decision-making at the most senior level, and provide a visible imperative for improved coordination at the desk level of each department concerned with political and

humanitarian issues. The previous DPA–DPKO–DHA framework for coordination has also been restructured and expanded to focus on the routinised joint consideration of countries of mutual early warning concern. Within DPA, the Policy Planning Unit has also initiated a prevention team process which conducts a monthly review of analyses drafted on possible emerging crises in each major geographic region.

What these efforts still lack are standardised methods which will allow for some commonality of analysis across different divisions and departments; neither do they make explicit the link to effective preventative measures. With initial impetus coming from the support of the British government, a project was initiated by the Office of the Secretary General in March 1998 to address these needs. The Early Warning and Preventative Measures Project has now developed an early warning methodology which can act as the basis for a common analytical language for the various UN departments and agencies responsible for preventive action. In this manner, UN early warning analysis will soon be linked to the effective implementation of UN preventive action in a single, integrated planning process. The project will run a series of staff college training workshops for all relevant UN staff in DPA, DPKO, OCHA, UNDP, UNHCR and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, such that the methods become standardised across headquarters for the purpose of joint analysis and planning between these departments.

Three other aspects of this project deserve mention. One is the effort to build in a comprehensive operational approach to early warning, making the development and human rights parts of the UN system central players in the analysis and planning process. The second is the use of a composite and dynamic framework for early warning analysis which links the use of indicators to a set of sectors for qualitative analysis (for example, governance and human rights) which may be related readily to existing operational frameworks. Third, the project design team has initiated an ongoing effort to provide an integrated survey of the range of preventive measures available within the UN system, from preventive peacemaking measures through to those concerned with preventive development and preventive humanitarian action. Taken together, these recent efforts in policy, training and operation are perhaps the most significant attempt by the UN in the last decade to take a structured approach to early warning and conflict prevention.

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# Reform of the French Aid Administration

The French international aid system has long been marked by France's historic relations with its former colonies and with the wider French-speaking world. This led to the development of a complex two-structured system:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which managed general diplomacy, multi- and bi-lateral relationships as well as assistance to Asia, America and Western, Eastern and Central Europe (the so-called 'hors-champ' countries);
- The Ministry of Development Cooperation, responsible for assistance to a grouping of most of the former colonies, essentially West and Central Africa, as well as North Africa and some of the Caribbean islands (the so-called 'du-champ' countries).

Alongside these two structures was the French Development Bank (Caisse Française de Développement) co-directed by the Ministry of Development Cooperation and the Treasury. This managed all official loans through bilateral and occasionally multilateral channels. In addition there was a complex mechanism to mobilise resources for emergency response set up by the Department of Humanitarian Action (Service d'Action Humanitaire) within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as an Emergency Unit (Cellule d'Urgence) – an inter-ministerial body including the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Health. The resources available to the DHA were always fairly limited and diminished gradually over the years, with France believing that funding through ECHO would be the key to financing emergency assistance.

The relationship with NGOs was based on different mechanisms. The Department of Voluntary Associations and Decentralised Cooperation (Dpt de la Vie Associative et de la Coopération Décentralisée, DEV/IVA) constituted for both ministries a mechanism for co-funding. The Commission for Cooperation and Development (Commission Coopération-Développement; CCD) offered a forum for dialogue. Management of food aid fell under a complex inter-ministerial administrative machinery involving the Ministry of Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, and the Treasury etc. Finally, there was the more political structure of the NGO-Liaison Unit (Mission de Liaison auprès des ONG; MILONG).

On the ground this two-tiered structure for the 'du-champ' countries replicated itself within the French Embassy on the one hand (with its consular and political departments) and the Mission for Aid and Development on the other, which, in certain countries, had considerable control and influence.

Initial steps towards reforming this two-tiered system began in 1981 under the then minister of development cooperation, M Jean-Pierre Cots. Sustained lobbying from various sources (African as well as French) quickly put a stop to the process. However, it was reintroduced in 1997 following the annual meeting of International Development

and Solidarity, the reforms were finally implemented at the beginning of 1999. The reforms are characterised by:

- The strengthening of the inter-ministerial aspects of aid by creating the Inter-ministerial Committee on International Cooperation for Development.
- The merging of the two ministries into one body. This should allow the imbalance in development strategies for Latin and Central America, Eastern and Southern Africa and certain Asian regions to be redressed. In addition, at field level the regional offices for aid and development (Les Missions d'Aide et de Coopération; MAC) have seen their status profoundly modified: under the newly created Department for Cultural Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance (Service de Coopération Culturelle et d'Aide Humanitaire) the erstwhile MAC is now totally integrated into the embassies with the head of each field office becoming an Assistant Ambassador.
- The definition of so-called 'priority zones' in which the French administration will concentrate its bilateral support in the knowledge that other regions will be assisted via multi-lateral, notably European, mechanisms.
- In the medium term the abolition of the DHA, whose assets were limited anyway, and the strengthening of the Emergency Unit. This should reinforce the coherence of French humanitarian action.
- A new mandate for the former French Development Bank, renamed the French Development Agency (FDA) which has been widened to include social development, education and health. This measure, introduced following the integration in 1995 of the former Indochina into the traditional areas of intervention, makes the FDA the operational centre of the French aid administration. However, the dual supervision of the FDA by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Treasury inevitably means there will be need for considerable mediation. Also, given that the FDA will keep its status as a bank certain decisions will be difficult to make: for example, the cancellation or rescheduling of debt repayments, grant making, involvement in unprofitable schemes, relationships with non-creditworthy countries and relationships with all countries that are affected by crises, be they natural or conflict.
- The creation of a body for civil society consultation, the High Council of Development Cooperation. This High Council, under the supervision of the prime minister and composed of a number of interest groups (NGOs, unions, grass-roots organisations and individuals) will be granted powers of inquiry.

The NGOs, or rather, the OSIs (Organisations of International Solidarity, according to current French terminology) have followed this reform with interest and have attempted to make proposals to the Commission of Cooperation and Development, either via their collective organisational structure, 'Coordination SUD', or through other working groups and networks such as Groupe URD. One of the difficulties was finding a forum in which effective

debate and consultation could take place. Not surprisingly the other issue was financial: what level of funding would be available to OSIs? What would be the funding framework under which OSIs could make bids? Who would be responsible for emergency operations, and what political, technical and financial mechanisms would be in place to cover the grey area between relief and development.

## Rwanda: the View of the French Parliament<sup>1</sup>

Since 1994, the genocide against the Tutsis and the massacres of political opponents in Rwanda have been subject to investigation by journalists, human rights organisations, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Belgian Senate, and academics. While their conclusions may vary, without exception they all refer to relations between France and Rwanda as an important, indeed decisive, element in the strategy of the Rwandan regime as of October 1990.

Despite this the French parliament only published its final report on the French role in Rwanda on 15 December 1998. Its authors readily admit that after four years memories fade, witnesses become apathetic and documents are lost. In addition, while the enquiry team congratulated itself on having comprehensive access to the documents it requested, these files had already been sifted through several times simply as a result of changes in government ministerial teams. Moreover, comprehensive access does not mean that the relevant defence, intelligence or foreign affairs departments supplied anything for which they were not explicitly asked.

Prior to the report a group of associations, academics and researchers had raised some vital questions concerning the whys and wherefores of French policy of intervention in Rwanda:

- What was the motivation of French military commitment to Juvenal Habyarimana's regime?
- What did 'indirect assistance' in the fighting actually mean?
- What was the reaction to criminal political activity (ethnic massacres and assassination attempts)?
- What type of French pressure was exerted on the Rwandan authorities to carry out an effective democratisation process, put an end to the massacres and implement the Arusha agreements?
- How did the French behave straight after April 1994 (the beginning of) and during the genocide?

The report covers all these issues with the exception of economic assistance – another raw nerve of war despite the fact that, as the report acknowledges, France along with Belgium had become the leading donor in 1993. The wording of the report is honest and the conclusions forthright and damning:

- France found itself committed militarily as a result of a unilateral decision taken by the French president in his own preserve, and in the absence of a legal framework.
- France was not able to obtain the promised democratic opening in exchange for salvaging a worn-out regime,

The new structure has only recently been introduced and is still in its early days. It is therefore too soon to judge its performance in relation to the new post-Cold War agenda. The OSIs, in any case, will remain vigilant and will try to maintain, collectively via their structures for representation, reflection and operational research, a critical but constructive approach.

and did not draw the necessary conclusions with regard to its commitment.

- France was aware of the ethnic excesses of the regime and the repeated massacres.
- There was indirect or close involvement of the French troops in Operation *Noroît* from the top of the hierarchy to field level during engagements against the Revolutionary Patriotic Front (FPR).
- The 1994 evacuations were selective.
- As a result of France's isolation, its votes on the Security Council contributed to international disarray in the face of genocide.

The report concludes, however, that France is not accountable to anyone despite the accusations and misdeeds laid at its door (attending interrogations of FPR prisoners, arming and training the militia, official arms deliveries beyond 6 April 1994 and so on). Nevertheless some reservations remain and several sections are inconclusive, for instance the ambivalent analysis of military and diplomatic involvement.

This report, with its arguments and 'proof', is now open to analysis. Criticism and new documents are already being circulated by the press adding to the impressive volume of information which has now been made public. Other investigations can also now be undertaken and will push back the actual and perceived boundaries of the exercise.

All the same this work is just one piece in several stages. The next stage will concern the behaviour of the international powers who have so far kept their distance as much as possible from this truth-gathering exercise. First comes the UN, the link in the chain most specifically targeted in the French report, followed by the US and Great Britain (which was then very active in the East African countries) whose effective involvement cannot escape the attention of analysts. The following stage will focus on countries in the sub-region: the DRC, Burundi, Tanzania and, of course, Uganda. In this regard we may recall, that in February 1998 the OAU also set up a commission of enquiry into the Rwandan crisis with which Rwanda is cooperating.

In the final analysis, the parliamentary investigation only dealt with France's official involvement. That was its task. Unofficial French practice remains untouched. This is a matter for the courts.

### Notes

1. National Assembly, *Enquête sur la tragédie rwandaise (1990-1994)* [Enquiry into the Rwandan Tragedy], Paris, December 1998, 393 pp., 633 pp., 437 pp. and 391 pp. Available from Kiosque de l'Assemblée nationale, Division de l'information, 126, rue de l'Université, 75355 Paris cédex 07, Tel: (+33) 1 40 63 69 86. Website: <[www.assemblee-nationale.fr/2/dossiers/rwanda/sommaire.htm](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/2/dossiers/rwanda/sommaire.htm)>

# Groupe Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement

The Groupe Urgence, Réhabilitation, Développement (Groupe URD) was formed in 1993. It brings together some 16 French emergency and development NGOs, as well as university-based experts, and has taken the lead in stimulating reflection and research on the continuities and discontinuities between relief, rehabilitation and development in the Francophone world. The publication in 1997 of a collective book, *Entre Urgence et Développement*, was an important launch for the group. An English translation will be published shortly by Zed Books. The activities of the network, which meets three times a year, fall into one of four categories: research, debate, training, and advocacy.

Current research activities concentrate on the relationship between private and state humanitarianism (especially through the French military); partnerships in unstable situations; from free gift to cost-recovery; the cultural, social, economic and political components of violence and security in conflict; and conflict prevention: political myth or operational reality. Short research reports have been produced through local partnership in Kabinda in the DRC (J. Grisoni) and on the role of the French army in rehabilitation (V. De Geoffroy). A lesson learning exercise on Hurricane Mitch is planned for this summer.

Advocacy work has focussed on recent reform of French official development aid, and has critiqued the Sphere project 'standards' (see RRN Newsletter 12).

Contact: François Grunewald or Veronique de Geoffroy:  
La Fontaine des Marins, 26170 Plaisians, France. Fax:  
(+33) 04 75 28 29 36. Email: <f.grunewald@ifonie.fr>

## New Sphere Newsletter

In mid-1997, a group of humanitarian agencies launched the Sphere Project. The Project produced a handbook that, based on a Humanitarian Charter, details what populations affected by conflict and calamity need for life with dignity. This activity was undertaken out of concern that a massively increased demand for humanitarian relief worldwide was in danger of outstripping the response capacity of the humanitarian system and could lead to inconsistent quality in relief efforts.

The aim of Sphere's new quarterly newsletter is to inform people about the work of the Project and to encourage discussion related to the Humanitarian Charter and the use and implications of using standards and indicators in humanitarian response. If you would like to receive the newsletter, please write to <sphere@ifrc.org>

# The Environmental Response Network

The Environmental Response Network (ERN) is a project of Green Cross UK. It has grown out of a three year project to test the feasibility of establishing an environmental resource related to disasters. It is expected to become operational in the summer of 1999.

The overall objective of the ERN is to offer a resource comprising environmental expertise, information and training related to disasters in order to:

- help integrate environmental considerations into emergency preparedness and response mechanisms;
- promote sustainable long-term reconstruction following a disaster;
- link environmental knowledge and expertise to the decision-making process in disaster management.

The ERN will support and integrate with existing initiatives taken by local, national and international agencies. Environmental specialists will be selected by a rigorous process developed with RedR, complementing RedR's register of relief personnel. They will be trained and available to work in pre- and post-disaster situations.

Environmental information on disasters will support these specialists and will be made available to organisations involved in disaster management. Green Cross is an associate of AlertNet and this information will be accessible through this site.

For more information, or to discuss collaboration, contact: Green Cross UK, Millennium House, Kingston University, 21 Eden Street, Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey KT1 1BL, UK. Tel: (+44) 208 547 8274. Fax: (+44) 208 547 7789. Email: <greencross@kingston.ac.uk> Website: <http://www.bluekey.co.uk/gcuk> The Network is currently looking for experienced environmental specialists to join the ERN and help advise on best practice for integrating environmental issues into every stage of disaster management.

## Contributors to the News section

**Refugees and Reproductive Health:** Susan Purdin, RHR Consortium, American Refugee Committee.

**Women's Rights in Bosnia:** Adapted from 'A National NGO Report on Women's Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina'.

**Early Warning and UN Reform:** John Cockell, London School of Economics.

**Reform of the French Aid Administration & Groupe URD:** François Grunewald, President of Groupe URD.

**Environmental Relief Network:** Lydia Cerbelle, Green Cross UK.

**Rwanda: The View of The French Parliament:** André Guichaoua, Professor at Lille University, France.

# Interactive ICVA

**I**CVA – the International Council of Voluntary Agencies – has instituted a new information policy aimed at turning the network into a leading advocate for humanitarian issues. The two major components of this policy are a new newsletter, provisionally titled ‘Talk Back’, and a new website. These are key to ICVA’s role as a facilitator of advocacy networks, and as an information provider. ICVA is aware of the information overload many in the sector face, and intends that these two resources will help members to structure and prioritise information of relevance.

The website has two main parts: a public site and a ‘members only’ site. The members’ site will allow access to unique documents and information not available elsewhere on the web – for example, the kind of information ICVA learns in the course of sensitive and confidential briefings. It will also hold detailed contact information on other members. Most exciting, though, is the interactive/discussion area where members can discuss topical issues and engage in frank discussion about them. The first topic proposed for

discussion is the Sphere Project. A username and password will be used to ensure confidentiality, and guest names will be issued for prospective members and friends of ICVA.

‘Talk Back’ is also important to ICVA’s new information policy. The newsletter and the website will be complementary, and the title Talk Back is intended to convey the idea of a proactive advocacy network that is prepared to challenge conventional thinking. It will contain ‘latest’ developments in countries of interest to ICVA members from a humanitarian perspective and, as with the website, will inform members of issues that are discussed in Geneva – a main source of news and information on humanitarian issues that are intrinsic to the sector but not covered in a consistent manner. It will also provide information about upcoming events.

ICVA’s extensive network of member organisations makes it ideally placed to debate the key humanitarian dilemmas that confront the aid community. ICVA hopes you will join in this debate.

For more information contact ICVA by email:  
<secretariat@icva.ch>

## Contributors to Country Updates, Newsletter 14

**Ethiopia and Eritrea:** Patrick Gilkes, Independent Consultant, London  
**Armenia:** unnamed  
**Bosnia and Herzegovina:** Nick Scott-Flynn, ICVA, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina  
**Albania:** Koenraad Van Brabant, RRN Coordinator, London

## Contributors to Country Updates, Newsletter 13

Apologies to those who contributed to Newsletter 13. Full credit is shown below:  
**Sierra Leone and Liberia:** Philippa Atkinson, RRN Regional Representative, West Africa  
**Nicaragua:** Donna Vukelich, Independent Consultant, Nicaragua  
**Haiti:** Charles Arthur, Haiti Support Group, London  
**Angola:** Marion Birch, HealthNet International, Mozambique  
**Georgia:** Helena Fraser, OCHA, New York

## Feedback from Addis Ababa

**I**n May, the InterAfrica Group, Center for Dialogue on Humanitarian, Peace and Development Issues in the Horn, based in Addis Ababa, wrote to thank the RRN for publishing Gordan Adam’s article on the positive capacity of radio and other forms of media in complex emergencies (RRN Newsletter 13, March 1999). InterAfrica Group broadcasts RVOP – Radio Voice of Peace-Somalia – which has, among other things, facilitated family re-unification, and provides information on health and family welfare in its daily broadcasts. It is the second most listened to program in Somalia (second only to the BBC). The letter ended: ‘Again, thank you for Adam’s article. Please continue the good work of the RRN. Your information is invaluable to us.’

**T**he Christian Relief and Development Association (CRDA), also based in Addis Ababa, wrote: ‘We very much believe that such ... informative documents are the best mechanisms for enhancing information exchange among our members. The CDRA, which is an umbrella organisation, has about 150 member NGOs and religion-based agencies. These organisations undertake relief, rehabilitation and development work throughout Ethiopia. Thus, the information of the kind [that the RRN] sent us will benefit them significantly. The publications have been forwarded to our resource centre for easy access by our users.’





# Country Updates

## Ethiopia and Eritrea

Statistics underline that the Eritrean/Ethiopian war is the biggest war in the world, yet it is almost totally ignored outside the region. Over half-a-million troops are deployed on both sides of the disputed border. Since the fighting flared up again in February, both sides have claimed nearly 100,000 killed, wounded and captured in three major battles: at the end of February, the Ethiopians re-took the disputed village of Badme, seized by Eritrea in May last year; an Ethiopian assault in mid-March at Tserona failed; an Eritrean attempt to recapture Badme in late March was also unsuccessful.

The war has been fought using First World War tactics – artillery barrages followed by tank and infantry assaults – but with modern weapons. Both sides refuse to disclose their own casualties or allow the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) access to the war zones; suspicions are now growing over the treatment of prisoners and of the age of soldiers, and each has accused the other of under-age recruiting.

Neither country can afford the conflict. Currency reserves in both countries have been seriously depleted by several hundred million dollars worth of military equipment. Ethiopia has bought from China and Bulgaria; Eritrea from Romania and Ukraine. Russia has sold to both sides. Suppliers have insisted on cash in advance. Defence spending is likely to double again this year. For Eritrea – population 3.5 million – the deployment of 270,000 troops has produced a serious labour shortage. Many families are running into difficulties as wage earners are drafted and remittances from abroad re-directed to the war effort. After February's losses, there has been a shortage of recruits; draft dodging in the urban areas has appeared. The government stopped exit visas for all those under 40 and halved the length of military training for national service conscripts to three months. The government has also raised income tax, and marketed treasury bonds to fund the war effort. Eritreans overseas, who contributed US\$400m last year and already pay a 2 per cent tax on earnings, are now being told they must donate at least US\$900 if they want passports or visas. Libyan assistance has proved less than initially hoped, and Eritrea's bid to re-invest itself as an Arab state has not produced the desired response. In April, the government finally admitted that the economic growth rate had halved in the last year; most observers believe this remains over-optimistic.

In April, the government relaxed previously strict restrictions on international NGO activity to try and encourage more aid, allowing a joint Oxfam, SCF and Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Committee assessment visit to southern Eritrea.

Ethiopia, with its larger population of 60 million, has yet to face recruitment problems but it, too, is finding the war a similar strain. The country has been hit by falling world coffee prices, with export earnings from July 1998 to March 1999 down 38 per cent compared to the 1997/98 period (total coffee earnings for 1997/98 were US\$445m). Like Eritrea, Ethiopia had an excellent harvest last year. This year prospects are uncertain. The short rains have been poor and there is already a severe drought in southern Ethiopia, as in Somalia. Both Ethiopia and Eritrea have called for international aid to help those displaced by the fighting. In April, the WFP launched a nine month US\$15.4m emergency food programme for 268,000 displaced Eritreans, mostly women and children (the men have largely been drafted). In March, WFP agreed a similar programme, for \$24.3m, for 272,000 out of the 330,000 Ethiopia claims have been displaced on its side of the border. Figures should be treated with some caution.

Both sides are now actively trying to extend the conflict. Eritrea has backed Djibouti's opposition forces in an attempt to disrupt Ethiopia's rail and road access to Djibouti port, and has been sending arms to the opposition Oromo Liberation Front in southern Ethiopia causing problems along the Kenya–Ethiopia border. It is also arming anti-Ethiopian factions in Somalia. Ethiopia is arming its own supporters in Somalia, and with Sudan has been backing the creation of an opposition Alliance of Eritrean National Forces. It has also sponsored a Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation to activate Afar opposition to the Asmara government.



In February, after defeat at Badme, Eritrea suddenly accepted the OAU's framework for negotiations. This calls for both sides to withdraw from the areas occupied since 6 May 1998, and for international monitoring of a ceasefire and of the disputed areas while a border commission establishes an acceptable boundary. Despite Ethiopia's earlier agreement, dispute then followed with regard to whether the plan referred specifically to Badme (as Eritrea claimed) or all occupied areas (as Ethiopia maintained). In April, Ethiopia conceded that it would accept a ceasefire prior to a complete Eritrean withdrawal from all occupied territory providing that a firm timetable for withdrawal was agreed. This encouraged the UN's Special Envoy, Mohammed Sahnoun, to make another effort at mediation, shuttling between Asmara and Addis

Ababa in April and May. While Sahnoun has made little apparent progress, Eritrea, apparently worried by the prospect of a war on two fronts, signed a six point agreement with Sudan at the beginning of May. Both sides have promised not to support each others' dissidents, though there is yet no timetable for implementation.

A negotiated outcome remains extremely difficult to achieve. Both countries are hurting far more seriously than they are prepared to admit, and the effects on development will be serious and long lasting. But it is, in many respects, a popular war, with both sides locked into a pattern of nationalist rhetoric and pride. Both President Issayas of Eritrea and Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia have gained politically from the conflict; neither can afford to lose.

## Armenia

The Republic of Armenia is a small landlocked country located in the mountainous Southern Caucasus region, marking the border between Europe and Asia. In the late 1980s and early 1990s Armenia entered a period of severe economic, social and political turmoil caused by several concurrent events. These included a devastating earthquake in 1988 (which claimed an estimated 25,000 lives and left another 250,000 homeless) the collapse of the former Soviet Union, and open warfare with Azerbaijan over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh.

As a country with few natural resources and as a net importer of food and energy, Armenia was particularly hard hit by the breakdown in inter-republic trade and economic relations resulting from the disintegration of the Soviet Union, financial constraints over the last 10 years have led to the deterioration of most of the country's infrastructure. Most institutions have had little or no basic maintenance since 1988 and have outdated equipment and chronic shortages of basic supplies. Limited budgets have prompted institutions to impose fees for services that were free in the past, thus limiting access for the poor. The deterioration of infrastructure such as roads, water, irrigation systems, and central heating continues to impose a range of hardships on both rural and urban populations.

While most current observers agree that the humanitarian crisis in Armenia is now over, pockets of extreme vulnerability remain. For this group, which includes a segment of the refugee population and elderly pensioners living alone, basic security needs to remain acute. To address these needs the international community continues to provide humanitarian assistance on a limited scale, while more longer term interventions are being explored.

While Armenia can be characterised as a country in transition, economic activity is still limited mainly to trade and services rather than production. As a result unemployment and/or underemployment is high and poverty is widespread. In addition, financial constraints over the last 10 years have led to the deterioration of most of the country's infrastructure. Most institutions have had little or no basic maintenance since 1988 and have outdated equipment and chronic shortages of basic supplies. Limited budgets have prompted institutions to impose fees for services that were free in the past, thus limiting access for the poor. The deterioration of



infrastructure such as roads, water, irrigation systems, and central heating continues to impose a range of hardships on both rural and urban populations.

The government of Armenia and the international community has responded to the challenges facing the country in a number of ways. Macro-level legal and regulatory reforms are being promoted to create a policy environment conducive to the development of a market economy and pluralistic governance. Concurrently, the international aid community is increasingly focusing its efforts on promoting civil society by supporting the nascent indigenous non-governmental sector, community development initiatives, and small and medium private enterprise development. This strategy is viewed as a more sustainable approach to providing assistance in that it helps to rebuild a social safety net and decreases dependency on external aid.

Lack of resolution over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh will, nevertheless, continue to play a role in the political and economic stability of Armenia and the region. For example, in 1992 the US Congress passed Section 907 of the Freedom Support Act which prohibits the delivery of US government economic and military assistance to the government of Azerbaijan. Within the parameters of Section 907, only the delivery of humanitarian and

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# Country Updates *continued*

## **Armenia *cont.***

democracy-building aid is allowed. Section 907 was passed largely because of the lack of resolution over Nagorno-Karabakh and the continuing blockade between the two countries. While 907 has been reinterpreted to expand the scope of humanitarian assistance, it still bars most categories of assistance to the government of Azerbaijan and, by extension, Nagorno-Karabakh – an area which is still recognised by the international diplomatic community as part of Azerbaijan although all Azeris fled the enclave during the conflict years.

Pending a permanent peace settlement, US assistance is therefore confined to humanitarian assistance to the victims of the conflict within the enclave. In FRY 1998, the US Congress allocated US\$8 million for humanitarian

assistance activities within Nagorno-Karabakh (previously, no US government assistance had been targeted to the enclave). Assistance within the enclave was primarily provided by the Armenia diaspora and a limited number of international organisations such as the ICRC and MSF. The US position continues to be that until a permanent peace settlement is reached, US assistance will be limited to relatively short-term humanitarian support.

Finally, it should be noted that, under the auspices of the OSCE, negotiations for a peaceful settlement continue through the Minsk Group which is comprised of a number of countries including Russia, France, the US, UK and Belarus. In the absence of significant progress on this front, foreign assistance coming into Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh tends to be dictated by the continuing political uncertainty in the area.

## **The Effect of NATO Action in Bosnia-Herzegovina**

When NATO action against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) began on 24 March 1999, many people in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) watched on their television sets. There was a poignancy in watching the conflict from Sarajevo: a city so recently besieged; a situation many blamed on Belgrade.

On a personal level the conflict has given rise to a number of emotions. Many people in BiH, particularly within Republica Srpska (RS), have an ethnic connection with Serbia. Although they may not support Milosovic they certainly feel angry about NATO action. Some of this anger has spilled over into acts against the international community. For example, offices of UNHCR, USAID and other international organisations have been attacked in Banja Luka. This has led to the withdrawal of international staff.

Others in BiH support NATO. The defeat of Milosovic may mark the end of the idea of a greater Serbia thus focussing the energies of the Bosnian Serbs on making BiH work as a country. Some feel that the Dayton Peace Agreement can never be fully implemented in BiH without regional stability, and the conflict presents the opportunity for such long-term stability once it is resolved. The economic effects of the conflict are also encouraging some in this direction. Such factors may lead the more pragmatic in RS to look to the West for support, and to comply more with the Dayton Agreement.

The conflict has given rise to a large number of refugees entering BiH. However, the picture is somewhat more complicated than in neighbouring countries. Officially there have been approximately 103,600 refugees from FRY: 43,000 in the months before NATO action; the remainder arriving after 24 March. The group is quite mixed, with less than a quarter being Kosovo Albanians. The others are Muslims from Sanjak, Serb refugees, Bosnian Serb returnees, and Croatian Serb refugees. Of these, only 8,000 are in camps; the rest are staying with family or friends.

Perhaps because of this more diffuse picture, international attention has not been focussed on assistance to BiH. However, lack of such assistance is short-sighted. The Bosnian authorities have only recently begun to take responsibility for dealing with refugees and asylum-seekers. While on the one hand this development is encouraging as BiH continues on the path to normality, with the state taking over appropriate functions and responsibilities, on the other it will remain fragile if there are not sufficient resources to enable the authorities to undertake this important role.

It was with some trepidation that the Bosnian authorities took up this role: within BiH over 800,000 people are still displaced from their pre-war (1992) homes, and hundreds of thousands outside the country are still unable to return. There is also some reluctance from those refugees coming from the FRY. Many want to be resettled to a third country, such as the US. This attitude has presented a challenge to those working with the refugees. It is a mark of the maturity and development of the authorities' approach that they have been able to meet this challenge. However, within the context of the reconstruction of BiH it is clear that extra resources will be needed to cope with the consequences of the conflict, so as not to jeopardise the progress already made.

The conflict also throws up some key dilemmas for those working in the international community, both in the governmental and non-governmental sectors. International personnel have been withdrawn from RS, in many cases leaving behind local staff. This has caused great anxiety to those in the international community. It has also disrupted much of the work on return of refugees that had been planned for this year. There has effectively been a cessation of return from outside the country, although internal returns of the displaced do continue.

For many international organisations the conflict has also highlighted the challenges in responding to the exodus of refugees from Kosovo. It is churlish to blame agencies like UNHCR for not being ready to respond to the hundreds of thousands who have left Kosovo. Without doubt, scape-goating was the reason for such criticism. International agencies and NGOs alike can only respond

effectively to emergencies if they have the resources to do so, no matter how many contingency plans they may have. For many agencies in BiH their response has been commendable although it has led to a drain of experienced staff to other countries in the region. This trend is worrying as it may jeopardise the still important work to be done in BiH. The problems of this region are linked and it would be short-sighted to move from one crisis to the next simply following donor money while failing to build on the enormous progress already made in the three years since Dayton was signed.

There is also a worrying trend of 'conflict addiction' among personnel within the international community. For some there is a sense of familiarity with the logistics of crisis – work that is sometimes less subtle and less frustrating than the development issues many have been engaged with in BiH. It is also work that is easier to raise money for. Again, the international donor community should not be short-sighted in this. New crises need new money; it should not be drained from existing programmes. In this context it is a welcome sign that the donor community increased its pledges to BiH at the World Bank/European Commission Conference in Brussels at the end of May.

The experience of BiH shows that reconstruction, reconciliation and return of refugees is a slow and difficult

process, harder to achieve the longer a conflict continues. There must be a commitment to learn from the lessons of BiH and apply these to the FRY and Kosovo when the conflict ends. For there to be a successful return of refugees there must be good coordination between the international community, donors, governments, NGOs and the military. The NGO community has a key role in this process and as such should be involved from the beginning. There are many valuable lessons to learn from the NGO experience in BiH. It would be a shame to waste that knowledge and above all it would do a dis-service those very refugees and others affected by this conflict.

### Notes

- Statistics provided by UNHCR.
- ICVA supports the work of the NGO community in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia through the following methods: coordination and networking, capacity-building, information sharing and advocacy. Contact: ICVA in BiH at: Obala Kulina Bana 4, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tel: (+387) 71 668 298. Fax: (+387) 71 668 297. Email: <icva@bih.net.ba>.
- ICVA, along with the European Council on Refugees and Exiles, organised a conference in Vienna at the end of June on the effects on surrounding countries of the NATO action in Yugoslavia. Conference findings are available from ICVA.

## Albania

By late May some 450,000 Kosovar refugees had increased the Albanian population of 3.4 million by some 14 per cent. An estimated 68 per cent of refugees have been taken in by host families or have found their own accommodation; the rest are living in tented camps or 'collective centres'.

The humanitarian community was ill-prepared for the scenario of comprehensive ethnic cleansing that followed the start of the NATO campaign against Milosevic. Apart from a few already in-country, most international NGOs – many established, others highly 'ad hoc' – only established a presence and started programmes in April and May. By the end of May, over 150 NGOs were known to UNHCR in Tirana, Albania's capital. The following are the current policy and operational challenges.

**Relocation:** The UN is keen on the voluntary relocation of Kosovar refugees to the south away from the border areas in northeast Albania, notably around Kukes town. The UN cites security, pressure on limited resources (notably water), and its determination to prevent the development of militarised camps that could become a support base for the Kosovo Liberation Army. However, many refugees are unwilling to go further south because they want to stay close to home where it is more likely that relatives still believed to be in Kosovo will be able to find them. Relocation of Muslim Kosovars into more Orthodox south Albania in the medium-term could create friction.

**Registration:** The government of Albania has signed a general protocol on registration with UNHCR and other key operational partners that spells out their respective roles and responsibilities. It can now recruit coordinators at the level of 'prefecture' (a provincial delineation), who

in turn will recruit registration clerks. The ministry of local government will register Albanian families hosting refugees. The registration exercise is planned for June 1999.

**Protection and Security:** Albanian crime – including organised crime – is beginning to impact on the refugees. Already victims of robbery and extortion, most worrying are the reports that refugees are also being targeted by gangs trafficking in Albanian women and children. In 1998 the Italian Ministry of Interior estimated that there were 10–15,000 Albanian sexual workers in Italy, which constitutes two thirds of all foreign sexual commerce. Albanian law has been lax in prosecuting those who exploit prostitution.

In addition, following the outbreak of the Yugoslav wars the drug route from Turkey shifted to Albania: fast speed boats take drugs, trafficked people, illegal migrants and desperate refugees across the Adriatic to Italy. The Albanian police are often indifferent, ineffective or suspected of cooperating with the criminal gangs. Although certain foreign military contingents provide security for the camps they operate, this is not a general NATO policy. The Albanian government plans to create a new police force especially for camp security, but this will take time and needs funding. Meanwhile, aid agencies are increasingly likely to become targets of opportunistic and organised crime.

**Winterisation:** Preparing to protect the refugees in anticipation of the fierce winters has to start now. This is politically sensitive: in Macedonia, because of the potentially destabilising presence of the Kosovars; for NATO, because it will send a signal that its campaign against Milosevic is not producing quick results. Yet even if a peace agreement were to be signed now, the





deployment of an international protection force and the clearing of mines in Kosovo – where many houses have been destroyed by the Serbs – would render a rapid, large-scale return of refugees before winter unlikely if not undesirable. Strategic planning for winterisation is currently taking place between the Albanian government and international agencies. Planning scenarios are developed on the basis of different total numbers of refugees, and on whether most can be accommodated through the winter by host families, in renovated public buildings, or in prefabricated shelters.

**Support to Host Families:** Given the desirability, from a human and financial point of view, to keep most refugees with host families, the UN is considering incentives to host families. The risk is that the relationship between host and refugee is pushed into a purely financial-commercial one.

**Economic Support to Albania:** Between 1992–96 a structural adjustment programme generated such spectacular growth in GDP that Albania was at times called the ‘Taiwan of the Adriatic’. This growth, however, was not translated into increased social expenditure, and the industrial sector, which collapsed together with communism, remains weak.

The collapse in 1997 of the private financial, so-called ‘pyramid’ schemes (started in 1993 and strongly supported by the government) caused a macroeconomic shock. The IMF, World Bank and European Union are providing macroeconomic support to Albania, but private investor confidence remains low. The Albanian

government hopes that the refugee aid will provide a fast track to development, but may discover that much aid is spent in, but not necessarily on, Albania.

**Coordination:** The Albanian government has created an Emergency Management Group with designated contact persons for line ministries, local authorities, and for coordination of donor aid and customs clearance. Meanwhile the aid organisations are trying to improve the circulation of information, and in April NGO members requested that VOICE develop an information service. Interestingly, ECHO and VOICE together developed a six-month project and both deployed information officers to Tirana and elsewhere. Another useful step has been the creation, in early May, of a Humanitarian Information Centre in Tirana, where INGOs, Albanian NGOs, UNHCR, NATO and the government all have a presence.

While there have been a number of other initiatives, the overriding problem is the fact that the UN has been sidelined politically by NATO and has also been marginalised in the relief effort. Contrary to the situation in Goma, bilateral donors have prolonged the problem by driving the emergency response through the military and NGOs, offering UNHCR assistance in kind but not in cash. By late May it was clear that UNHCR had to be brought back into a leadership role to fill the ‘coordination vacuum’.

**Quality Support and Local Capacities:** Not surprisingly, the bilateral character of the first relief effort, the influx of large numbers of new aid agencies, the emphasis on rapid and supply-oriented emergency response, and the absence of UN leadership and limited planning make for varying standards of professionalism in the aid effort. On one level, this humanitarian effort could provide an opportunity for Albanian NGOs and other Albanians to find new employment – provided international agencies invest in staff and counterpart capacity-building. But international agencies also need support to increase the quality and professionalism of their operations.

Faster than before, donors and inter-agency projects and networks are talking about monitoring of performance and accountability: Sphere standards, the Ombudsman function, evaluation and monitoring of the impact of aid on communities of hosts and refugees are only some of the quality references mentioned. A constructive approach would consist of organising now – in terms of monitoring, information systems, and reflective working groups, seminars and trainings to strengthen the quality of agency performance – while the operational agencies in Albania are still expanding and consolidating their programmes.

# Training Courses

## Issues in Modern Peace-keeping

13 September–8 October 1999  
Clementsport, Nova Scotia, Canada

This advanced course is intended to provide senior staff with a comprehensive perspective on issues relevant to Peacekeeping. Split into a six-module framework, alongside a number of topics (gender, ethics, culture, human rights and the media) the course examines a range of issues including:

- understanding modern Peacekeeping (conceptual and legal frameworks, the UN);
- operational Peacekeeping (conflict prevention, mitigation, termination and recovery);
- perspectives on Peacekeeping (regional, NATO, US and Russian).

For further details, contact the Registrar (C-99), The Pearson Peacekeeping Center, Cornwallis Park, PO Box 100, Clementsport, Nova Scotia, Canada. Tel: (+1) 902 638 8611. Fax: (+1) 902 638 8888. Email: <registrar@ppc.cdnPeacekeeping.ns.ca>

## Public Health in Complex Emergencies

31 July–14 August 1999, Kampala, Uganda

This course focuses on critical public health issues faced by NGO personnel working in complex health emergencies. The goal of the course is to enhance the capacity of humanitarian assistance workers and their organisations to respond to health emergencies. Participants will master key competencies in epidemiology, environmental health, nutrition, training, communicable disease, reproductive health, psychosocial issues, management, violence/weapons/trauma, and international humanitarian law.

Contact: Lorna Stevens, Director, NGO Health Training Programs, IRC, 1222 E. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, NY, NY 10168, USA. Tel: (+1) 212 551 3005. Fax: (+1) 212 551 3185. Email: <shortcourse@intrescom.org>

## Conflict Resolution Training Programme

Autumn 1999, Oslo, Norway

This training programme, at the International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), presents conflict resolution workshops on three levels:

- Introductory workshop (8–10 September)
- Development workshop 1 (5–7 October)
- Development workshop 2 (14–17 December)

Contact: Ingvild Skinstad, PRIO, Fuglehauggt, 11, 0260 Oslo, Norway. Tel: (+47) 22 54 77 00. Fax: (+47) 22 54 77 97. Email: <crt-programme@prio.no>

## Peace-keeping and Election Monitoring

28 June–17 July 1999, Pisa, Italy

The aim of this course is to train a limited number of participants for the tasks usually assigned to civilian peace-keeping/humanitarian operations and election monitoring missions. The course offers both general background lectures and role-play simulation, and emphasises operational procedures and practice.

Contact: Secretariat, Scuola Superiore, S. Anna, via Carducci, 40-56127 Pisa, Italy. Tel: (+39) 050 883 312. Fax: (+39) 050 883 356. Email: <pkocorso@sssup.it>

## Public Health in Relief and Emergencies

September 1999, London, UK

This eight day residential course aims to transfer health workers' professional skills to the relief environment, and enables participants to develop and strengthen the technical, managerial and interpersonal skills required to work effectively in emergency situations.

Contact: Sarah Hall, MERLIN, 14 David Mews, Porter St., London, W1M 1HW, UK. Tel: (+44) 207 487 2505. Email: <merlin@gn.apc.org>

## Financial Management for Non-Financial Managers

14–16 September 1999, Oxford, UK

As the title implies this course has been designed for non-experts. More and more, programme management includes a financial aspect and this course is ideal for those wanting a solid understanding of financial management.

Contact: Janice Griffen, INTRAC, PO Box 563, Oxford, OX2 6RZ. Tel: (+44) 1865 201 851. Fax: (+44) 1865 201 852. Email: <intrac@gn.apc.org>

## Forced Migration

12–30 July 1999, Oxford, UK

This course considers the consequences of forced migration which are essential to both the development of effective programmes to assist refugees and to address the root causes of human displacement. The school is designed for senior and middle managers who are involved with assistance and policy-making for forced migrants.

Contact: Manager, Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, 21 St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LA, UK. Tel: (+44) 1865 270723. Fax: (+44) 1865 270721. Email: <summer.school@qeh.ox.ac.uk>

# Operational Security Management in Violent Environments

Report of a training course, Tirana, Albania  
21–23 May, 1999

Albania suffered from a widespread breakdown of public order in 1991–2, in 1997 and again in September 1998. Many Albanians are now armed, and crime is increasingly organised. Aid agencies, whose numbers and assets have increased enormously in the last few months, have had vehicles looted and offices broken into. As a result there was significant interest in this RedR workshop, with 20 participants coming from 14 organisations, including one Albanian NGO, the Swiss Disaster Relief and the UK's DfID.

Aid operations in Albania take place in a conflicted environment: there is still strong distrust of the government, and the Albanian police have suffered from cases of corruption including collaboration with criminal gangs. Although the Albanian population is showing tremendous hospitality towards Kosovar refugees, there is growing pressure over resources and resentment that aid is being channelled to refugees but not to the poverty stricken host population. A further increase in refugees, from Macedonia and possibly Montenegro will only increase the tension. Criminals, organised or otherwise, are beginning to target refugees and are certainly watching the aid organisations.

A threat analysis by workshop participants indicated that armed robbery – of individuals, vehicles, offices and warehouses – is perceived as the highest threat, followed by car accidents. Being caught in a riot or public disorder remains a threat. In future, agencies may face dilemmas when 'offered' protection from criminal gangs – against a fee. Kidnapping for ransom and sexual assault are currently not seen as major threats. The crossborder shelling and sniper fire on the border with Kosovo, close to Kukes, are not a major threat as agencies are generally not there. If refugees and aid agencies return to Kosovo, mines and possibly booby-traps will be a major threat.

Although caution is required everywhere, a rapid mapping exercise revealed that certain areas are now known to be higher risk than others. Participants collectively discussed measures to prevent armed robbery and vehicle safety, key advice to give to staff if caught in an incident, and the immediate steps to be taken by the country office. Most preventive measures comprise a protection strategy. In the medium term, however,

especially the newer aid agencies will need to develop a strategy to enhance their acceptance in the various social environments in which they operate, for which good local contacts are essential. The workshop stressed the importance of security planning to ensure that everyone understands the threats in the environment and the logic behind standard operating procedures.

A review of the communications environment revealed major concerns. Agencies are reliant on mobile telephones and landlines, but in times of public disorder these break down immediately. In addition, the mountainous terrain makes radio communications difficult. The risk is that agencies will develop individual communications technology which is not compatible and vulnerable to break down. There is urgent need therefore to identify what the demands of the aid community are with regard to communications, what investments in communications systems would also be of value to Albania, and then consult with technical experts for appropriate solutions and training.

Another fruitful exercise was the reflection on the relocation/evacuation experiences during the disturbances in 1997 in Albania, during the evacuation from Kosovo in early 1999, as well as a critical exploration of scenarios around Kukes and the assumptions underlying possible responses. Finally stress management, individually but also at team level, was brought up.

Protection of refugees and especially camp security are also of growing concern to the aid agencies. This is covered in greater detail in the earlier country update on Albania (page 24).

The workshop was a great success. Participants brought context specific knowledge, and in the various sessions and exercises good practice guidelines were immediately applied to the Albanian situation. Its value further came from the mix of individuals and agencies (Albanians and foreigners, with extensive country knowledge or new to the country) which allowed a sharing not only of experiences but also of insights in how to operate in Albania.

Hopefully the networks and common understanding generated at the workshop will create some critical mass to follow up on a number of identified priority areas:

- the centralisation of security information in Albania;
- better analysis and dissemination;
- further security and first aid training within and between agencies;
- communications planning and coordination;
- protection of refugees;
- mines awareness programmes and training for Kosovars and aid organisations.

## Resource List on Albanian Issues in this Newsletter

- **Information**  
<tirana.info.center@dart-1.ofda.net> is an inter agency information source.
- **Information**  
<ngofocus@albnet.net> is an information source operated by VOICE.

Longer versions of the above report on security training in Albania, and of the Albania Country Update, may be found on the RRN website: <[www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html)>

# Conferences

## ALNAP's Fifth Bi-annual Conference: Learning and Voice in the Humanitarian Sector

London, ODI, 22–23 April, 1999

The chief objective of the Active Learning Network on Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Assistance (ALNAP) is to improve the quality and accountability of humanitarian assistance programmes. It does this by providing a forum for the identification and dissemination of best practice and the building of consensus on common approaches. It is composed of a two-tier membership structure of Full Members and Observer Members, a Steering Committee and a Secretariat which is based in the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the ODI in London.

A chief element of ALNAP's efforts to engage the humanitarian aid community in a dialogue on issues of accountability and learning is the organisation of bi-annual meetings for the 40 full members. The fifth such occasion took place on 22–23 April at ODI in London.

The dedication of the first morning of the meeting to a tour-de-table has become a regular and valued feature of the ALNAP commitment to inter-agency communication and debate. The tour-de-table offers each member the chance to share information and solicit input on evaluations and projects currently underway or in the pipeline at their organisation. Members were asked to highlight any projects or programmes known to them which focussed on reaction to or evaluation of the crisis in Kosovo. Other presentations on the first day included a report by Claude de Ville de Goyet from the Pan American Health Organisation on the evaluation of preparedness and response to Hurricane Mitch (see following conference report), a report by Judith Large of the University of Kent on the peace-building activities of the World Health Organisation in Eastern Slavonia, and one by Nicolas Leader of HPG on humanitarian principles and their implications for accountability and effectiveness. Progress reports on the Sphere, Ombudsperson and People in Aid initiatives were also presented.

The presentations on the second day of the meeting centred on themes of learning and voice within the humanitarian sector. These included a presentation by Anne Cockroft of CIET Europe on Sentinel Community Surveillance and its utility to humanitarian programmes; a report by Pierson Ntata of Chancellor College at the University of Malawi on the involvement of affected populations in the work of 12 UK aid agencies in Sudan; a study of learning in the food and nutrition sector by Annalies Borel from Concern, Ireland; a review of shared social learning for humanitarian programmes by independent researcher Philippa Atkinson and Raymond Apthorpe of the Australian National University in Canberra; and a report on

institutionalising victim's voices by Mihir Bhatt of the Disaster Mitigation Institute in Ahmedabad, India.

The report on the participation of affected populations in relief operations in Sudan represents an ALNAP initiative. This was sparked by ALNAP's interest in issues of participation and beneficiary voice. The synthesis study on shared social learning was also commissioned by ALNAP in an effort to review and reflect upon current thinking about the ability of humanitarian programmes to reflect the social and cultural contexts and daily realities of the populations with which they work.

The relevance and congruity of these themes sparked discussion and debate, and helped to focus ALNAP's future work programme as one that should emphasise the role and importance of learning at organisational, sectoral and system-wide levels. Reasons for this focus include the event-based nature of the system, the complexity of the contexts in which the system frequently operates, the heavy reliance upon expatriate personnel and their high turnover, and the highly context-specific nature of individual operations and the particularities of the affected populations and their traditional livelihood systems which require the adaptation of approaches to ensure appropriateness and effectiveness.

Efforts to focus ALNAP's attention on issues of learning and accountability were commended and reinforced by members in their response to the themed presentations and discussions on these subjects. Along with continued work on its baseline activities, the membership endorsed work by the Secretariat on the:

- preparation of annotated bibliographies;
- completion of a study on achieving greater commonality in the monitoring and reporting of humanitarian assistance programmes;
- development of a proposal for a global study based on the work of Raymond Apthorpe and Philippa Atkinson on participation and shared social learning;
- deepening of the initial analysis by Annalies Borrel on the food and nutrition sector;
- implementation of a study on lines of accountability and international duty bearers;
- support of an edited volume on 'Doing Evaluations of Humanitarian Assistance'.

Members of the Steering Committee were also enthusiastic and encouraging in their discussions on the future of ALNAP's, with one member commenting that:

...the ALNAP structure has begun to demonstrate its enormous potential for undertaking innovative thinking and activities within the humanitarian system which would otherwise be difficult if not impossible to achieve.

Minutes of the meeting and the text of all the presentations will soon be available from the ALNAP Website: <[www.oneworld.org/odi/alnap/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/odi/alnap/index.html)>

# Can Sanctions be Smarter?

London, 16–17 December, 1998

This conference brought together experts from the political, financial, humanitarian and human rights world, from government circles, the UN and NGOs. It deliberately inscribed itself into a growing critical review of sanctions policy which includes, among others, the so-called ‘Interlaken process’ on financial sanctions sponsored by the Swiss Government <[www.smartsanctions.ch](http://www.smartsanctions.ch)>, and work by international researchers, notably in the US.

The consensus is that comprehensive trade sanctions have many undesirable ‘side-effects’, and that sanctions must be more humane and effective. In this light, the conference focused on two questions: Can humanitarian assistance, even with swifter and more streamlined procedures, provide an effective safety-net, compensating for social and economic dislocation caused or aggravated by prolonged trade embargoes? Can financial sanctions be an effective alternative to or should they complement trade embargoes?

Although sanctions are least effective against authoritarian regimes, the conference concluded that sanctions remain a necessary foreign policy instrument between diplomacy and force. The overall recommendations were therefore to:

- **Make sanctions more humane:** Humane sanctions are the result of principled sanctions policies that respect the same international norms that sanction-senders want the target regime to uphold. If impact monitoring shows that humanitarian exemptions cannot mitigate the cumulative effects of the sanctions, the sanctions policy will have to be revised.
- **Make sanctions more targeted:** More targeted sanctions derive from a better analysis of the vulnerabilities of the target regime. Psychological and financial sanctions are among the tools.
- **Make arms embargoes more effective,** through better design and enforcement.
- **Mobilise the capacity and shoulder the costs** necessary to make sanctions management, enforcement and impact-monitoring effective.
- **Maintain an active, flexible and creative political dialogue and engagement** with the target regime and, do not allow sanctions to become a substitute for other political initiatives.
- **Make sanctions policy more accountable,** including through independent review.

Many advantages would be offered if financial sanctions were an alternative to trade embargoes. Work currently focuses on creating the legal and technical requirements to freeze foreign-held assets. But not all potential targets have such assets and there are also divergent opinions about the feasibility of targeting individuals. Even when financial sanctions can be applied, a key problem is obtaining information about whose assets are where without warning potential targets and allowing them to move and hide assets.

The conference was particularly innovative in terms of highlighting what humanitarian agencies can do to mitigate the humanitarian impacts of trade embargoes in particular:

1. Under sanctions, data collection systems of relevant ministries in the target country and of the humanitarian

agencies should be strengthened. The relevant data are not limited to health and food security but include micro-level social and economic conditions, and macro-economic developments. Practical research is needed to further develop the methodologies for impact assessment and impact monitoring, and agencies must adopt standardised methodologies to make results comparable.

Humanitarian agencies too often advocate against sanctions without convincingly demonstrating the link between sanctions and identified needs. The challenge is to make data credible and the argument convincing.

Humanitarian exemptions policy should be based on impact monitoring and vulnerability mapping – not simply focusing on increasing the availability of goods through imports, but helping vulnerable groups maintain access. It should measure itself not in terms of inputs but in outcomes – maintaining minimum living standards and essential services. Policy guidance must improve the design of humanitarian exemptions by sanctioning authorities, and also for appropriate policy adaptation by government institutions in the targeted state.

2. Sanctions should be principled. If sanctions are meant to be an alternative to war then they must minimally respect basic principles of international humanitarian law, such as ‘proportionality’ in the damage inflicted and ‘distinction’ between civilian and military targets. Sanctions authorities must be accountable and demonstrate that they undertake every possible effort to avoid violating basic rights of the general population in the target country. Trade sanctions have sometimes been imposed to protect the civil and political rights of people but in doing so they have contributed to the violation of their social and economic rights. Human rights groups tend to specialise in civil and political or in social and economic rights, and have in the past not found a common position on sanctions. The question remains whether social and economic rights can be subordinated to civil and political rights, or whether sanctions can be designed that do not violate social and economic rights.
3. Finally, sanctions need to be politically managed. There needs to be clear objectives of the sanctions or monitoring of compliance becomes difficult. Sanctions impose a certain international political isolation, but this should be balanced with ongoing political dialogue and not prevent the consideration of incentives to reward progress towards compliance. The design and political management of sanctions should be informed by an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the target government, but also the political opposition and civil resistance to the target regime. Sanctions may affect the balance of force between the target regime and its national opposition, sometimes to the detriment of the opposition. The support for sanctions within the national political opposition and among the population in the target country must also be monitored. There may be differences between the opposition-in-country and the opposition-in-exile, and popular support for sanctions may erode if the population suffers too much.

The seminar report, and an extensive annotated bibliography, are available from the RRN Website <[www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html)>

## Trafficking in Human Beings for the Purposes of Sexual Exploitation

*Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
16–17 December, 1998*

This conference, organised by the Council of Europe as part of its initiative in the field of equality between men and women, was referred to in the lead article on trafficking. The conference was convened because little concrete evidence had been obtained with regard to trafficking. The aims were therefore to:

- ascertain whether more concrete evidence was available;
- obtain from representatives of the Entities and the state how they have dealt and would deal with the issue from both a legal and practical standpoint;
- obtain information from the other states, in particular the Ukraine and FRY, in terms of their experience in the area;
- consider what measures should be taken on the part of BiH in cooperation with the NGO community and the international institutions to combat the problem.

According to OHCHR, there was considerable lack of clarity as to the nature of the crimes being committed and the possible mechanisms for redress. Both Entities tended to treat prostitution and trafficking as homogenous, and neither had a legal or social analysis/response reflective of the different consequences if not causes of the problem. This was also reflected in the discussion by the NGOs. Accordingly, the legal mechanisms for dealing with the issue were not considered. However, it was clear from the initial submissions of the Entities that their approach is one of the application of criminal law without further action.

Recommendations from the conference are to:

- Undertake analysis and research into the extent of the problem, and create a database.

- Undertake legislative reform to prevent the criminalisation of women in this situation and to provide measures for their protection.
- Ensure police education and reform, particularly concerning the number of police women that must be recruited.
- Create a police department with special authority to deal with trafficking.
- Ensure that this is a state initiative and that there is cooperation between the Entities.
- Undertake education of the local population as to the reality of prostitution and the existence of trafficking.
- Create a 'steering board' of representatives from the NGOs, international community and the government to draw up an action plan to combat the problem.

In addition to the above, OHCHR recommends:

- The immediate suspension of the application of cantonal law relating to the deportation of women as being in contravention of the positive obligations on the state under Articles 3, 4, 8 and 14 of the ECHR and Article 1 of CEDAW with General Recommendation 19.
- In the alternative, that the cantonal court apply Article 11 of the Law on Minor Offences which allows for the defence of coercion, threat or force. If this is to be effective then there would have to be a commensurate protection programme for the women giving evidence. Clearly if there is to be prosecution of the traffickers then such a programme is a necessity. In practical terms, the first step is to ensure local police inform the IPTF of any cases they have of prostitution and registration of aliens.
- A programme for the repatriation of those women who wish to return. This could be facilitated through the IOM and connections with NGOs in the country of origin who work with trafficked women.

For more information, visit <<http://www.unhcr.ch/html/hchr.htm>>

### Conference on Displacement, Forced Settlement and Conservation, 9–11 September 1999, Oxford, UK

It is estimated that 10 million people are displaced from their homes and communities each year through a combination of civil unrest, armed conflict, development projects and other interventions. The Refugee Studies Programme has studied many aspects of forced migration.

It is expected that this international conference will bring together a total of 20 papers on issues relating to conservation, displacement and forced migration.

For further information contact: Dawn Chatty, Refugee Studies Programme, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford, Oxford, OX1 3LA, UK. Fax: (+44) 1865 270 721. Email: <[dawn.chatty@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:dawn.chatty@qeh.ox.ac.uk)>

### CODEP International Conference, 14–15 October 1999, London, UK

The main aim of the Conflict, Development and Peace Network (CODEP) is to provide a forum for the exchange of information and thinking on the causes and impact of conflict, as well as the promotion of good practice in peacebuilding and development. The theme for CODEP's 1999 conference is 'Critical Partnerships for Peace: Dynamic Collaborations in Conflict Situations'.

For further information contact: Kathleen Armstrong, CODEP, 52 Great Portland Street, London, W1N 5AH. Tel: (+44) 207 323 5779. Fax: (+44) 207 323 5782. Email: <[karmstrong@codep.dircon.co.uk](mailto:karmstrong@codep.dircon.co.uk)>

# Evaluation of Preparedness and Response to Hurricanes Georges and Mitch

*Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic  
16–19 February, 1999*

This conference, convened by the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO), provided a forum for those involved in responding to hurricanes Georges and Mitch to learn from experience by building on the evaluation of the response and so better prepare for future disasters. The conference addressed the following key questions:

- Did disaster preparedness receive the required attention from health and other sectors?
- Could some of the consequences have been prevented?
- Was there optimum action and coordination among the various agencies involved?
- How can mechanisms for coordination be strengthened?

In all aspects of the relief operation, from early warning to reconstruction, the importance of access to accurate information, participation of a broad cross-section of society and coordination between agencies was stressed. Below are some conference findings and recommendations:

1. Lack of coordination between agencies resulted in delays in the effective provision of assistance as agencies worked independently. This was often due to inadequate or inaccurate information and lack of participation as communities and civil society were not involved in pre-planning. It was recommended that a single, national institution should coordinate disaster planning and response activities and that coordination be recognised as a continuous process involving actors at all levels on a daily basis.
2. Information was recognised as vital in terms of public awareness. Participants stressed the difficulty in accessing official information and the perceived failure of the authorities early warning. High quality information is essential and information systems that link communities with national coordination agencies must be developed and implemented at national level. Assistance for this should be provided by the international community and donor organisations.

The use of the Internet in this was identified as indispensable both for information dissemination and the building of networks inter- and intra- country. Local levels should have improved access to Internet and radio as appropriate. The role of the media was debated and it was noted that the use of appropriate language in the media was important so that the majority of population could understand. It was found that the media also disseminated rumours, particularly of disease epidemics; training of journalists and improved mechanisms for the dissemination of official information were recommended.

3. Central to the conference were health issues – emergency medical care, communicable disease surveillance and control, food and water-borne illness, vector transmitted diseases and water and basic sanitation and nutrition. Coordination and quality and exchange of information were again found to be vital. The central role of PAHO/WHO was stressed; also that governments and local authorities must ensure that the international donor community's response is based on reliable and verified needs assessments: health personnel should only be sent at the request of the of the affected country and any assistance provided must include sufficient logistical and technical components. This is because dependence on the affected countries' health institutions increased the burden during the most critical phase of the response.
4. The conference concluded that there is a need for comprehensive training and involvement in preparedness at all levels including vulnerable communities, local and central government, the private sector, NGO's and grassroots organisations. This should be with the aim of creating a 'culture' of preparedness and mitigation.

The conclusions and recommendations are published in a conference report which can be ordered from PAHO on <disaster-publications@paho.org> or fax: (+1) 202 775 4578. In addition, a conference organised by the Organizing Committee of the Hemispheric Meeting for the Americas of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (Costa Rica, 31 May–5 June) reviewed achievements and pending challenges in the area of disaster reduction in the region into the next century. For details visit <www.disaster.info.desastres.net/idndr/idndr.htm> or email: <idndr99@netsalud.sa.cr>

## Feedback

The Eastern Mennonite University (Virginia, USA) reproduced the article 'Former Child Soldiers in Liberia', by Sam Gbaydee Doe (RRN Newsletter 12) for 45 students taking part in their Ethnic Identity and Conflict Transformation training course.

A separate letter from Sam noted: 'The publication of our ... article [on child soldiers] seemed to attract many. I have received notes of commendation, inquiry and challenging questions from a number of persons. Your magazine really has a wide range of readers! WANEP [West Africa Network for Peacebuilding] considers itself a member of your network and this is reflected in our organisation's brochure.'

The Resident Representative of Redd Barna Guatemala in Guatemala City wrote to ask for Good Practice Review 7, Evaluating Humanitarian Assistance Programmes in Complex Emergencies to use as reference in their programme design, implementation and evaluation procedures.

## Environmental Issues in Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Response

University College, London, 18 March, 1999

This conference set out to raise public awareness of how important environmental issues in disaster prevention, preparedness and response are. It was also a forum for Green Cross to announce the results of its three-year project to find ways to give such issues earlier, adequate attention in disaster-related work (see earlier piece on the ERN). Participants included those from international agencies and NGOs operational in disaster preparedness and response, experts and donor organisations.

The proceedings opened with a definition and history of disasters which offered a chilling insight into future 'pressure points' that may confront the human race; climate change, population pressure/biodiversity loss, refugees, and human illness. Mikhail Gorbachev, President of Green Cross International, told the audience that it is essential that development safeguards the environment if the world is to avert the threat of destruction of its resources.

A number of case studies were presented which illustrated powerfully the environmental factors in recent disasters around the world. For example, a case study concerning Azerbaijan from ERT Caspian described root causes of environmental damage of a different kind in eastern Europe, where industrial production practices have caused pollution and contamination as never before. Its sheer scale is well beyond the scope of NGOs to tackle and needs concerted efforts at the level of the state.

Another example came from India's Disaster Mitigation Institute which raised the issue of post-natural disaster relief. In most countries policy, until now, has been a completely separate activity from the conservation of natural resources and it was suggested that the way to bridge the gap is to focus firmly on vulnerable communities. Another case from SEEDS of India showed achievement through community action. A clear pattern emerged: development leads to environmental degradation, which in turn results in disaster, and disaster recovery is transformed into development. The development-disaster cycle then starts all over again.

## Economic Agendas in Civil Wars

London, 26–27 April, 1999

This workshop was organised by the Centre for International Studies at Oxford University. It examined the role played by economic agendas in contemporary conflict, with an emphasis on their function as incentives or disincentives for continued violence by belligerents. It also explored policy implications for external actors engaged in efforts to mitigate and contain conflict where such agendas play a significant role. The aim of the workshop was threefold:

- to improve understanding of the political economy of civil wars through a focused analysis of the economic agendas of competing factions in civil wars;

A framework for rapid assessment and planning by response personnel was discussed in light of needs for NGO training. But should all NGO personnel in the field be trained in environmental awareness, or are the issues so complex that specialised expertise is indispensable?

## Green Cross Environmental Response Network

The conference marked the launch of the ERN (see earlier article; a service Green Cross will offer to organisations in disaster prevention, preparedness and response). The new Network offers environmental expertise, specialists and internet-based information specific to disaster situations. It will later be supplemented by training and will enhance local capacity by making these resources available to communities affected by disasters through the agencies which assist them, thus supporting NGOs, governmental and international agencies.

## Conference Conclusions

Conference conclusions were the following:

- *Coordination and integration* emerged as first essentials, with partnerships, information sharing and flexibility among all those working in the field.
- Efforts will be most effective if they target *vulnerability* (vulnerable communities, vulnerable environments, vulnerable species or vulnerable regions).
- There is urgent need for *monitoring*: systematic data collection, baseline statistics, funding, expertise and training to support NGOs and governments.
- *Consciousness-raising* is a great need: informing public opinion, keeping awareness fresh, 'nudging' governments, exploiting the teachable moment after an event, sharing and spreading best practice.
- *Sustainable principles*: capacity building, mainstreaming the environment, differentiating between symptoms and causes, linking to economic benefits and the truth that prevention is better than cure.

Finally, supporters were urged to help Green Cross with disseminating information, with funding, with their time and their commitment as individuals and organisations.

For more information contact Green Cross UK. Details earlier in the Newsletter on page 15.

- to examine how globalisation creates new opportunities for the elites of competing factions to pursue their economic agendas through trade, investment and migration ties, both legal and illegal, to neighbouring states and to more distant, industrialised economies;
- to examine the possible policy responses available to external actors, including governments, international organisations, NGOs and private sector firms, to shift the economic agendas of elites in civil wars from war towards peace.

The papers will be published in a single volume by Lynne Rienner (Boulder, CO) at the end of 1999. The book is being edited by Mats Berdal (Oxford University) and David Malone (The International Peace Academy). For individual papers contact: Ben Rowswell at Lincoln College, Oxford. Email: <ben.rowswell@lincoln.oxford.ac.uk>



# Publications

## **Military–Civilian Interactions: Intervening in Humanitarian Crises**

(1999) by Thomas George Weiss (Rowmann & Littlefield Publishers, Inc) ISBN 0-8476-8745-7.

The new dynamics of the post-Cold War period have seen a substantial downsizing of conventional European and North American armed forces. Simultaneously, they have been assigned a new role in foreign lands as a buffer between increasingly viscous internal wars and the resulting human tragedies. The newly invigorated UN has resumed a centre-stage role as arbitrator and peacekeeper, with the ‘blue helmets’ being the frontline forces of a wildly optimistic ‘global neighbourhood’ force.

Sadly, the optimism lasted months rather than years. Well-publicised UN shortcomings or outright failures in Somalia, Bosnia, Haiti and Rwanda, along with less visible ones in Afghanistan and Angola, were to sully the waters for the UN throughout the 1990s. A turning point, particularly for the US administration, was Somalia in 1992–93 when Operation Restore Hope did just the opposite and US marines were sent home in body bags; this set extreme limits on any future foreign adventures of this kind. The retrenchment of US foreign policy to a large extent set the agenda for the rest of the Security Council.

Thomas Weiss’s book provides an extremely useful account of ‘military–civilian humanitarianism’ (the coming together of military forces and civilian agencies to deal with the human suffering from complex emergencies) in five prominent cases: Northern Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Haiti. Each contains a brief narrative of the background to the humanitarian crisis and the international response, with their costs and benefits. Weiss suggests that a critical analysis of UN failures in the 1990s should not confuse the ‘two United Nations’: the first, where governments meet and make decisions; the second, where specialised agencies, officials and soldiers implement these decisions. Although each bears responsibility for successes and failures, the latter mainly does what the former permits.

The author very tentatively presents a framework for comparative analysis of the case studies; a rare task given (a) the very context-specific nature of the interventions; and (b) the short timespan involved (only eight years since the Iraq emergency). His cost-benefit framework compares three variables: military cost (in dollars, lives and political cost), civilian crisis before intervention (displacement, hunger, human rights), and civilian benefits after intervention (improvements in displacement, hunger, human rights). The table in the concluding chapter provides an interesting snapshot of all five case studies comparing these variables.

In his concluding chapter, Weiss poses more questions than answers. He runs through the usual doubts over whether military–civilian actions contribute towards the political economy of war. He examines the ICRC contention that outside military intervention justified exclusively in terms of protecting humanitarian assistance is unviable and

in contravention of the Geneva Conventions. And he gives consideration to the oft-repeated – though no less pertinent – question of whether the resources given to humanitarian emergencies shield the much broader human costs of ‘normal’ poverty which claims many more victims than the number who die in humanitarian emergencies. These and other dilemmas are presented in well-written rhetorical fashion which will satisfy an academic as well as a more general readership. Highly recommended.

*Jon Bennett, Independent Consultant*

## **Ecology, Politics and Violent Conflict** (1999) M Suliman (ed) (London/New York: Zed Books). **A Manual on Alternative Conflict**

**Management for Community-Based Natural Resource Projects in the South Pacific. Context, principles, tools and training materials** by M Warner (London: Overseas Development Institute).

Contemporary wars are sometimes alleged to be resource wars. These two publications explore the role of conflict over natural resources in wider conflict. The first publication is a disparate mix of theoretical and case studies mostly drawn from the Horn of Africa and Southeast Asia. It explores conflict over natural resources at the global level (global warming), at regional level (fresh water resources, fisheries) and at local level (land, water and forest resources). Its central thesis is that population pressures and resource scarcity do not directly cause conflict: conflict is not a straightforward outcome from resource depletion, but results more from the unequal distribution of, and denial of access to, limited natural resources. ‘Scarcity’ therefore cannot be ‘naturalised’; it is the result of political, social and cultural policies and choices that can either prevent or foment violence. If that is the case, then environmental conservation and rehabilitation are not enough to resolve conflict over natural resources. Economic and political measures, designed to restore justice, are needed. The consequence of this insight is that whereas we can recognise that environmental conflict is a contributing factor to overall conflict, it now becomes methodologically very difficult to more precisely isolate and determine this specific linkage or influence.

The second publication is a training manual with applicability well beyond the South Pacific where it has been piloted. It is pitched at preventing local level disputes over natural resources, between community groups or between community groups and outside public or private organisations, from escalating into violence. It provides guidance on how to build conflict prevention measures into the design of community-based natural resource projects before they are implemented. The manual describes the principles and process of alternative conflict management, and offers tools, exercises and case studies.

**The Horn of Turbulence: The State of War and Peace in the Horn of Africa**

1998 (1999) by Dr Axel Klein (London: Institute for African Alternatives) Tel: (+44) 171 482 4660 Email: <ifaanet@gn.apc.org>.

IFAA has been producing annual reports on the state of war and peace in Africa for over five years. This particular report adopts a regional approach due to the interrelationship between the different conflict scenarios in the area: prior to the destabilisation of Zaire, cross-border interventionism was practised nowhere else as blatantly as in the Horn.

The report proposes that the process of reconciliation has much to gain from redressing the imbalances in the prevailing analysis of conflict in the Horn. In addition, it is critical of the role of external donors in the region: conflict, and consequently conflict resolution, has to be squarely situated within social processes and needs to be framed within the workings of the international political economy. While external agencies may be aware of the importance of this, and of the knowledge gap surrounding this process, they should also be more conscious of the controversy surrounding their interventions. The most profitable point of engagement, the report finds, is with local peace initiatives determined upon breaking the cycle of violence and counter violence among given communities.

The report's arguments are substantiated by extensive studies of the four relevant countries: Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Based on the studies undertaken the report concludes that:

- Conflicts in the Horn are resource conflicts between different actors in which ideology, ethnicity and religion are utilised as idioms for maximisation and control, as well as for the definition of identity and entitlements.
- Resource shortages have resulted from the incomplete and asymmetrical incorporation of African producers and elite into world markets. Elite consumption rising with international peer groups is the driving force behind state expansion at the expense of the traditional sector, thereby marginalising rural societies.
- The nature of the African elite and their positioning within the world economic order has discouraged economic innovation.
- All four countries need to engage in the urgent reformulation of the remit, form and extent of the state.

The report is produced with support of the Swiss Peace Foundation and the Canadian IDRC. It is part of IFAA's wider Environment and Conflict Project, or ECOMAN, from which *Ecology, Politics and Violent Conflict* (see previous review) also sprang.

**Developing Financial Institutions in Conflict Affected Countries: Emerging issues, first lessons learnt and challenges ahead**

(1997) by G Nagarajan (Geneva: International Labour Office) CH 1211, Geneva 22, Switzerland.

An exploratory paper to identify issues from programme reports of, among others, the ILO, USAID, GTZ. The author first identifies the macro-, meso- and micro-conditions that affect financial intermediation in post-conflict countries. She then offers a synthesis of the design and performance of various such programmes in El Salvador, Uganda, Cambodia and Mozambique. Among the preliminary lessons learnt are that credit guarantee programmes and revolving funds have been ineffective, and that group-based lending may be problematic in environments where conflict has destroyed trust and confidence between people. Different approaches to microfinance services, for lack of donor coordination, and the absence of ongoing market surveys are other factors that negatively affect performance but that are more within the control of the programme management. The paper ends with some broad suggestions about the role of government, donors and financial intermediaries.

**Manual on Self-Reliance, Employment and Microfinance: Operational guidelines for developing a self-reliance strategy in refugee and returnee situations**

(1997) (Geneva: UNHCR) Reintegration and Self-Reliance Unit, PTSS/DOS, PO Box 2500, CH 111 Geneva depot 2, Switzerland.

Wages and self-employment are a step towards self-reliance for refugees and towards durable solutions for UNHCR. This manual first considers general issues in refugee employment programmes, developing a strategy for self-reliance and planning and implementing self-reliance programmes. Job-oriented vocational training programmes, microfinance programmes for self-employment, and job creation programmes based on tied loans are considered in more detail. Other potential self-reliance programmes such as relief substitution, handicrafts, and non-cash grants for initial start-up businesses are briefly touched upon. So too the monitoring and evaluation of self-reliance programmes.

Of particular value are the extensive annexes which detail assessment techniques and which provide checklists for assessments. UNHCR intends to turn the manual into training modules. The manual is illustrated with examples from various countries and agency experiences. UNHCR's interest is in employment creation. The treatment of microfinance in this manual therefore is limited to micro-credit. It does not consider savings and remittances services. A particular problem with loans to refugees is maintaining repayments if refugees return or UNHCR phases out.

# Economic Dimensions of Conflict and Conflict Management

A list of over 40 books and published and unpublished reports and articles on various aspects of sanctions, with a short summary of each, is available on the RRN Website: <[www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html](http://www.oneworld.org/odi/rrn/index.html)>. Note also the publication of *Sanctioning Saddam: The Politics of Intervention in Iraq (1999)* by Sarah Graham Brown (London: I B Tauris & Co Ltd).

## Economic Sanctions

**Violating Human Rights in Haiti: An Anatomy of Sanctions (1999)** by Elizabeth Gibbons (Westport, Centre for Strategic and International Studies/Praeger Press).

This is one of the most impressive case studies of sanctions to date.

Haiti was the first country to be subjected to sanctions with a view to restoring democratic rule, an approach subsequently – and equally unsuccessfully – tried for Burundi and Sierra Leone. It is furthermore a particularly interesting case because of the substantial support from the Haitian population and democratic opposition due to generous humanitarian assistance provided to offset the impact of sanctions on vulnerable groups. The study is further innovative because it gives voice to many Haitians who were interviewed after the sanctions were lifted.

The author – at the time of the sanctions UNICEF's representative in Haiti – documents the extensive social and economic dislocation and impoverishment caused by the sanctions for which, in reality, even generous humanitarian assistance could not provide an adequate safety net. For example, the sanctions controlled the black market and smuggling. This generally reinforced the autocratic regime while at the same time throwing the general population into 'survival mode' which further hampered mobilisation for an effective democratic opposition. The sanctions also eliminated the

middle class, reduced access to education and weakened national institutions to the advantage of non-governmental aid agencies, leaving the newly elected leaders with a debilitated and distrusted state machinery.

In retrospect, many Haitians who had supported the sanctions came to regret their innocence about the prolonged impact of such sanctions. The author therefore poignantly asks whether social and economic rights can be violated by sanctions in an attempt to restore democracy and promote civil and economic rights.

**Companies in a World of Conflict (1998)** by J Mitchell (ed) (London: Earthscan/Royal Institute of International Affairs).

This book summarises the papers and discussions of a workshop on today's challenges for the transnational gas and oil companies, co-sponsored by the Norwegian Statoil and the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

Transnational companies are increasingly examined by campaign NGOs with regard to their impact on the environment but also concerning their attitudes towards social equity and human rights. The increased use of sanctions in the 1990s has increased companies' commercial risks in addition to political and reputational risk.

The chapter by Hollis offers an excellent analysis of the security and commercial policies of the Western powers towards the Middle East, and of the impact of the UN and US sanctions against Iraq, Iran and Libya in terms of their oil and gas industries. The contribution by Waelde offers a rich and insightful analysis of 'secondary sanctions'. These are sanctions imposed, mainly by the US, against companies that are held to violate US sanctions against a target state. Where there is sufficient international consensus, this 'extra-territorial' enforcement of US

sanctions can be tolerated, inasmuch as there is no other effective mechanism for 'global governance'. In other instances, such as with US sanctions against Cuba and Iran, other countries, notably the Europeans, have responded with 'blocking legislation' obliging companies to ignore US sanctions.

**Economic Sanctions and American Diplomacy (1998)** by R Haass (ed) (New York: Council on Foreign Relations).

Recently, sanctions have become the most popular tool of US foreign policy. Contributors to this volume examine the reasons for this, but also the relative effectiveness of those sanctions.

One contributing factor is the shift in influence over foreign policy from the Executive to Congress, and the rise of single-issue constituencies and lobby groups to which Congress is highly sensitive. Whereas imposing sanctions may signal action and resolve towards the domestic constituencies, they are seldom effective where they attempt to deter or reverse undesirable behaviour in the target elites of other states. China, Cuba, Haiti, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan and the former Yugoslavia are examined as case studies. The book concludes with a number of recommendations for US policy-makers, basically advocating that sanctions should no longer be used as an 'off-the-shelf' tool but subjected to the same rigorous consideration as the deployment of military force.

**The Impact of Sanctions. A study of UNICEF's Perspective (1998)** by E Hoskins (New York: UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes).

This report is possibly the most advanced attempt to develop a methodological framework for assessing and monitoring the impact of sanctions based on a human

rights framework. The study identifies 13 universally accepted human rights and sets relevant humanitarian indicators against them. Merging this with a table of the observed humanitarian effects of sanctions yields a manageable list of selected indicators that are best suited to survey measurements. This traditional assessment methodology is then enriched with systematic context analysis of the variables that could explain and/or influence the impact of sanctions, and with trend analysis over time. More work is needed to develop and test the impact monitoring methodology. The author also recommends a principled approach to sanctions. Existing humanitarian law should be clarified with regard to its application to sanctions.

### Post-Conflict Reconstruction

**The Price of Peace: Emergency Economic Intervention and US Foreign Policy (1998)**  
by *D Rothkopf* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) Fax: (+1) 202 483 1840.

This report examines US experience with emergency reconstruction in Haiti, Palestine and Bosnia.

Accepting the underlying rationale to give people a material stake in peace (by supporting rapid economic recovery and job creation after the acute conflict has subsided) the author concludes that current US approaches are ineffective, wasteful and inadequate. A better informed and more strategic approach must be developed as there will be future situations where rapid initial recovery will have to be initiated – North Korea and Cuba being two likely cases.

Recommendations are therefore made. For example, it is suggested that rapid economic recovery should be recognised as first and foremost a political strategy to support peace. The situation should therefore be appraised by political criteria and not (only) by the conventional economic criteria that apply in more stable situations. Popular support will only be generated when economic inter-

ventions are quick impact and are (made) visible. Thus different legal, evaluative and institutional tools are required than those currently used. The Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the Export-Import Bank and the Office of the US Trade Representative inappropriately apply approaches that are derived from development economics. USAID is portrayed as bureaucratic and too focussed on NGOs whose concern is not with the overarching policy goals of the US. Private business also needs more incentives and risk insurance before it will venture in still unstable situations.

There is a further need for a standing, high-level coordinating mechanism with a budget and executive powers to take responsibility for US emergency economic interventions. The US should realise that it does not fully control emergency reconstruction: local authorities may have very different agendas. Therefore US economic support should be made available subject to very strict conditionalities. The US may also be working through multilateral channels with donor partners that have a different analysis and different objectives. In such cases it should be clear about the role it realistically can and will take. If it wants to lead, it must mobilise the resources and the support to do so. If not, diplomatic democracy must be accepted and must not obstruct the approaches of its partners.

**The World Bank's Experience with Post-Conflict Reconstruction (1998)** by *Kreimer et al* (Virginia: Operations Evaluations Dpt. Publications, The World Bank) PO Box 960, Herndon, VA 20172-0960 USA. Fax: (+1) 703 661 1501 Email: <books@worldbank.org>

This World Bank study identified 18 countries with 157 Bank-supported post-conflict operations representing US\$6.2bn in lending. Its report is a lesson learning exercise based on three field studies (Bosnia Herzegovina, El Salvador, Uganda) and six desk studies (Eritrea, Haiti, Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Rwanda, Lebanon).

The creation of the Post-Conflict Unit of the Bank was already a step towards less ad hoc programming in post-conflict situations. As the existing policy (OP 8.5) is designed for post-natural disasters, the main recommendation of the study is now for a clear operation policy, with Bank procedures and good practices for reconstruction following conflict. The Bank can provide lending but also non-lending (expertise) services. The study identifies a major role for the Bank in providing economic development policy advice during peace negotiations, in the coordination of post-conflict aid, and – with the IMF and donors – on macroeconomic and external debt issues. It also identifies past mistakes and weaknesses:

- a lack of understanding of the domestic political dynamics with possibly predatory and exclusionary behaviour;
- a too ambitious agenda for policy reform (aggressive increases in taxation, downsizing of the civil service etc) soon after a major social collapse;
- inadequate attention to the restoration of human and social as opposed to physical capital; inappropriately slow disbursement instruments;
- weak or no in-country resident teams.

It also recommends that peace conditionality be used carefully and selectively, on a case-by-case basis.

**The IMF, the World Bank and Economic Policy in Bosnia (1998)** by *D Woodward* (Oxford: Oxfam Publishing) 274 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 7DZ, UK.

The Dayton agreements were mainly designed to provide a political solution to the Bosnian war. They created new political structures, with two Entities – the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina and Republica Srpska – each further divided into 'cantons' with a high degree of decentralised autonomy.

Woodward's research was carried out in 1997 when the attention was on immediate

reconstruction and institutional building rather than longer term economic policy design. It very clearly highlights the dilemmas for donors that result from the many political and economic restraints, and that may reappear one day over a post-war Kosovo. Economically, the government had little discretion over monetary and exchange rate policy and was facing a heavy debt burden. On the one hand it needed revenue but increased taxation was deemed to discourage private investment. There was also uncertainty about the speed of reform from a socialist to a market economy post-conflict: should domestic entrepreneurs be temporarily shielded behind protective trade barriers or not? Should international bank conglomerates be encouraged to establish themselves or should the

domestic banking sector temporarily be favoured?

In the absence of financial resources to rehabilitate damaged or underutilised enterprises, the temptation is to go for perhaps excessive privatisation and for cost-recovery for utilities and public services. Speedy privatisation, however, is not always the most cost-effective method, and it increases inequalities as it benefits those with money. The study indicates that unemployment and the collapse of social welfare are major problems and risks to the sustainability of peace. Yet donors have invested comparatively little in social services and welfare, and the economic reforms do not lead to rapid employment creation. At the political level, the degree of decentralisation – deemed necessary to deal with the ethnic dim-

ension of post-conflict Bosnia – makes it difficult to re-establish national policies and to promote reintegration. The aim of Republica Srpska remains integration with Serbia-Montenegro rather than with the Federation of BiH. Therefore it has many incentives to develop systems and policies that are incompatible with those of the Federation, and to be obstructive in ‘national’ Bosnian policy debates. If, as a result, donors ‘punish’ Republica Srpska by withholding aid, its recovery will be slower and its inequality with the Federation increased.

These political and economic dilemmas are real. On top of this there are donor-driven problems: strong political conditionality, delays in disbursements of aid, and a relative lack of interest and support for much needed social welfare.

**‘Commission d’Enquete Parlementaire concernant les Evenements du Rwanda’,  
*Rapport (1997) Brussels, Senate.***

This lengthy report, simultaneously in French and Flemish, is the outcome of a parliamentary inquiry into the events and policy decisions at the time of the genocide in Rwanda. It follows the court martial and exoneration of the commander of the Belgian contingent in UNAMIR in the spring of 1996 in Belgium. Subsequently, an ad hoc group of the Senate Commission for Foreign Affairs conducted a documentary study which indicated that the Belgian authorities had, or should have had, substantial advance knowledge of a planned genocide and of serious threats against the Belgian peacekeepers.

The commotion caused by this report, as well as public pressure, led to the creation of a parliamentary commission in January 1997. This was given extended judicial powers of inquiry in April 1997 when it had become clear that the UN had refused to cooperate. Kofi Annan, at the time of the genocide in charge of the UN Department for Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO) and now Secretary General, did not consider it in the interests of the UN to have former or current UN staff testify. The French and US intelligence services equally refused cooperation or access to their documents. General Dallaire, then overall commander of UNAMIR and now a member of the Canadian army, responded to questions in writing.

The report highlights UNAMIR as a highly problematic peace-keeping operation. The international actors who had supported the 1993 Arusha Accords had overlooked the internal power struggles in the larger Hutu body politic as

well as the opposition to them among extremist parties, including in circles close to President Habyarimana. Although the Arusha Accords allowed for an assertive international force, the donor countries, not in the least the US, designed a much watered down version in terms of numbers of troops deployed, their mandate and rules of engagement.

Second, the report offers a detailed incident analysis not only of the death of the 10 Belgian peacekeepers – which triggered the withdrawal of most UNAMIR troops – but also of the contributing factors that made this event possible. The analysis reveals serious technical, mission and command problems.

Finally, the report is critical of the political management of the conflict. It criticises the Security Council, the UN Secretariat and the DPKO for weak and ineffective action. It points out that the World Bank and the African Development Bank failed to notice that their debt relief allowed the Rwandan government, after 1990, to enlarge its army and increase defence expenditure. It criticises the General Staff of the Belgian armed forces for inadequate training, support and analysis. In addition, the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is found wanting for not having undertaken robust diplomatic campaigns to strengthen the mandate of UNAMIR while doing exactly that to obtain the complete withdrawal of UNAMIR after the killing of the Belgians when it was clear that the massacres had started.

One overall conclusion is not clearly spelled out though: the international community may feel a concern for peace and security, but not for the actual protection of civilians.

A fuller analysis will appear as an article in the *Journal of International Peace-keeping* 6(1)143–153.

**Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice** (1999) by Doreen Indra (ed) *Refugee and Forced Migration Studies, vol 5 (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books)*.

This book is primarily concerned with the interplay of gender with human rights, protection, and refugee determination in law and practice. In 'Human Rights of Refugees with Special Reference to Muslim Refugee Women', Khadija Elmadmad explores ways in which Islamic states might be able to complement secular, 'modern' international legal instruments relating to refugees with notions of asylum and protection derived from Islam. Audrey Macklin presents 'A Comparative Analysis of the Canadian, US and Australian Directives on Gender Persecution and Refugee Status'. Her thorough analysis explains how agents of these three governments have developed linked, yet differing, legal bases for partially incorporating gender as a criterion for refugee status.

Another set of chapters is concerned with how to weigh the sometimes directly contradictory values of cultural relativism and universalised notions of individual human rights in the context of gender and forced migration. Although a spectrum of positions is reflected in the volume, the balance is definitely on the side of the priority of individual human rights when rights and cultural expectations are in opposition.

Researchers and practitioners will find the first three chapters very useful. These provide a much-needed understanding of women and gender in development

approaches to forced migration, their historical development and future possibilities. Doreen Indra in 'Not a Room of One's Own' draws a number of historical parallels between successive feminist approaches to gender in development and forced migration research and practice. Through an exploration of the treatment of women and gender in development and a history of forced migration she introduces the Women and Forced Migration (WIFM) approach which brings to the fore the need to reform discussion and practice in order to put women more centrally into forced migration picture. She concludes that the WIFM approach to the provision of aid and programming does appear to be increasing. However she contends that the Gender and Forced Migration (GAFM) approach in analysis, policy and programming does not equate 'gender' solely with women, nor solely with women's activities, beliefs, goals or needs; gender is, instead, 'a key relational dimension of human activity and thought informed by cultural and individual notions of men and women who are forced migrants having consequences for their social and cultural positioning and the way they experience their lives'. As such this approach may allow researchers and practitioners to be more sensitive to situationality and variability so that in the end each story tells if not a different tale, then at least a 'gendered meaningfully different variant of the story'.

Tahmina Rahman is Oxfam-UK's policy adviser on gender and advocacy and has experience in emergency programme and policy related issues.

## Book Reviews on the Net

### Coordination

**Strategic Humanitarian Coordination in the Great Lakes Region 1996–1997** (1998) by S Lautze, B Jones & M Duffield (New York: OCHA). **Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons learned** (April 1998) Report of a review seminar (New York: OCHA). **Summary Report on the Tripartite (UNICEF/UNHCR/WFP) Study of the Great Lakes Emergency Operation** (1998) (Rome, World Food Programme) EB3/98/5/3.

### Conflict Management

**Demanding Sacrifice. War and negotiation in Sri Lanka** (1998) eds J Armon & L Philipson. **Safeguarding Peace. Cambodia's constitutional challenge** (1998) by D Hendrickson. *Conciliation Resources: London. Fax: (+44) 20 7837 0337. Email: <accord@conciliation.gn.apc.org>. The reports are available from the website: <www.c-r.org/cr>*

**Afghanistan. Essential field guides to humanitarian and conflict zones** (1998) eds E Girardet & J Walter. *International Centre for Humanitarian Reporting/Crosslines: Geneva. Fax: (+41) 22 950 0752. Email: <info.ichr@itu.ch>*

### ICRC Publications

**Seminar for NGOs on Humanitarian Standards and Cultural Differences. Summary report** (1999), 55pp. **Modes of Action used by Humanitarian Players. Criteria for operational complementarity** (1999) by P Bonard, 67pp. **Staying Alive. Safety and security guidelines for humanitarian volunteers in conflict areas** (1999) by D Lloyd Roberts 125pp. *ICRC: Geneva. Tel: (+41) 22 730 2422. Fax: (+41) 22 734 8280.*

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

# 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.

### Koenraad Van Brabant, **RRN Coordinator**

February saw Koenraad Van Brabant's appointment to the post of RRN Coordinator. With full responsibility for the Network, Koenraad's excellent analytical skills, combined with his knowledge and experience of the field, will prove invaluable.



### Rachel Houghton, **RRN Deputy Coordinator**

In January we welcomed Rachel Houghton to the RRN team. Her background in publishing and communications in a number of research NGOs in South Africa and the US will prove extremely useful in her role as Deputy Coordinator.



### Sarah Geileskey, **RRN Administrator**

With responsibility for the production of publications, upkeep of the website, management of the budget and other support duties, Sarah has a solid background in administration.



We are pleased to welcome Olivia Cheasty to the RRN team as Junior Projects Administrator. Details of Olivia's responsibilities, along with her photo, will appear in the next RRN Newsletter.

With additional support, advice and assistance from Margie Buchanan-Smith, **Humanitarian Policy Group Coordinator**.

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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, SIDA (Sweden), the Department of Foreign Affairs (Ireland), and the Department for International Development (UK). Over this 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

SIDA

Department of Foreign Affairs,  
Ireland

DFID