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Providing aid in insecure environments: trends in policy and operations

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Acronyms

ACF	Action contre la Faim
ANSO	Afghanistan NGO Security Office
CBO	Community-based organisation
CPE	Complex political emergency
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of the UN
FTS	UN Financial Tracking System
HIC	Humanitarian Information Centre
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
IASMN	Inter-Agency Security Management Network
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICVA	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
IDP	Internally displaced person
IED	Improvised explosive device
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IGO	Inter-governmental organisation
IHL	International humanitarian law
INGO	International non-governmental organisation
IO	International organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRIN	UN Integrated Regional Information Networks
MOSS	Minimum Operating Security Standards
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
NCCI	NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFDA	Office of United States Foreign Disaster Assistance
P5	Permanent Five Member of the UN Security Council
PSO	Peace Support Operations
SACB	Somalia Aid Coordination Body
SAG	Security Advisory Group of InterAction
SCHR	Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response

SIRS	UN Security Incident Reporting Service
SMI	Security Management Initiative
SRA	Security Risk Assessment
UN	United Nations
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSECOORD	UN Security Coordinator
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	Under-Secretary-General
VRA	Virtual Research Associates
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WVI	World Vision International

Executive summary

Just before this report went to print, 17 aid workers from the organisation Action contre la Faim were shot dead in Muttur, Sri Lanka. This horrific, execution-style killing came towards the end of a year that saw unprecedented numbers of attacks against aid workers in Darfur, and in the wake of surges of violence in post-invasion Iraq and Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, there is a widespread perception within the international aid community that serious violence against aid workers has increased in recent years. This perception has prompted aid actors to change their approach to staff security and to the conduct of their aid operations. Yet no comprehensive empirical analysis exists to support or refute the claims of increasing violence against aid workers on a relative scale, that is, measured against the numbers of aid workers operating in the field. This gap in knowledge has meant that policy and operational responses to security conditions have been largely driven by impressions and anecdotal evidence, and important trends have not been identified.

This report presents findings from a two-year study examining aid in insecure environments. Drawing on the most comprehensive global dataset to date of major reported incidents of violence against aid workers from 1997 to 2005, it provides a quantitative analysis of the changing security environment for civilian aid operations. It then examines the related trends in policy and operations over the last decade, in particular how perceptions of increased risk to aid operations have affected the development of security measures. Lastly, it explores the way in which aid operations have adapted to working in highly insecure contexts through a growing reliance on national staff.

While the study relies on numerical data to provide a missing empirical basis to the security discussion, the authors are conscious of the fact that this data represents individual human lives and often tragic outcomes.

Measuring aid worker insecurity

Since 1997, the absolute number of major acts of violence (killings, kidnappings and armed attacks resulting in serious injury) committed against aid workers each year has nearly doubled, with the increase growing steeper in the second half of the decade. Overall, there were 408 reported acts of major violence against aid workers over the nine-year period, involving 941 victims and resulting in 434 fatalities.

However, when the number of victims is compared to the population of aid workers in the field, which increased by an estimated 77% from 1997 to 2005, the global incidence trend of violence against aid workers is found to have risen only slightly. The annual number of victims per 10,000 aid workers in the field averaged five in the first half of the period and six in the second. Moreover, the relative rate has actually fallen in the six countries or regions where violence against aid workers is most prevalent (Somalia and Somaliland, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chechnya and the North Caucasus).

That the relative rate of attacks against aid workers overall is stable might lead to the conclusion that security management practices have had a positive impact on staff security. However, the data analysis found a further trend. The decreased risk to aid workers in the six most violent contexts has accrued only to international staff. National staff represent the majority of victims (79%) in all countries, and their risk relative to international staff is increasing in the most violent contexts. This finding correlates with another observation in the study: that in times of heightened insecurity, international staff rely increasingly on national staff or local partners to manage aid programmes, in effect shifting the burden of risk. The study also found that insecurity is not impinging on all institutions in the same way. While the number of incidents affecting UN and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) staff decreased over the time period, incidents affecting national Red Cross and Red Crescent workers have increased in absolute terms, and those affecting NGOs have increased in both absolute and relative terms.

The study found no correlation between the overall level of violence in a given context (as measured by the number of conflict-related deaths per year) and the level of violence against aid workers. Based on a regression analysis of the six most dangerous contexts, the study also concluded that violence against aid workers was no more or less likely to occur in relation to a range of factors, such as the presence of a UN 'integrated mission', interventions by the US or other great power forces, or the presence of global terrorist cells. At the same time, however, the study found that most aid worker victims were deliberately targeted, for political and/or economic purposes, rather than being randomly exposed to violence. Politically motivated incidents have increased by 208% over the time period. Taken together, these findings suggest that, while there is no correlation between the level of violence against aid workers and the specific politico-military factors examined, international military interventions are often a feature of (and can contribute to) extremely volatile environments for aid work, where political targeting is increasingly a tactic of choice.

Policy and operational approaches to security

Beginning in the 1990s, and accelerating in the years following 9/11, humanitarian organisations have taken steps to professionalise and institutionalise security management. These efforts have included the development or upgrading of security guidelines, instituting training and creating senior posts responsible for security, and developing technical and

systematic means to record and analyse security incident information. Very few of these efforts have been undertaken in a coordinated fashion. At the headquarters level, while collaboration has increased within networks of US- and UK-based NGOs and among UN agencies, considerable coordination challenges persist. In matters of security, this study found that aid organisations are in fact highly interdependent, making coordination a critical feature of security management. Coordination remains informal and variable across countries and emergencies, however, and tends to be most effective when severe security pressures demand it. Although the reporting of security incidents has been prioritised and has attracted significant investment in recent years, critical gaps in this area remain, and are cited by many as a major impediment to good security analysis.

The most significant changes in security management are seen at the operational level, reflected in shifts between the three components of the 'security triangle' paradigm: protection, deterrence and acceptance (Van Brabant, 2000). These terms have become ubiquitous in the aid community over the last five years, although their meaning and value have at times been lost. This study defines the terms as follows:

- *Protection*: seeking to reduce vulnerability to targeted and random attacks.
- *Deterrence*: presenting a counter-threat.
- *Acceptance*: entails the aid agency becoming a familiar and trusted entity by the host community and the beneficiary population, cultivating a network of contacts and inter-mediaries to maintain open lines of communication and reception from the key (often belligerent) parties.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable decline in the practice of *active* acceptance strategies by aid organisations, particularly in highly unstable environments. In addition, new types of protective measures have been adopted in certain volatile contexts, with some agencies adopting very low-profile or even 'clandestine' modes of programming. This is particularly the case where there is a high risk of targeting due to an organisation's perceived association with certain political actors.

The role of host states and governmental donors has perhaps been underplayed in the past, and their respective functions in providing and supporting security measures for aid workers deserve increased attention. For host states, clear challenges exist in situations where there is limited capacity, and where the state is a party to the conflict. For their part, donor governments report that they are willing and prepared to fund security costs, but many agencies insist that available funding is still inadequate. The lack of coordination among donors themselves on security issues has added to these challenges, as has the apparent disconnect in donor policies, notably in the US, between support for aid agency security on the one hand, and on the other a tendency to subsume aid within the global counter-terror agenda.

Despite reforms, the seriousness with which agencies now speak of security management is still not matched in practice. These weaknesses have influenced decision-making on aid programming in insecure environments over the last decade, as the final strand of the study's analysis explores.

Localisation as a response to insecurity

Faced with insecure operating environments that limit access to populations in need, humanitarian actors have developed and employed differing approaches for service delivery since the mid-1990s. In recent years, such responses have involved international staff working at a distance from the affected area and increasing reliance on national staff or partner organisations in order to maintain operations. So-called 'remote management' programming has the important benefit of allowing operations to continue. But it also creates a number of challenges. These include less efficient service delivery, difficulties maintaining a strategic programme and planning focus, corruption risks and accountability concerns. Considerations that influence agencies' switch to remote management include the level of insecurity and its expected duration, the size of the programme, a desire to maintain presence for solidarity or visibility reasons, the sector of programming and the type of goods and equipment involved. Agencies also claim that levels of vulnerability and need are key factors in determining whether to provide aid by remote management, but this study suggests that it is not only life-saving interventions that are prioritised; decision-making is also influenced by a range of other factors related to political concerns or agency image.

Humanitarian organisations have largely failed to fully consider the ethics of transferring security risks from expatriate staff to national staff or local NGOs. One of the core assumptions of remote management approaches is that national workers are at less risk than their international counterparts. But this assumption is often unfounded, and nationals may find it exceedingly difficult to decline the work for economic and/or altruistic reasons. Viewed against the significant rise in the relative risk of violence to national staff in the most dangerous contexts, this raises serious ethical and operational questions for the international aid community.

This study contends that passing responsibility to local partners need not be an *ad hoc*, reactive measure. Instead, international humanitarian actors should be encouraged to engage in prior strategic planning and adopt guiding principles on how these approaches can best be undertaken. The report concludes with a series of recommendations to strengthen operational security and aid management in insecure environments. It provides an outline of what good remote management practices might look like, and argues that the development of local capacity and the security of national as well as international staff should be central to future aid programming, at the global, regional and local levels.

Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Overview and purpose of the study

For people who work in war zones, the risk of death or serious injury is real and ever-present. The military have a clear means to mitigate and absorb the consequences of this risk. When a serious incident occurs against civilian aid operations, however, it shakes the confidence not only of the organisation affected, but of the whole aid community. The aid programme invariably loses impetus, and can come to a complete halt. When one agency reduces its presence or withdraws following an attack others often follow, either passing responsibilities over to local partners or leaving the beneficiary population to cope alone. Alternatives to withdrawal are not readily apparent. International humanitarian law (IHL) and UN conventions are designed to protect civilians, including aid workers, from violence during conflict. IHL, however, has been increasingly flouted, and the environments in which aid agencies work today bear little resemblance to the experiences of war upon which IHL was originally conceived. In fact, experience has led many to believe aid actors may be *especially* vulnerable in conflict situations as potential targets for violence (interviews, 2006).

In recent years, there has been a widespread perception of new and growing threats to aid workers, to their operations and to their access to beneficiaries. There are multiple views about the extent and causes of the changed security environment for aid workers. Most are based on anecdotal experience and a general sense that the dynamics of security have somehow changed. Some see this change as a result of overly close cooperation with military and political actors, especially in the context of the US-led war on terror. Many note that humanitarian action has been subsumed or co-opted by military campaigns in the service of national and global security objectives, or has become inextricably associated with state-building and related political agendas. Others see new dangers from non-state actors and movements that view aid operations as representing norms of stability and order, and as such attack them in the interests of sowing chaos, irrespective of these operations' humanitarian function or their relationship with military or political actors. Although some observers maintain that, on the whole, the relationship between humanitarian actors and conflict and insecurity remains unchanged, the general consensus holds that some combination of these developments has directly contributed to a deterioration in the security environment for aid work.[1]

This consensus has spurred the international assistance community into recognising operational security as a vital policy concern, both for its own staff and for the success of aid operations in general. This has resulted in investment in enhanced security capacity and coordination, adding impetus to a trend that began in the mid-1990s to strengthen and professionalise security management within the sector. In particular, the UN system, along with some of the larger international NGOs, has initiated a number of major new developments in the way operational security for aid work is conceived and managed. At the UN, this has meant a new institutional structure – the UN Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) – an increase in funding, additional and more senior security staff and advances in methods of risk assessment, incident monitoring and response. Developments among non-UN actors, though for the most part uncoordinated, have also been significant. A group of key US-based international NGOs has developed inter-agency security standards, and some NGOs have centralised systems for reporting and collecting information on security incidents. Over the past few years, many aid organisations have added dedicated security personnel to their staff, and new provisions for security resources have been included in grant proposals. Policies and protocols have also been enhanced.

On the ground, changes in security policies and practices have yet to be fully implemented, and in any case only partially address the problems at hand. At present, responses to insecurity have included adaptations in programming, a growing reliance on national staff and a shift to working with local partner organisations to maintain operations. These strategies have had both positive and negative effects in terms of meeting standards in programming, addressing priority needs and overall impact. Organisations remain for the most part reactive in their approach to changes in programming, treating each scenario as new rather than developing a strategic approach and sharing lessons between organisations. The steady engagement of local actors in relief efforts over the past few years also brings into question the traditional roles of international aid organisations in conflict environments.

This study examines three interrelated elements of the changing security environment for aid actors. First, it provides an empirical basis against which to test the perception that aid workers face increased risk. Second, it explores the implications of this perception in practice, and how the development of security measures has been affected over the past decade. Third, it considers the impact of insecurity on the delivery of humanitarian assistance in high-risk contexts, with a focus on the increasing localisation of response.

1 The view that threats against aid workers had risen in the post-9/11 political environment was expressed in numerous interviews with UN, IO and NGO representatives undertaken for this study.

1.2 The changing security context for aid operations: reality, perception and response

By any measure, international aid work is a dangerous profession. When we compared on-the-job death rates for aid workers against the ten most hazardous civilian occupations in the US, aid workers came in at number five, after loggers, pilots, fishermen and structural iron and steel workers.[2] Unlike these other civilian professions, however, the high fatality rate for aid workers is largely due to violent acts. It is an oft-repeated fallacy that vehicle accidents are the primary cause of aid worker deaths in the field. While they may account for the largest number of safety incidents and insurance claims, statistical analyses by researchers at Johns Hopkins University (Sheik, 2000; Rowley, 2005) have found that the majority of *fatalities* are caused by intentional violence.[3]

Unlike other research on this topic (highlighted at the end of this chapter), this study addresses intentional violence only, as opposed to the broader range of risks facing aid workers in the field, including illness, accidents and environmental hazards. Aid workers have historically faced two main categories of threat:

1) Environmental threats. Environmental threats include both *incidental* threats, the so-called collateral damage incurred from operating in unstable and violent contexts, and *parasitic* threats, where aid workers are targeted for their economic assets – in common crimes or via extortion, for instance.

2) Political threats. Aid workers may become either a principal or an associated political target for armed groups. Principal political targeting involves attacks on aid operations and workers to block or divert the delivery of aid to certain groups, or to exact punishment for that delivery. This includes 'terrorist'-type attacks on aid workers designed to send a message, to disrupt stability and normality, to sow fear or to undermine trust in the current authority. Associated political targeting refers to attacks on aid operations and workers for their perceived allegiance to, participation in or non-differentiation from an enemy political agenda.

As regards economic targeting, a rise in general criminality in many developing countries has been observed since the mid-1990s. Some have attributed this to increasing inequality and the potentially destabilising effects of globalisation (Bourguignon, 2001). Raised expectations, newly observed wealth and more visible gaps between haves and have-nots, often accompanied by diminishing public sector services, create frustration, which in turn can breed crime. This is cited as one possible cause for the increased crime rates in cities like Nairobi, where international workers once moved about freely, but are now warned not to go out alone or at night (interviews with UNDSS and UN agency/NGO staff, 2006).

Although most security and humanitarian professionals interviewed for this study agree that the most prevalent threats to aid workers remain those in the environmental category, particularly banditry, they also share a strong sense that political targeting has increased in the past few years. There have been several grim watershed moments – incidents which have jolted the aid community into new ways of thinking about security. Perhaps the first was the murder of six International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) workers in Chechnya in December 1996, which drove home to aid practitioners that humanitarians were no longer exempt from violence in war. Even earlier, in the Somalia and Bosnia emergencies, many aid workers had their first experience of high-risk, militarised humanitarian relief efforts, where their aid commodities were treated as spoils of war and they themselves were frequent targets of combatants. More recent incidents have included the bomb attacks against the UN headquarters and the ICRC offices in Baghdad in 2003. The ICRC attack in particular suggested that all aid workers, even those with the most explicit mandate and the most principled approach, were deemed potential political targets.

The Baghdad bombings represented, in the most extreme form, the severity of the security challenges emerging from the post-9/11 security environment and the political polarisation surrounding the US-led war on terror. Other factors – both new and old – complicating the security environment for aid work include the proliferation of conflicts that are at once internal and transnational; the challenge of failed or failing states that lack any national security infrastructure; new tactics of violence, such as suicide bombings; and the prevalence of active militia groups, with no clear chains of command or known interlocutors with whom to negotiate.

Approaches to operational security for aid work have tended to pass over the fact that the fundamental responsibility for the security of aid personnel lies with the host state. This principle is embodied in IHL, and has been reaffirmed in several UN resolutions. It was also formally adopted by 79 state signatories to the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel in 1994. In practice, however, this responsibility has often not been discharged, not least because the most dangerous environments are frequently those where the state lacks the basic capacity to take on this role, and/or does not have the political will to do so. New attention is focusing on this under-emphasised aspect of security, particularly within UNDSS.

2 In 2004, the US Department of Labor reported that 'individual occupations with high rates of fatal injury were logging workers (92.4 per 100,000 workers), aircraft pilots and flight engineers (92.4 per 100,000), fishers and related fishing workers (86.4 per 100,000), and structural iron and steel workers (47.0 per 100,000) (US Department of Labor, 2005). To calculate the 2004 fatality rate for aid workers (both violent and accident/illness-related) we extrapolated from our data on aid workers killed in 2004 (56). Rowley's calculation of 60% violence-related deaths (Rowley, 2005) would yield an estimated total of 94 deaths from all causes. Against our aid worker denominator for that year, this gives a rate of 45 per 100,000, just below that of structural iron and steel workers.

3 The Sheik (2000) study data, excluding peacekeeping personnel, yields a figure of 72% of aid worker deaths resulting from violence between 1985 and 1998, and Rowley (2005) shows 60% of deaths between 2002 and 2005 as violence-related.

Against this backdrop, this study has sought to illuminate the nature and extent of the threat to aid work as it has changed over the years, and to assess the responses adopted by the aid community to meet this challenge.

1.3 Methodology

The overall methodological approach of the study had four components: data collection and analysis; field research; documentation and literature review; and key informant interviews. The data collection and analysis forms a critical empirical basis for the report's overall conclusions. The field research provided additional sources of information for the data collation and analysis, and explored key policy and programming questions with field-based personnel. The primary source documentation and literature review and HQ-based interviews were undertaken to complement the data analysis and field work, and provided historical background, organisation-specific developments and independent perspectives on changes in the overall security context for aid operations over the last decade.

In this report, the term 'aid worker' is used to describe personnel working for humanitarian or multi-mandated aid agencies that operate in humanitarian relief contexts. The term 'humanitarian operations' is used to define the work primarily being implemented in relief contexts, including life-saving, basic welfare and protection-related activities.

1.3.1 Data collection and statistical analysis

The study constructed a global dataset of major incidents of violence affecting aid workers from 1997 to 2005. Using this data, it identified trends and correlating factors in the incidence, targeting and tactics of violence against humanitarian actors in various contexts. (This subsection and the next describe in detail how the quantitative data was gathered and analysed. Casual readers may prefer to skip to subsection 1.3.3, page 9.)

Data sources

Incident data was drawn from public sources and augmented by internal organisational information provided to the study. Previous compilations and chronologies of incidents provided a helpful starting point. One such contribution to this area of research was made by Dennis King. As a consultant to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), King compiled a chronology of aid worker casualties (King, 2002 and 2004) from 1997–2004, based on news and agency reports collated from ReliefWeb,[4] the world's largest centralised compilation of international news and organisational reports on humanitarian matters. The US State Department also chronicles violence against aid workers within broader reports such as *Patterns of Global Terrorism* (US Department of State, 2005a), and in the country chronologies in the annual *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices* (US Department of State, 2005b). Additional lists of aid worker fatalities, kidnaps and injuries were provided in UNDSS reports and other UN documents. Incident data was assembled from these compendia, and sources were independently researched for cross-checking purposes.

Further incidents were identified via web searches of international wire services and news agencies, in local media reports from the countries of occurrence and in the published reports of aid organisations. Internal reports made available to the project by aid organisations were also used. The study's researchers also cross-checked the data with UNDSS incident reports, local coordination mechanisms such as the Afghanistan Non Governmental Organisation Safety Office (ANSO) in Kabul, and Humanitarian Information Centres (HICs). Finally, information on additional incidents and specific details from six of the highest-incident countries or regions – Somalia and Somaliland, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chechnya and the North Caucasus – was gathered by the project's field researchers, described in section 1.3.3.

Parameters and definitions for data compilation

The incident data was compiled for the years 1997–2005. For each incident, the dataset recorded the number of aid workers affected (victims); their institutional affiliation (UN/Red Cross/NGO/other (donor government, international financial institute)); their nationality (national/international (expatriate)); the outcome of the incident (victims killed/wounded/kidnapped); the method of violence used (ambush, armed incursion, etc.); and the country or context in which the incident took place. Where available, the motive for the incident was also recorded, although this was only possible for a limited number of incidents (see section 2.4, page 19, for more detail on motives).

Table 1 describes the parameters for the study, and defines the terms used.

The following types of incident were not included in the dataset:

1. Rape. While it is well known that rape against humanitarian staff in the field occurs, the research found very few reports explicitly citing rape or sexual assault. It is assumed, based on our reading of incident reports, that the stigmatising nature of the crime means that a certain number of these incidents went unreported, while others were reported simply as assaults. For these reasons, this particular type of major violent incident was not included as a separate category of incident outcome or tactic. In the rare cases where a rape is specified in the incident report,

4 The ReliefWeb site is managed by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): 'Recognizing how critical the availability of reliable and timely information in time of humanitarian emergencies is, the UN General Assembly endorsed the creation of ReliefWeb and encouraged humanitarian information exchange through ReliefWeb by all governments, relief agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Resolution 51/194 on 10 February 1997', www.reliefweb.int/rw/hlp.nsf/db900ByKey/AboutReliefWeb.

Table 1: Categories and terms used in the dataset

Victim-descriptive data	
Aid workers affected	Aid workers are defined as personnel attached to humanitarian or multi-mandated aid agencies and NGOs that operate in humanitarian relief contexts. Political and human rights workers and peacekeeping personnel are not included. Personnel of commercial contractors are included if they were subcontracted by an agency providing emergency relief (such as private contractors delivering food for WFP), but not if they were working on reconstruction projects.
Organisation	• **UN** – UN agencies and offices that engage in field-level humanitarian assistance, defined as agencies belonging to the IASC,[5] plus IOM and UNRWA. • **ICRC** – international and national staff of the ICRC. • **IFRC** – national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies and IFRC international delegates. • **NGO** – international and national/local NGOs that deliver services in humanitarian contexts. Incidents against staff of these organisations were included regardless of whether they occurred in a 'humanitarian' or a 'development' context.
Type of staff	• **International** – expatriate staff working in the field for international organisations. • **National** – includes both national staff of international organisations and aid workers working for local organisations.
Incident-descriptive data	
Outcomes	The nature of the violence in terms of its outcome for the victim: • **Killed**. • **Kidnapped** – held for at least 24 hours. If a victim was killed in the course of a kidnapping, the incident is entered as a killing, not a kidnapping. • **Wounded** – injuries sustained from intentional violence including landmines.
Type/methods of violence	The means or tactics used in the commission of the violent act have been divided into five categories: • **Ambush** – includes pedestrian–vehicle or vehicle–vehicle attack on roads. • **Armed incursion** – attack by an armed group on a home, office or project site. Includes attacks with sticks, clubs, etc. • **Aerial bombardment** – this category includes surface-to-air attacks on planes. • **Landmine** – does not include de-miners killed by accidental detonations in the course of their work. • **Individual attack/assassination** – an attack that singles out an individual; can also include personnel killed in the course of a robbery.
Context-descriptive data	
Political environment of country/ emergency case	The types of political environment in which these incidents occurred were considered important in analysing which contexts may be more dangerous for aid workers. Contexts were: • Inter-state war. • Civil war, or ethno-nationalist/religious warfare (>1,000 battle-related deaths/year).[6] • Civil violence: intermediate-level intensity (<1,000 battle-related deaths/year). • Low-level civil violence (>25 deaths/year, but <1,000 over the course of the conflict). • No active conflict/limited violence (can include development or transitional scenarios, or a temporary lull). Other factors: • Presence of a UN-sanctioned peacekeeping or peace-support mission. • Presence of a transnational terrorist organisation/cell. • Military intervention by foreign forces of the same region. • Military intervention by foreign forces of one or more great power countries. • Presence of armed groups: warlords/militias/insurgents. • Use of integrated mission approach by the UN.

5 The full members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Humanitarian Affairs are FAO, OCHA, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO.

6 These classifications of violence levels are used by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP). Armed conflict information by country is available at www.sipri.org.

the victim is counted as 'wounded' in the outcome categories.[7]

2. Detention/harassment/threats. It is an unfortunate reality of humanitarian work that, in some environments, being detained or harassed at borders and checkpoints is a regular occurrence. Verbal and written threats may also be commonplace. Arrests by officials, even if legally suspect and protracted, were not counted unless the arrested person was physically brutalised. (To be counted as a kidnapping, the victim had to have been forcibly taken or detained by a non-state actor and held for at least 24 hours.) Although many field reporting systems rightly track these incidents for the purpose of mapping trends, they fall outside this study's focus on acts of major violence, and so are not included unless they resulted in physical injury.
3. Mugging, robbery, looting, banditry, car-jacking, vandalism. Likewise, unless a serious injury or kidnapping occurred as a result of these criminal acts, they were not included in the dataset.

Timeframe

The year 1997 was used as a starting point for data collection primarily for reasons of thoroughness and availability of data. ReliefWeb was launched in October 1996 and, although it contains some documents and records dating as far back as 1981, it was not until after 1997 that it actively sought and obtained widespread contributions by governments, agencies, NGOs and media sources (including locally based media in recipient countries). In addition, it is generally agreed that reporting and record-keeping on security incidents, then as now a highly sensitive issue, was scanty and uneven across international aid agencies up until the mid-1990s, when staff security and security coordination became an organisational priority.

Setting the start of the timeline in the late 1990s has the additional advantage of denominator comparability. The 'population explosion' of aid agencies in complex political emergencies following the Cold War had already occurred, so incident data trends would not be as skewed by this exponential jump in the number of aid workers in the field.

How to measure relative risk: the challenge of getting the aid worker denominator

This study represents the first formal attempt to calculate an incidence rate for violence against aid workers by comparing global incident data against the estimated number of aid workers in the field – a measure that has proved elusive. Other studies have also noted this as the principal missing component in any comprehensive analysis.[8] The difficulty in arriving at a valid denominator is why past studies have used sample groups of self-selecting organisations, or have simply noted the impossibility of calculating rates.[9] This section describes the process by which we arrived at an estimate of the number of aid workers in the field for each year during the time period – a figure that, by our calculations, has grown by 77% from 1997 to 2005.

As the first step, the study set out to construct a measure of the 'humanitarian footprint' by mapping the aid agencies operational in humanitarian contexts from the UN system, the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and the international NGO community. Aid agencies were then asked to provide the number of field personnel employed, disaggregated between international and national staff, for each year from 1997 to the present. Different methods used to count staff were accepted as long as an organisation's counting method was consistent over time.

Of the ten UN aid agencies consulted, five (the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), OCHA, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA)) were able to provide full disaggregated staffing data for all or most years. Three others (the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP)) were able to provide partial data, while the remaining two agencies (the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP)) were unable to provide data for more than two years. The ICRC provided full, disaggregated figures for all years, while the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the national societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent produced only minimal data.

To compile the total list of international NGOs engaged in humanitarian response, the project consulted the membership of the major consortia (InterAction, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA) and the Steering Committee for

7 The lack of reporting on this type of violent act speaks to the larger problem of sexually-based violence in the operational context. The threat of rape still receives little or no attention in most security assessments. The combination of a culture of stigmatisation and silence around the issue, and the fact that the vast majority of security personnel in the field are male, has resulted in dangerous ignorance and under-attention to a problem which the aid community is only just beginning to address (interviews with UNDSS and agency staff, 2006).

8 Sheik (2000) reports: 'Without denominators for field staff – which few organisations could provide – we could not calculate risks or rates, making it difficult to ascribe the increased number of deaths to increased risks'. Similarly, Van Brabant (2000) notes that that: 'There can be no valid trend analysis without a determined "population" (denominator): in other words, we need to know the (changing) population of aid workers over time, per organization, and across the sector, in order to see whether the number of aid workers injured or killed by manmade violence/1000 aid workers increases or decreases'.

9 One notable exception is a PhD dissertation by Marianne Abbott of Ohio State University, entitled *Dangerous Intervention: An Analysis of Humanitarian Fatalities in Assistance Contexts* (2006). Abbott uses UNHCR data on the number of IDPs in a given context as a proxy measure to estimate the number of aid workers present. While an innovative approach, this assumes that the size of the aid worker presence correlates with levels of need, which past experience does not support. A more accurate proxy, in our estimation, may be donor funding levels, and these are included as a partial factor in the proxy calculations this study made for aid worker presence in specific countries.

Humanitarian Response (SCHR)), WFP's list of 257 NGO partners and the rosters of USAID's NGO grant recipients. The NGOs were divided into five tiers based on their annual overseas programme expenditures.[10] The first tier includes the largest and most ubiquitous actors, with overseas programme budgets of over $200m (World Vision International, CARE International, Save the Children Federation, Oxfam International, Catholic Relief Services and all sections of Médecins Sans Frontières). The second contains those with budgets between $100m and $200m, the third $50m–$100m, the fourth $5–$50m and the fifth under $5m.

Because some small international NGOs have come and gone over the time period, it was not possible to account for all agencies in the fourth and fifth tiers. However, their small size (with staff numbering in the hundreds or smaller) means that this should not significantly affect the overall denominator, which is in the hundreds of thousands. Additionally, some of the international NGOs (mainly in the fourth and fifth tiers) use only limited direct hires, and programme much of their expenditure through local NGO partners. By including the local NGO personnel whose positions would be funded through subgrants and partnerships with international NGOs, this formula helped the calculations to arrive at a closer estimate of the actual humanitarian presence worldwide. This was crucial because it is outside the scope of this study to map the vast array of local NGOs operating in emergencies over the time period, much less obtain staffing figures for them.

A total of 54 international NGOs were originally consulted for staffing figures.[11] Of these, 15 provided full disaggregated staffing data for all or most years; 15 provided partial data; and the remaining 24 provided data for two years or less. Seven organisations specifically confirmed that they did not keep staffing records for more than two years prior: Save the Children UK, CARE US, the American Refugee Committee, Médecins du Monde, Action Aid, CHF International and Islamic Relief. Several of these organisations indicated that they were upgrading their human resource systems to address this problem.

In total, 66 organisations were queried. Of these, only 32% were able to provide full, disaggregated data for all or most years; 26% provided partial data and 41% provided only very minimal figures.[12]

Using this data, the missing figures were imputed through the following method of systematic inferencing. For organisations where staffing numbers were available for some but not all years, the project calculated the ratio of their overseas programme expenditure to their field staff numbers for the years where the data was on record, and used that ratio to fill in the missing years for that organisation. (To get a breakdown of international versus national staff, we used the average percentage of internationals in that organisation's data history.) For organisations where no staff numbers were available for any of the years, an average expenditure-to-staffing ratio was applied based on the ratios of the other organisations in that tier for each year.

Despite sustained attempts, it was not possible to obtain a valid estimate of employees and volunteers working for the IFRC and the numerous national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies. For this reason, the aid worker denominator comprises UN, ICRC and NGO numbers only. When incident numbers were measured against this figure to calculate rates, we excluded incidents involving national Red Cross/Red Crescent workers.

Based on these calculations, the study estimated that the aid worker population (excluding IFRC and national Red Cross and Red Crescent workers) had grown by 77%, from 136,204 in 1997 to 241,654 by 2005.

Agencies were also asked to provide their field staff figures for the six cases examined: Afghanistan, Chechnya, the DRC, Iraq, Somalia and Somaliland and Sudan. However, the percentage of agency HQs able to provide these numbers was even lower than the small percentage that could provide the global figures.

The agency-provided information was supplemented by the study's field researchers, who relayed the figures they had collected and advised on potential sources for country-wide counts or estimates.[13] The bulk of the remaining research was aimed at gathering staffing figures directly from the in-country offices of selected UN agencies, NGOs and the IFRC and national societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The staff numbers for those organisations that provided data for all or most of the years 1997–2005 were added together to produce a sample of the aid worker population for each country.

As a complement to the aid worker sample, total aid flows to each of the six case studies for each year between 1997 and 2005 were collected from the UN Financial Tracking System (FTS), including funds from consolidated appeals and from outside of the consolidated appeals process, and from the

10 Overseas expenditure figures were compiled from agencies' annual reports and USAID VolAg Reports. The figures were converted into 2004 US dollars and adjusted for inflation using an average annual US inflation rate of 2.4% for the years 1997 to 2004, as provided by the Consumer Price Index of the US Bureau of Labor.

11 The final list of organisations used to approximate the total NGO footprint differed from this original list, however, because the decision to use budget figures to approximate staff sizes dictated a different and more comprehensive selection of NGOs.

12 Collecting and maintaining this information appears to present several challenges. Most organisations implement short-term projects and experience high staff turnover, making staff numbers volatile over time and difficult to estimate at any one time. We found a lack of centralised staffing records, so that even if information was collected for previous years, it is often not readily available today. Second, national staff are usually hired and managed by country offices, without the requirement that figures be reported to HQ. Third, organisations have little incentive to collect such information, given that it is not explicitly required in reports to donors, the media or the general public, and given the many other urgent priorities.

13 Sources included government bodies, field representatives of OCHA, UNDSS and UN peacekeeping or assistance missions, as well as other aid coordination bodies and independent research organisations in-country.

Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, including Emergency and Food Aid given by DAC countries and total ODA from all donors. Although both of these sources are incomplete, they provide in some places a helpful sense of the relative scale of aid operations, and this was used to complement the sample of actual staff numbers.

Despite the admitted limitations to this method (including small sample size and possible selection bias), the sample of aid worker numbers was deemed reliable enough to approximate the general trends in the aid worker population over the time period.

1.3.2 Regression analysis
Having obtained incident rates for the types of personnel and organisations in the most violent contexts for aid workers (Afghanistan, Chechnya/North Caucasus, DRC, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan), regressions were run on statistical software to determine the existence of any statistically significant correlations between these rates and the presence of political and conflict variables in these cases. For each regression, the dependent variable used was the year-to-year percentage change in the number of incidents (total, national staff incidents and international staff incidents); the independent variables were the presence/absence of political and contextual factors as listed in Table 1, above. (See Annex 2: Results of regression analysis, page 59.)

1.3.3 Field research
The six case studies were chosen based on an early analysis of the available data. The field research allowed for in-depth analysis of the environment for aid programming and the behaviour and practice of the operational agencies in adapting to changes in the security context. In particular, the case studies allowed for a detailed exploration of the role local aid actors play in service delivery strategies when international actors shift to remote management approaches. This involved looking at the programming and security strategies, arrangements and resources of the local NGOs engaged in humanitarian assistance, and how these are supported by international entities.

The choice of case studies also allowed for a cross-checking of the incident data through interviews and documentary review, thereby capturing additional, non-reported incidents. This resulted in a deeper analysis of the motives and circumstances surrounding incidents of violence, in particular in determining whether victims were targeted primarily because they were aid workers (or working for a particular aid agency), whether this was an associated motivation, whether there were economic considerations, whether the involvement of the aid worker was purely incidental, for instance if they were caught in cross-fire, or if they were targeted for personal reasons.

Four background papers have been published from the field work, covering Afghanistan, Chechnya and the North Caucasus, Iraq and Somalia and Somaliland. These can be found on the HPG website (www.odi.org.uk/hpg).

1.3.4 Primary source documentation and literature review
The study examined primary and secondary material in six main areas:

- Past and current agency security practice, including policy documents, guidelines, manuals and training materials.
- The evolution of UN security reform, including UN General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, official reports on security and agency security materials.
- Trends in local capacity-building and partnership efforts in conflict environments.
- Academic studies of aid worker security.
- Background literature on the changing security context, including the global war on terror, counter-terrorism, the impact of UN integrated missions and civil–military relations.
- Country-specific studies and reports.

1.3.5 Interviews
Altogether, the study undertook over 350 semi-structured interviews with policy-makers and practitioners from the security and aid sectors. Approximately 65 interviews were conducted with personnel in headquarters, and the remainder were field-based. UNDSS provided the research team with particular support and granted full access to all relevant UNDSS headquarters-based staff. The study researchers also interviewed UN agency, NGO, Red Cross/Red Crescent and donor representatives. Within the six case studies, approximately 250 field staff were interviewed in capitals and in the operational regions. Interviewees included UN officials, international NGO staff, inter-agency representatives, staff from local NGOs, private security contractors and government officials.

1.4 Related studies

Prior studies have used different slices of the incident data to analyse the issue of aid worker risk. Perhaps the most frequently cited source, an article in the *British Medical Journal* by Johns Hopkins researcher Mani Sheik and colleagues entitled 'Deaths Among Humanitarian Workers', was published in 2000. This study looks exclusively at fatalities, using voluntarily supplied information on deaths of staff of the UN and NGOs in the 14 years between 1985 and 1998. It also includes the civilian staff of peacekeeping missions. It compares deaths by violence against other types of fatalities, such as accidents and illness. This study used Sheik's baseline for aid worker fatalities to compare against the later time period, showing a considerable increase from the period 1985–1998 to 1997–2005. However, this increase may be exaggerated due to incomplete data in the earlier study. As Sheik acknowledged: 'Some organisations had no deaths or kept no records of deaths or their circumstances. Overall, 32 organisations and their affiliates provided data, with only three declining'. Incomplete data notwithstanding,

the Sheik study provides some interesting findings, including that most deaths were due to intentional violence caused by guns or other weapons, and that many deaths were linked to banditry. In addition, 'One third of deaths occurred in the first 90 days of service, with 17% dying within the first 30 days; the timing of death was unrelated to previous field experience'.

A study by another Johns Hopkins researcher, Elizabeth Rowley, examined data on deaths, hospitalisations and medical evacuations provided by a sample group of 20 international NGOs between September 2002 and December 2005 (Rowley, 2005). Key findings from this study include the fact that over 60% of aid worker fatalities were the result of intentional violence, rather than accidents or illness. The Rowley study places intentional violence in a broader context of potential risk factors, allowing us to compare risk rates with other professions.

Cate Buchanan and Robert Muggah of the Small Arms Survey have examined violence against aid workers via an analysis of weapons availability and misuse (Buchanan and Muggah, 2005). Their research focused on 96 countries in Southeast Asia, the Balkans, the Great Lakes and the Middle East, and analysed responses from over 2,000 questionnaires from UN agencies and international and local NGOs. Although the study drew conclusions about the rate at which humanitarian personnel have experienced security incidents, these findings were limited (for this study's purposes) by the size and representativeness of the sample, and by the short time period covered (2003–2004).

1.5 Structure of the report

The structure of this report mirrors the line of inquiry taken by the research project. Chapter 2 begins with a presentation of the quantitative data on security incidents and risk in order to provide a clearer picture of current trends and a point of departure for policy analysis. Chapter 3 examines the security policy response by aid organisations to the security environment, and how policy developments in different parts of the humanitarian system relate to each other. Chapter 4 addresses the implications of security risk and response on the delivery of aid and access to needy populations, analysing in particular the effects on the role of local organisations and other entities. Chapter 5 presents summary conclusions and a series of recommendations for institutional actors and decision-makers in the international aid system, and those providing security for aid efforts.

1.6 A final note

Arguably, a study on the issue of aid worker security misses the larger point. If aid workers are in danger of growing violence and impunity, the argument holds, the primary concern must be for the civilians that the aid workers are there to assist, who are surely facing the same or greater risks. The study is aware of important work examining levels of violence and efforts to protect civilians, and considers that this report serves as a complement to those findings. It also takes the view that, whilst aid organisations have an important role to play in protection, it is a necessarily limited one given their mandate and capacities. Any progress in this area will require the joint efforts of humanitarian, human rights and political and military actors, as the current 'responsibility to protect' process reflects (UN Security Council, 2006; UN OCHA, 2004b). Furthermore, while the above assumption regarding the correlation between aid worker and civilian risks may hold true in certain cases, our data has revealed some important divergences between the level of overall violence in a given environment and the incidence of attacks on aid workers. The available data shows that there is no direct correlation in the six most dangerous contexts between battle-related deaths (many of them civilian) and violence against aid workers. It is suggested here, however, that certain methods, principles and lessons in operational security can translate into and inform civilian protection efforts. Perhaps most importantly, as this study shows in Chapters 3 and 4, high insecurity for aid workers can drastically reduce the amount and quality of aid provided to civilians.

Chapter 2
Measuring insecurity: quantitative analysis of violence against civilian aid operations

This chapter presents the findings of the study's statistical survey of violence against aid workers from 1997 to 2005. The study constructed a detailed global dataset of killings, kidnappings and armed attacks against aid workers during the nine-year period. It also calculated an estimate of the 'denominator', or number of aid workers in the field, which allowed for an analysis of relative as well as absolute trends. The statistical analysis of this data has yielded the following summary findings.

2.1 Overall findings

In line with the general perception, violent incidents involving aid workers have indeed risen sharply – nearly doubled – over the past decade. However, the study found that the population of aid workers in the field also expanded significantly during that time period, with the result that the relative incidence of violence rose only by a small amount (an average of five aid worker victims per 10,000 in the field during the first half of the time period, and six in the second). In the most dangerous contexts, moreover, the overall incident rate per staff member decreased over the time period. In other words, even as incident numbers in these contexts were rising, they were being outstripped by the number of new field staff positions being deployed.

Troublingly, however, the benefit of decreased risk in these contexts appears to be accruing to international staff only. National staff, who already constitute the bulk of victims in absolute terms, face increasing relative risk from year to year in the areas with the highest number of violent incidents against aid workers (Afghanistan, Chechnya, DRC, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan), while that of international staff is declining in these contexts. The statistical analysis points overwhelmingly to the conclusion that aid work is becoming increasingly dangerous for national staff, and safer for international staff.

Another divergence in risk appears between types of institutions. UN and ICRC aid workers have in the past few years seen a decrease in major violent incidents, while NGO staffers have endured increasing numbers of these incidents in absolute, relative and proportional terms.

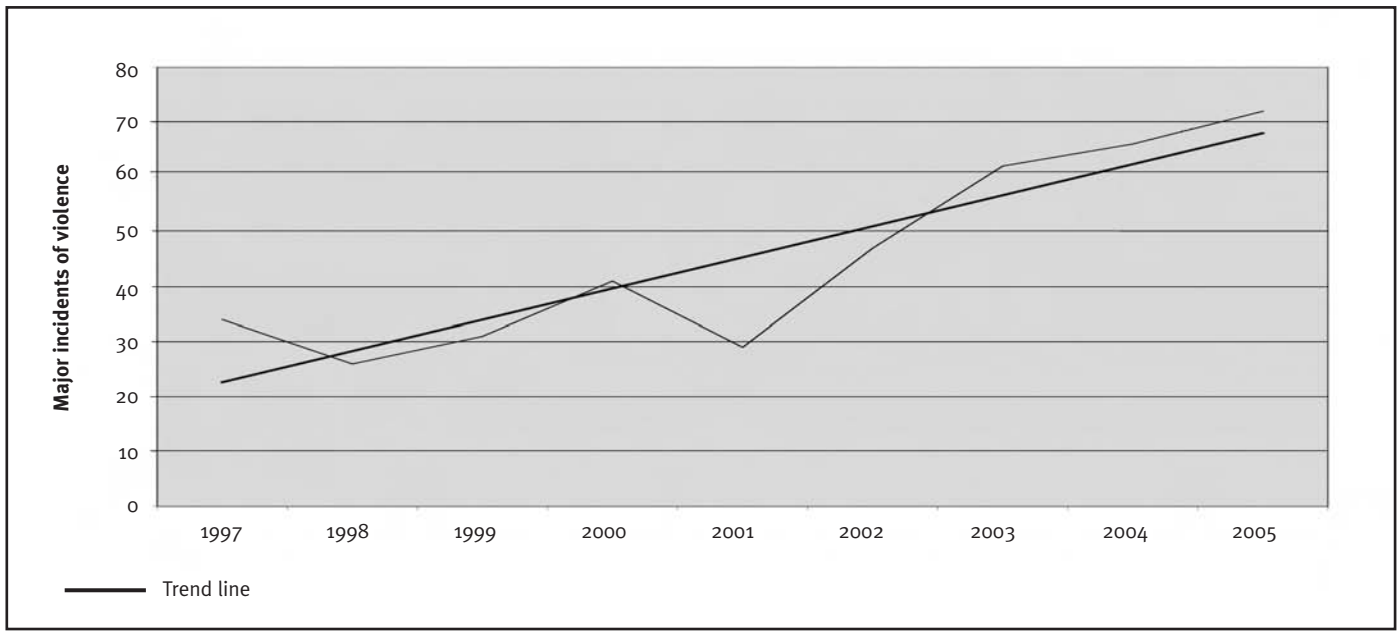
Finally, the study found that aid worker violence does not correlate with the nature or intensity of the conflict. Surprisingly, statistical regressions of the incident data show the most dangerous operational environments for aid workers are not those with the highest level of overall violence, as measured by conflict-related deaths per year. Incidents against international staff in fact show a slight increased risk in areas where there is no active conflict, and where a UN-sanctioned peacekeeping force is present, possibly indicating a sense of increased security leading to freer movement and possibly less vigilant security measures. Nonetheless, violence against aid workers is not random, but overwhelmingly directly targeted – and increasingly politically motivated. The study found that violent acts with political motivations rose during the time period, exceeding the increase in (purely) economically motivated incidents by a factor of nine.

Table 2: Yearly breakdown of incidents

Year	Total incidents	Total aid worker victims	UN	ICRC	IFRC	NGO	Donor/other	Killed	Wounded	Kidnapped	Nat'l	Int'l
1997	34	77	26	9	10	31	1	39	8	32	43	34
1998	26	69	24	26	5	14	0	36	15	18	54	15
1999	31	66	16	8	4	38	0	29	15	20	41	25
2000	41	94	31	10	0	51	2	58	25	11	74	20
2001	29	94	28	11	3	52	0	27	20	47	66	28
2002	47	88	17	7	5	58	1	38	23	25	73	15
2003	62	145	31	8	20	86	0	86	49	8	118	27
2004	66	140	18	0	11	107	4	60	55	24	109	31
2005	72	174	24	4	5	139	2	61	95	17	159	15
Totals	**408**	**947***	**215**	**83**	**63**	**576**	**10**	**434**	**305**	**202**	**737**	**210**

* The figure of 947 includes those killed in the bombing of the UN's Baghdad headquarters in August 2003, but not the estimated 150 people injured in that incident. Records are insufficient to determine the number and affiliation of the injured.

Figure 1: Trend in absolute numbers of incidents: 1997–2005



2.2 Global trends in violence against aid workers

Between 1997 and 2005 the dataset recorded 408 separate incidents of major violence against aid workers (killings, kidnappings and armed attacks resulting in serious injuries), affecting 947 individuals.

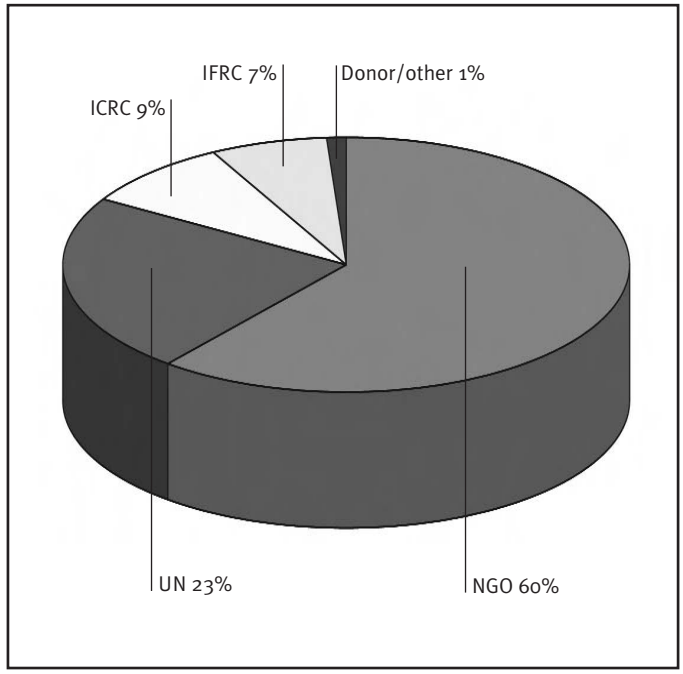
The global figures for both incidents and victims appear to show a steep upward trend during the nine-year time period in absolute terms, with a 71% increase in the number of victims and a 92% increase in average violent incidents between the first half of the period and the second.

2.2.1 Institutional affiliations of victims

Staff members of NGOs constitute the largest share of the victims of violent incidents in absolute terms, at 60%. Personnel of UN aid agencies represent the second-largest portion (23%), followed by Red Cross workers at 16% (9% ICRC staff and 7% IFRC and national Red Cross/Red Crescent society workers). The final 1% is made up of personnel attached to official donor agencies and other entities (e.g. the World Bank).

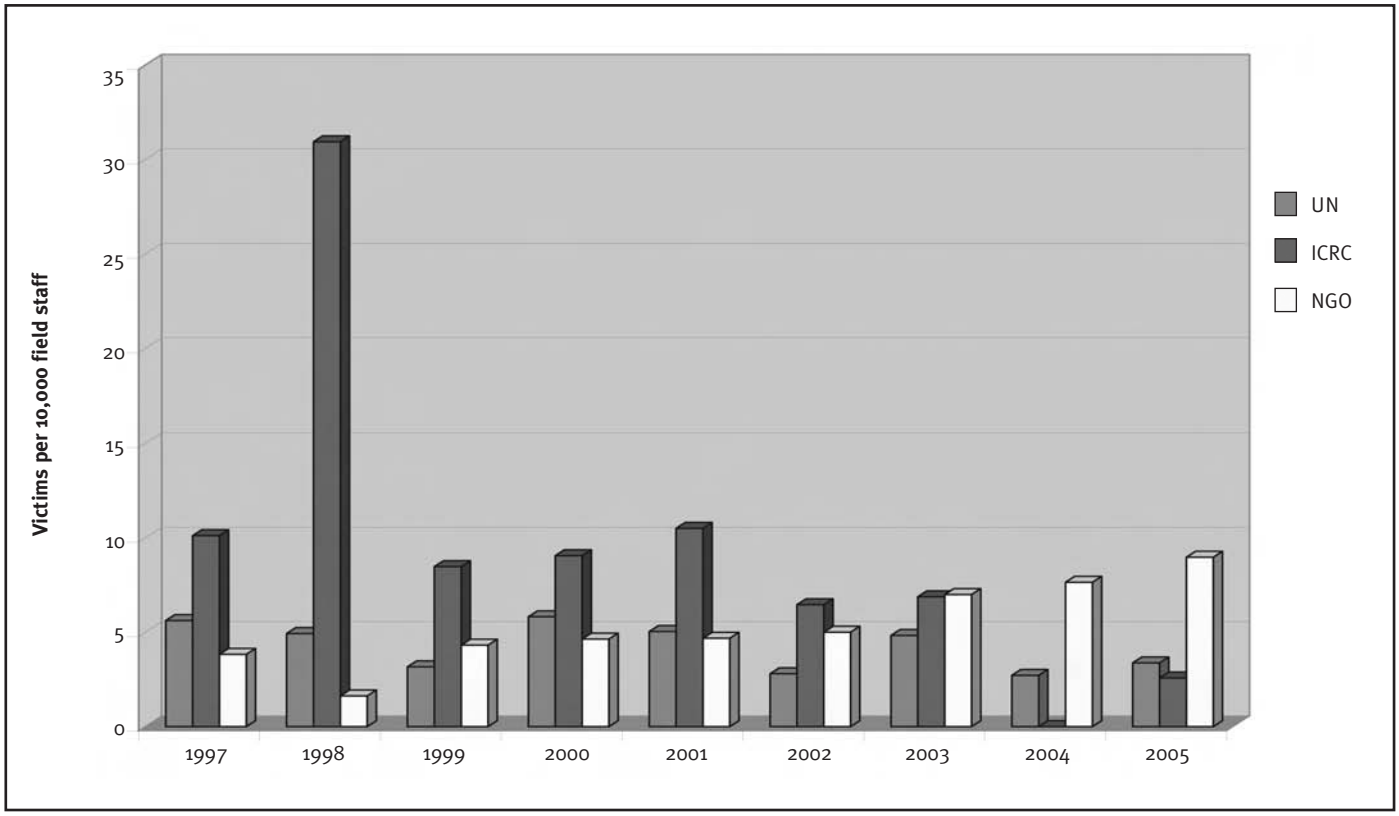
Among aid worker victims, UN and ICRC staff represented a decreasing share of total victims in absolute terms, falling by 10% and 63% respectively from 1997–2001 to 2002–2005. The share of NGO and national Red Cross and Red Crescent society worker victims, on the other hand, increased by 161% and 133%. When comparing the incidence rates between institution types, this divergence is less dramatic but still observable. While UN humanitarian and ICRC personnel once constituted the highest percentage of victims per staff member in the field, the past few years have seen a decrease in violent attacks against these groups. NGO staff, on the other hand, account for an increasing number of these incidents in absolute, relative and proportional terms.

Figure 2: Casualty percentages by institution type, 1997–2005



Possible explanations for the divergence include, in the first instance, a transition period after the bombings in Iraq in 2003, during which both the UN and the ICRC displayed a heightened conservatism and a more risk-averse approach to operations. In the case of the UN, this refers to the 17 months after the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad in August 2003, and before UNDSS was established in December 2004. The

Figure 3: Trends in casualty rates by institution, 1997–2005



ICRC also went through what some have called a period of 'hibernation', during which it held a far-reaching organisational discussion about next steps. After this transition period, agencies in the UN system displayed increased security awareness and enhanced adherence to pre-existing security protocols and policies, and this may have prevented incidents or reduced risk to UN personnel. Another factor could be the increased numbers of NGO operations in high-risk areas following the spike in humanitarian crises and funding in the past few years, including in contexts such as Darfur and Afghanistan. Finally, the shifting proportions raise the question of whether a process of 'cascading vulnerability' is at work. Many respondents interviewed for this study noted this phenomenon, whereby when one potential object of violence hardens the target by visibly increasing its protective or deterrent measures, others become more vulnerable. In certain cases, where international aid entities of all stripes may be targeted for their assets, for their perceived association with political actors or agendas, or for symbolic reasons, it is believed that cascading vulnerability has taken place.

2.2.2 Increase in fatalities

All told, a reported 434 aid workers lost their lives to violence during the period 1997–2005, closely approaching the total of UN peacekeeping troops killed in action during the same period (458).[14]

Comparisons of the data for this time period against the previous decade must be made with caution, given the widely acknowledged improvement in reporting over the past several years, but the study by Sheik et al. offers perhaps the best available baseline. Sheik tallies a total of 375 deaths between 1985 and 1998. Excluding non-humanitarian personnel (peacekeepers) and accidental deaths from Sheik's data gives a figure of 208 aid workers killed, or an average of 12 fatalities per year for the years 1985–1996.[15] In comparison, this study's data reveals an average of 48 aid workers killed each year during 1997–2005. Furthermore, fatalities show an upward trend during the time period, with the annual average rising from 38 (1997–2001) to 61 (2002–2005), or an average percentage change of 62%.

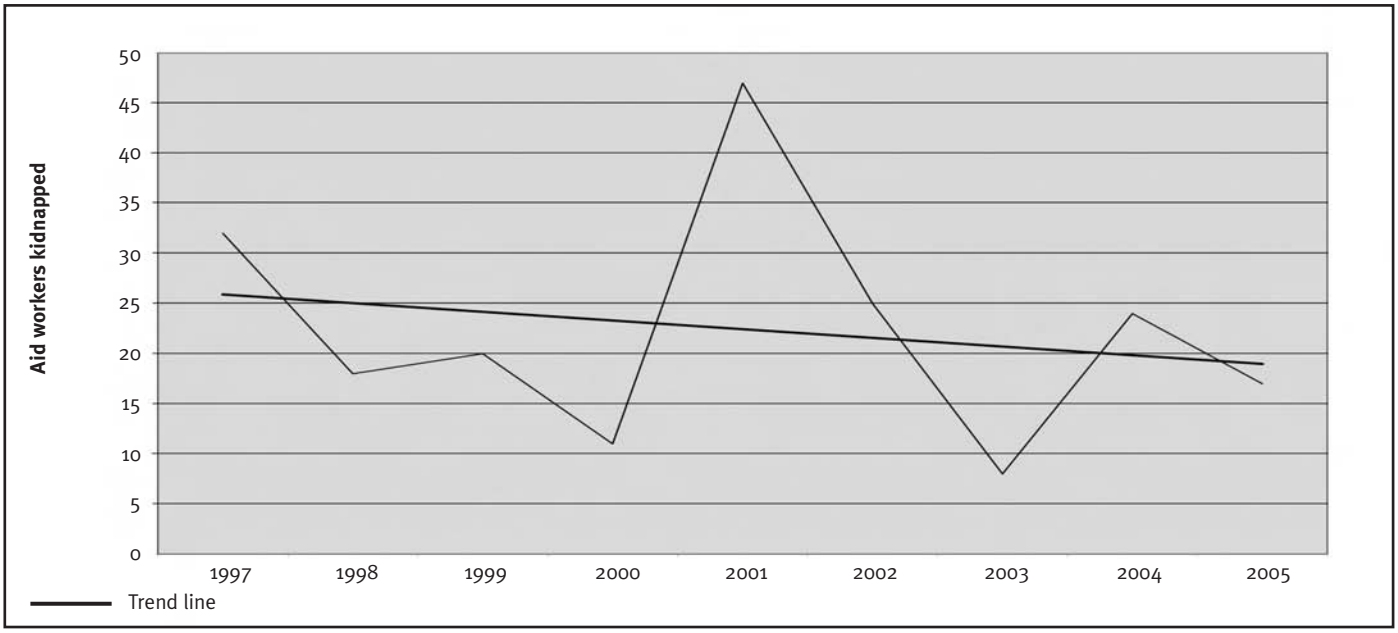
2.2.3 Increase in wounded/injured

The study also counted victims who were seriously injured by violent acts, meaning they were shot, stabbed or otherwise assaulted badly enough to require medical treatment. The number of wounded includes survivors of landmines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) (except staff of de-mining agencies killed in accidental detonations), as well as those beaten outside the context of a kidnapping. Victims who were beaten or tortured while in captivity are counted as 'kidnapped', not 'wounded'. As mentioned, rape victims – in those cases where the rape was explicitly reported – are also counted under the wounded category.

14 The number of military and military observer troops killed by malicious acts between 1997 and 2005 was provided by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (unpublished source).

15 According to Sheik, between 1985 and 1998 slightly less than 50% of all humanitarian workers killed were in UN programmes. A quarter were UN peacekeepers (Sheik et al., 2000).

Figure 4: Global trend in kidnappings, 1997–2005



Not counting the estimated 150 people injured as a result of the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, 305 aid workers were seriously hurt in deliberate violence during the time period. The smaller number of serious injuries compared with fatalities can be explained by the effectiveness of deliberate, targeted violence or, perhaps more likely, by the fact that a wounding was less likely to be reported than a fatality. According to the available data, however, serious injuries increased by 234% from the first to the second half of the time period.

2.2.4 Decrease in kidnappings/hostage-taking

The one outcome that shows a decrease from the first half of the period to the second was kidnapping. The dataset recorded kidnaps as cases where staff members were forcibly taken or detained by non-official entities and held for more than 24 hours, with the ultimate outcome being release or escape. Cases that ended in the killing of the abductee were counted as fatalities, not kidnappings. This category of incident fluctuated over the time period, with a peak in 2001 (47 individuals kidnapped), but on average appears to be on a downward trend. On average, 28% fewer non-fatal kidnappings occurred in the second half of the time period.

According to the data, the highest number of kidnappings was reported in Somalia, Sudan and the Chechnya/North Caucasus region. This form of violence appears to be favoured in certain contexts and locations. Over 80% of the kidnappings during the time period took place in just eight countries or regions, as shown in Table 3.

In sum, unlike other categories of violent outcomes, kidnappings seem to be declining globally. The 28% decrease in kidnappings from the first half of the time period to the second seems particularly striking given that the numbers of those killed increased by 62% and those wounded by 234%, even when the Baghdad bombing injuries are excluded. Overall, internationals were ten times more likely to be kidnapped as nationals.[16]

Table 3: Areas of highest aid worker abductions, 1997–2005

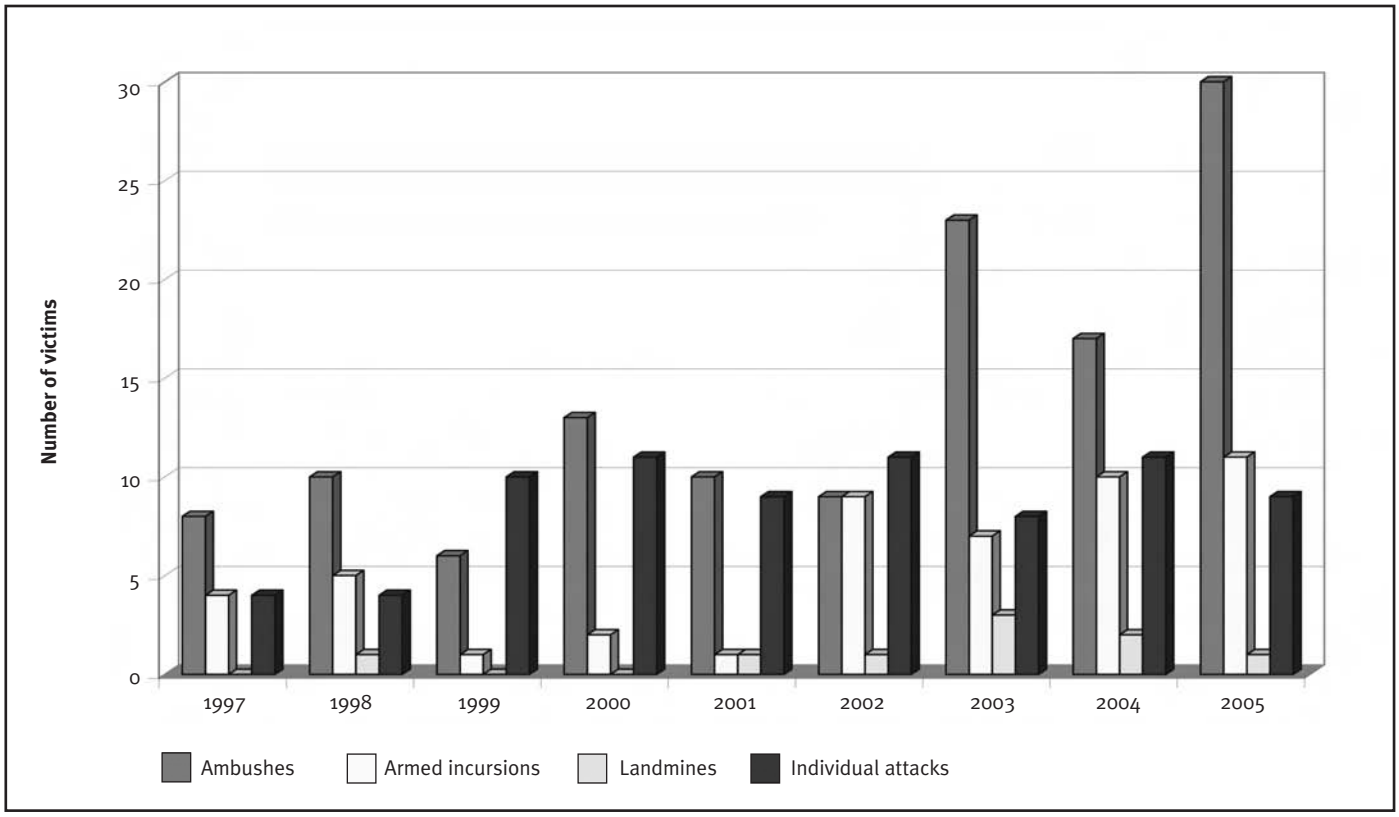
Country/region	Aid workers kidnapped	Peak years
Somalia	42	1997, 2001
Sudan	27	2004
Chechnya/ North Caucasus	25	1997, 2002
Tajikistan	22	1997, 2001
DRC	19	2001, 2005
Burundi	12	2001
Iraq	9	2004
Liberia	8	1999

2.2.5 Trends in methods/tactics

Ambushes at road blocks, firing on vehicles, banditry, car-jackings and other targeting of staff on the road remained by far the single most common means of violence against aid workers. Both the proportion of this mode of attack compared to others (44%) and its rate of increase from the first to the second half of the period (110%) indicate clearly just how exposed and vulnerable aid personnel and assets are while in transit. This was not, however, the fastest-growing method of choice among attackers. Armed incursions into organisations'

16 Excluding IFRC and national Red Cross/Red Crescent incidents (for which we do not have staffing numbers to calculate rates), the dataset records 92 kidnappings of nationals and 98 kidnappings of internationals during the time period. Measured against their average representation in the field during those years (est. 156,928 nationals and 16,847 internationals) this yields a rate of 0.6% international staff kidnappings as compared to 0.06% for national staff.

Figure 5: Trends in tactics, 1997–2005



Box 1: Defining risk and threat

In security parlance, the risk (to an individual, an aid organisation or assets) is a factor of the specific threats in the environment (for instance bandits or hostile militia groups) and one's vulnerability/exposure to those threats. Some definitions also include the cost or consequences of the potential threat as follows:

Risk = Threat x Vulnerability x Consequences

Threats are considered to be outside an agency's or individual's control, but risk can be reduced by specific behaviour (such as not travelling at night) or inputs (comprehensive training for staff or armoured vehicles) that reduce one's vulnerability.

Faced with evidence of a high or rising number of incidents per field staff member, we say that a particular institution or type of staff member is 'at risk' or is facing increasing risk. For instance, while national and international staff may face different threats in some contexts, our analysis has shown that nationals are being placed at risk, as evidenced by their incidence rates.

For further discussion of these concepts, see Van Brabant (2000) and ECHO (2004).

offices and residences, often culminating in lethal violence, grew at a greater rate than any other form of violence, by 256% from the first half of the time period to the second.

2.3 Relative rates of risk and case-specific findings

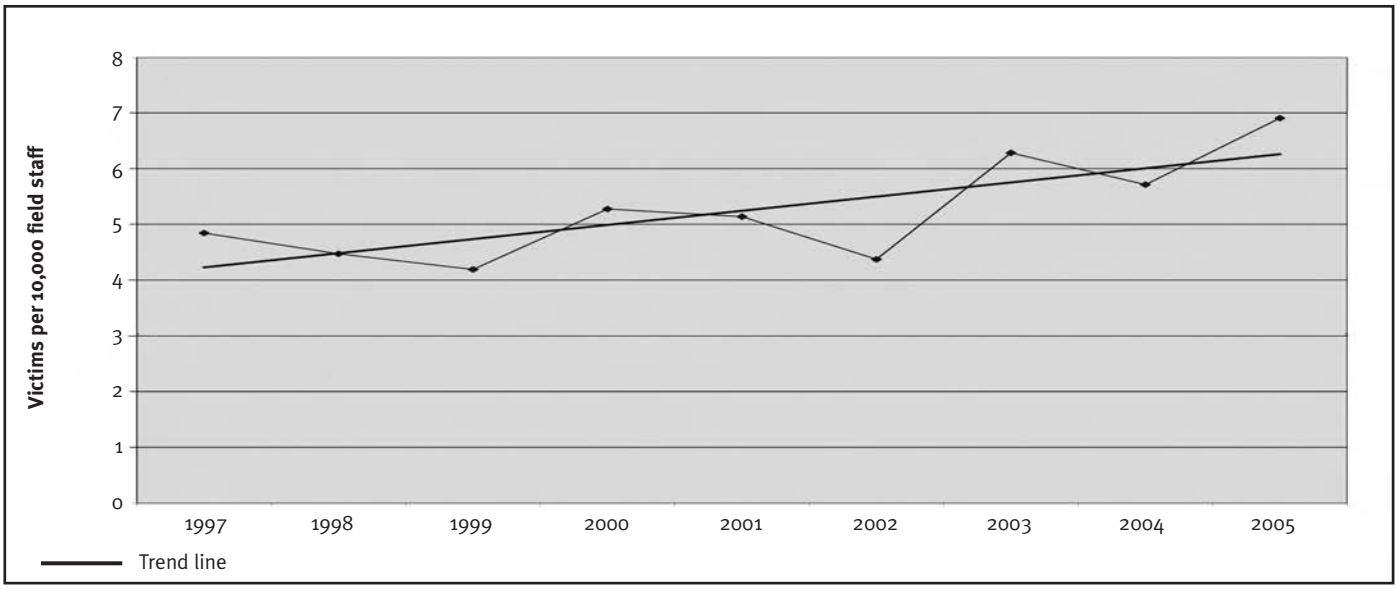
When the number of aid worker victims is compared against the number of aid workers in the field, a much more complex picture emerges. By arriving at a reasonable estimate of the aid worker population, the study was able to calculate rates of incidence, or the number of aid worker victims per 10,000 in the field, for each of the nine years. When compared against the growing number of aid workers operating in the field globally, the incidence of violence is still seen to have risen, but the increase is far less precipitous. Taking the total number of UN, ICRC and NGO victims for each year against the estimated combined field staff numbers for those institutions yields an average annual incidence rate of five victims per 10,000 aid workers in the field for the first half of the period, rising to an average of six per 10,000 in the second. This amounts to a percentage change of 22% as opposed to the near-doubling (92% change) of incidents in absolute terms.[17]

2.3.1 Estimating the global aid worker denominator

Employing the methodology described in section 1.3.1, the study arrived at a global estimate for the number of field-

17 While both the relative and absolute figures increased, and the relative figures increased much less than the absolute ones, it should be noted that neither exhibit a statistically significant rise at 95% confidence. In other words, it is possible that both increases are due to random variation each year, rather than being indicative of an actual increase over the nine-year period. Because of the wide variation in the numbers of incidents that occur year-to-year, it is particularly difficult to conclude that either the absolute or relative figures have definitively increased. However, it is clear that, from 1997 to 2005, the relative rate grew much less sharply than the absolute number of incidents.

Figure 6: Trend in overall incidence: victims per 10,000 aid workers in the field



based aid workers from the UN humanitarian agencies, the ICRC, and international NGOs as follows. These figures show a marked increase in the number of aid personnel overall, rising 77% from 1997 to 2005. More specifically, NGOs were found to have grown at 91% over the nine year period, while the UN experienced an overall growth of only 54%. This large overall increase in the number of aid workers, as well as the increase in NGOs relative to the UN, has important policy implications not just for security but for a variety of other issues related to humanitarian action.

Table 4: The estimated global aid worker denominator

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	% change
UN	46,305	48,676	50,501	53,254	55,577	60,673	64,181	66,255	71,136	54%
ICRC	8,899	8,407	9,442	11,051	10,476	10,848	11,636	12,449	15,518	74%
NGOs	81,000	86,000	88,000	110,000	111,000	116,000	123,000	140,000	155,000	91%
Total	**136,204**	**143,083**	**147,943**	**174,305**	**177,053**	**187,521**	**198,817**	**218,704**	**241,654**	**77%**

Figure 7: The estimated global aid worker denominator

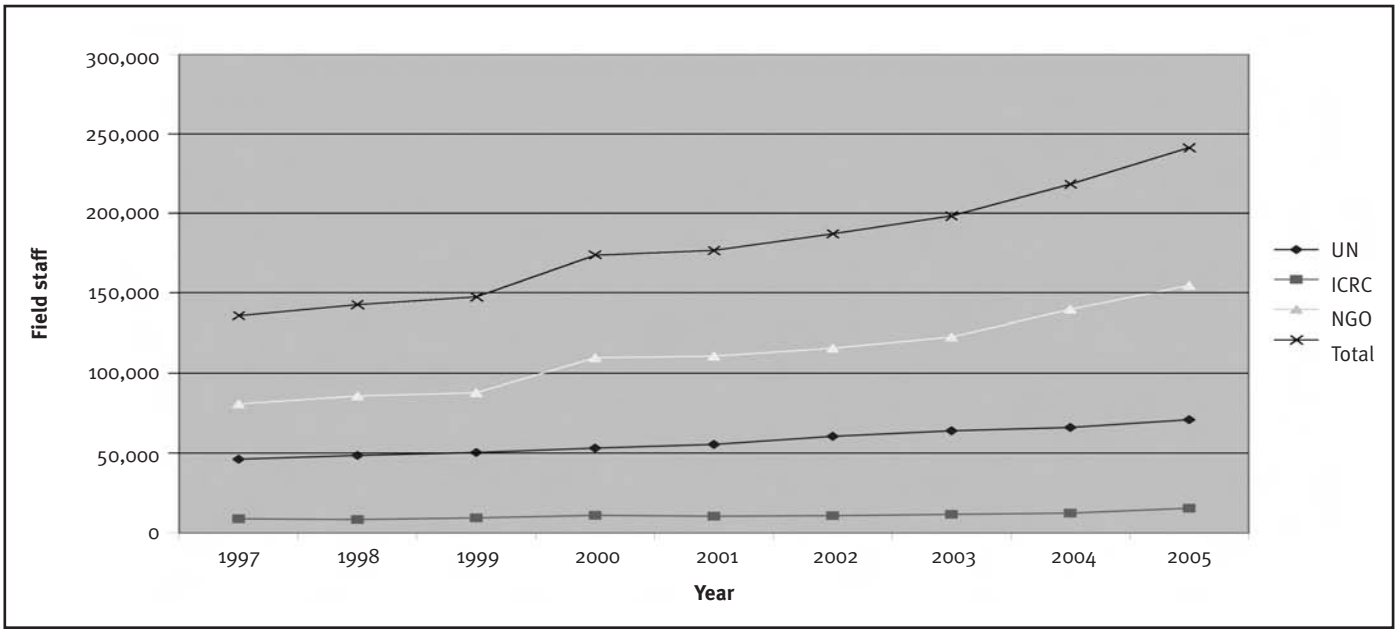
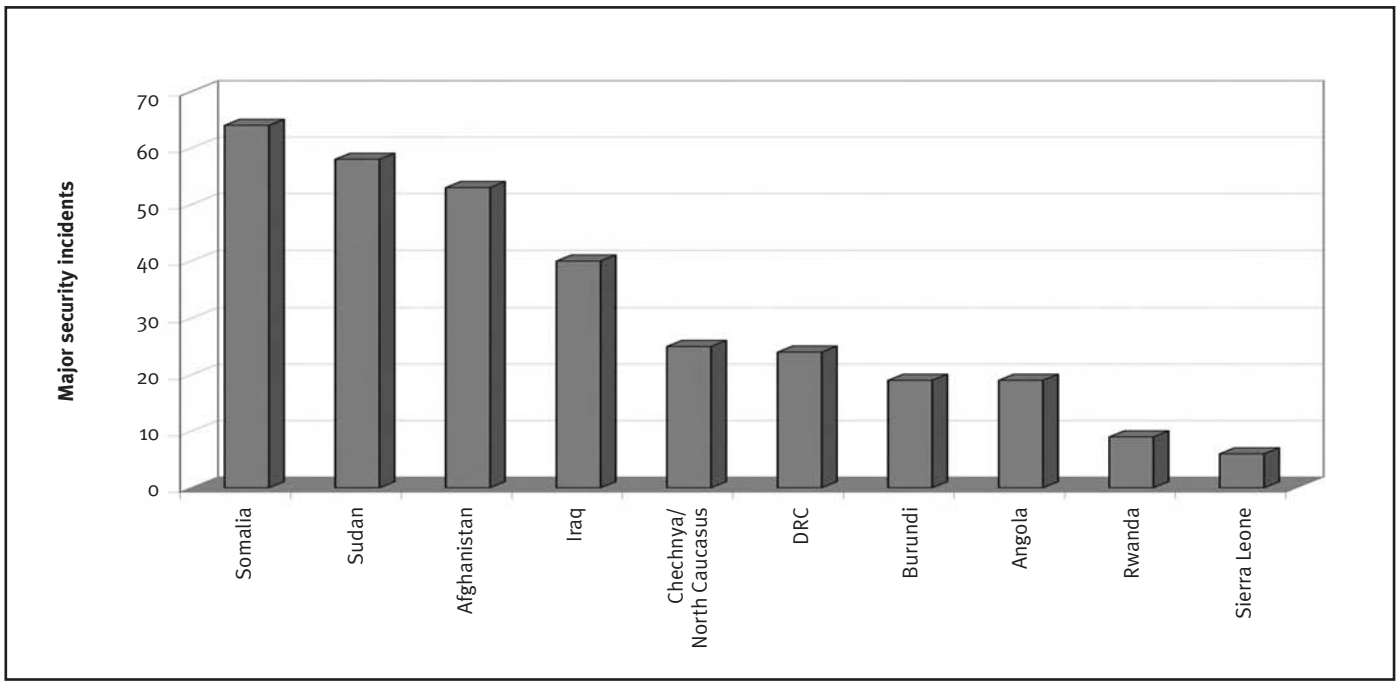


Figure 8: Countries/regions with the highest number of major security incidents, 1997–2005



It was not possible to arrive at a reasonable estimate of IFRC and national Red Cross/Red Crescent society workers; thus, when incidence rates were calculated, incidents affecting IFRC and Red Cross/Red Crescent staff members were excluded. The INGO figures have been rounded to the nearest thousand because of the process of systematic inference from budget figures that was employed, as described in section 1.3.1. Because of the approach used, it was not possible to calculate reliable confidence intervals around these point figures, but these figures should be understood as reasonable estimates, rather than precise figures.

2.3.2 The risk picture in the most insecure environments

Some observers have suspected that the two cases of Afghanistan and Iraq, which experienced a spike in incidents after 2001 and 2003 respectively, may have skewed perceptions about aid worker security globally. Indeed, when controlling for these two cases, the number of incidents worldwide is seen to fall slightly (-0.2% change from year to year). However, while Afghanistan and Iraq certainly contribute to the total rise in incidents in the second half of the time period, particularly in 2003 and 2004, they are by no means the only drivers, and similar results could have been achieved by controlling for any two other cases within the highest risk category during this time period. Somalia remains the most violent context for aid operations in terms of total number of incidents and in incidents relative to staffing numbers in the field (with the exception of Iraq 2003–2004), followed by Sudan, Afghanistan and Iraq. The other highest-incident regions or countries from 1997–2005 were Chechnya/North Caucasus, the DRC, Burundi, Angola, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

Looking at the highest-incident environments (Afghanistan, Chechnya/North Caucasus, the DRC, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan), the number of incidents per staff member actually went down each year during the time period. In other words, the total number of staff members deployed in field positions in these dangerous environments grew faster than incidents of violence against them.

2.3.3 National and international staff victims

In these six contexts, the net gain in aid worker security was enjoyed exclusively by international staff. When the data is disaggregated, one sees that the incident per staff member ratio grows for national staff, while it shrinks for internationals. The annual net percentage change in the number of international staff victims relative to the aid worker population in the field stands at –41%. This diminishing number of international staff victims (again, relative to the estimated aid worker denominator in these cases) contrasts with an annual net percentage increase of 108% for national staff victims.

Figure 10 (overleaf) shows the differing incidence rates for national and international staff. While the average rate is still higher for international staff, the national incidence rate appears to be growing, while that for internationals is stable or decreasing.

2.3.4 Contextual/political factors

The study set out to examine whether there was a causal relationship between the level of violence against aid workers and the following variables: intensity of the conflict based on the number of battle-related deaths

Figure 9: Absolute number of national and international staff victims globally

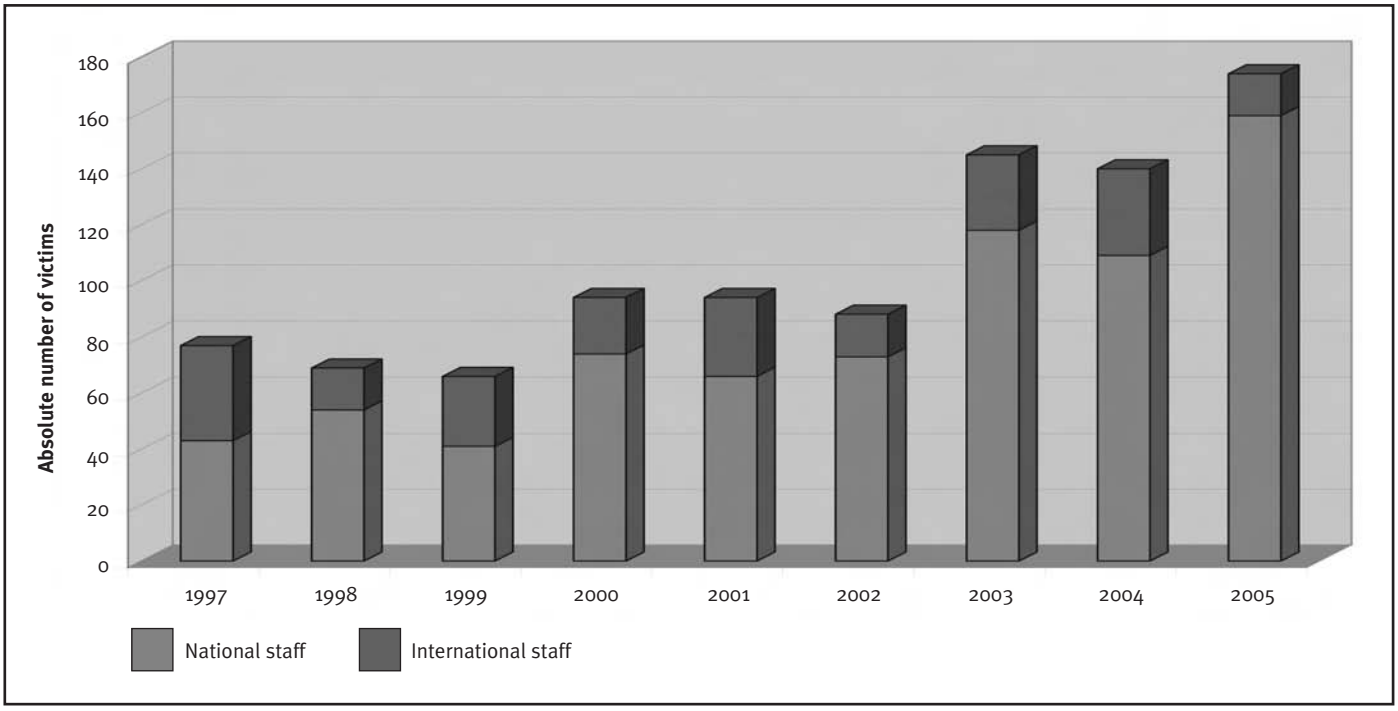
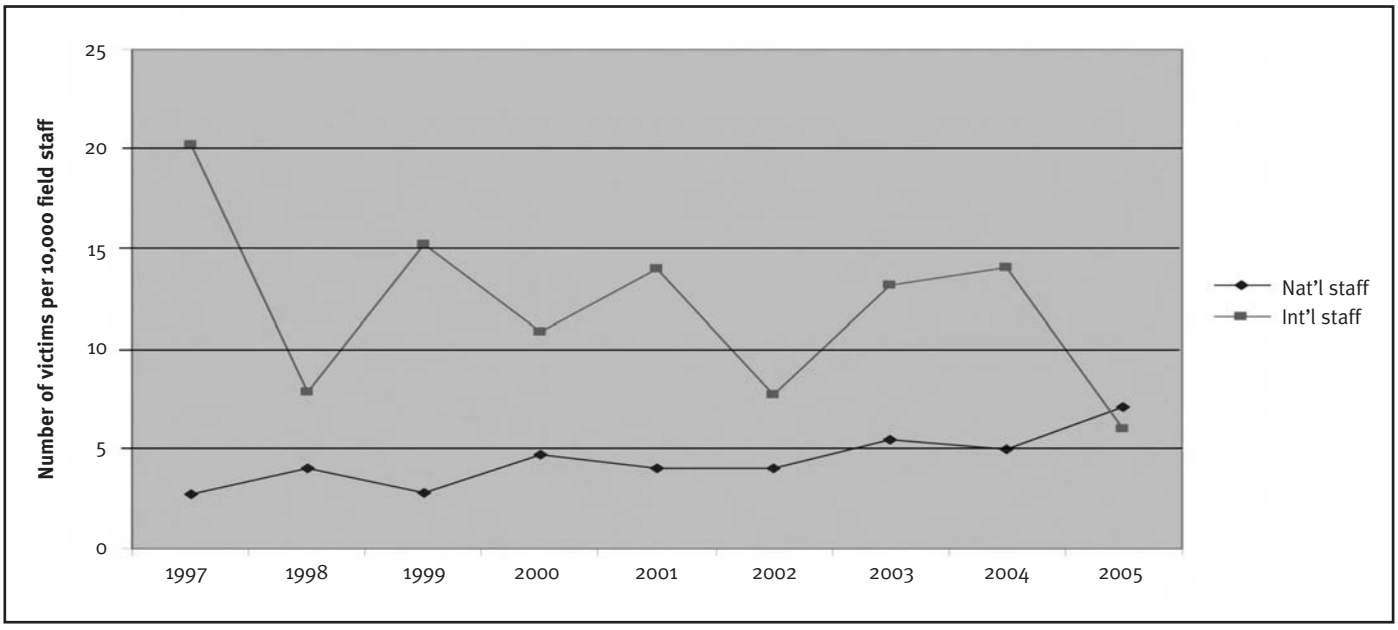


Figure 10: National and international staff victims globally relative to their presence in the field



per year;[18] and the presence of certain conflict parties or strategic approach, including UN peacekeeping forces, global terrorist movement cells, regional force intervention, a force intervention by a Security Council Permanent Member and the use by the UN of an integrated mission approach.

The incident data in the six cases was analysed in this way. When regressions were first run using country data on incidents against aid workers *without* factoring in their field staffing numbers, it appeared that one or two of the independent variables had significant correlations with

18 The project uses the measures employed by Uppsala Conflict Data Program, defined as follows: 'Battle-related deaths refer to those deaths caused by the warring parties that can be directly related to combat over the contested incompatibility. This includes traditional battlefield fighting, guerrilla activities (e.g. hit-and-run attacks/ambushes) and all kinds of bombardments of military bases, cities and villages etc. Urban warfare (bombs, explosions, and assassinations) does not resemble what happens on a battlefield, but such deaths are considered to be battle-related … Battle-related deaths, which concern direct deaths, are not the same as *war-related deaths*, which includes both direct as well as indirect deaths due to disease and starvation, criminality, or attacks deliberately directed against civilians only (one-sided violence)' (Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, 2006).

violence against aid workers. However, when the estimated percentage change of the size of the aid worker population was considered, these correlations disappeared. In fact, one of the most robust findings of the regression analysis is that these variables had no statistically significant impact on aid worker violence. It is safe to say that these variables are not important determinants of violence against humanitarian aid workers in these six cases. The one slight exception seems to be the presence of UN peacekeeping missions or UN-sanctioned peace support operations. Where this variable was present, we saw a slight, but statistically significant, *increase* in the number of international staff victims.

Several conclusions may be drawn from the above. First, a higher level of violence/intensity of conflict does not seem to correlate with higher numbers of aid workers attacked. Rather, one most likely sees a defensive reaction in these conflict environments that appears to reduce exposure and/or mitigate the threat. The fact that internationals become *more* exposed to violence when a peacekeeping or peace-support force is present (while incidents against nationals decline) is likely to stem from a feeling among international agencies that the force provides a measure of ambient security that allows them to extend their operational presence, and gives their international staff greater freedom of movement than they would otherwise have. Although the existence of this 'false sense of security' was not examined explicitly in the interviews for this study, the hypothesis seems reasonable given past experience of organisations and aid programmes clustering around peace operations, in cooperation or in parallel, and donor funding for such programmes rising following the establishment of the mission (as in Kosovo, East Timor and Darfur). A similar slight rise in international victims was seen in cases of the lowest level of conflict-related violence, which would support the same hypothesis.

Second, aid worker violence is not affected directly by the presence or absence of particular conflict parties or agendas. It may be that risk is more directly correlated with factors relating to the rule of law environment providing the backdrop to the given political and military interventions. It was not possible to determine a hard indicator of rule of law *vis-à-vis* aid worker security, but qualitative research supports the hypothesis that insecurity for aid workers increases where the responsibility for security is not centralised in a single authority (e.g. a host government, a single military actor, UNDSS), but instead is diffused and weakly coordinated.

2.4 Intentionality: assessing the relevance of victims' aid worker status

Although recognising it as by far the most slippery portion of the data analysis, the study sought to examine the intentionality behind aid worker attacks, and to measure to what extent aid workers were targeted specifically for reasons related to their mission. To do this we developed three different classifications of the relevance of the victims' aid worker status as follows:

1. Political relevance
Primary political target: aid workers were attacked with the purpose of disrupting, diverting or punishing the act of aid delivery, or the targeting of aid workers was used to send a political message, gain political leverage or sow general chaos.

Associated political target: aid workers are perceived to be aligned or equated with another party (the US, the West, the UN), and attacked for reasons of nationality or perceived participation in the other actor's agenda.

2. Economic relevance
Robbery, theft or extortion of aid worker assets were the primary motivation for major acts of violence.

3. No relevance (incidental)
Aid workers were in the proverbial 'wrong place at the wrong time' and affected by crossfire-type violence (i.e. collateral damage), landmine detonation or random attack, where the profession of the victim is unknown or irrelevant to the perpetrator.

It was not possible to assess the motivations of the perpetrators (or even to identify them) in every case. In 41% of 408 total incidents, reports either lacked sufficient detail or were ambiguous even as to those directly involved, and had to be classified as unknown. Even when the exact motives or combination of motives were unknown, however, in many cases it was clear that the victims were targeted in some way because they were aid workers. By separating these intentional acts from clearly unintentional ones – for instance, the random detonation of a landmine, fatalities from aerial bombardments that targeted whole towns, crossfire incidents and when humanitarians happened to be present at mass riots or attacks – one is left with very few truly unintentional incidents. Such random incidents number only 13% of the total of 408 incidents.

Of the incidents where a reasonable judgment as to motivations could be made based on details from the reports and perceptions of those on the scene (only 159 incidents out of the 408 total met this standard), the majority had some form of political motivations attached, and only 28% (58 incidents) were motivated exclusively by economic factors (in other words, common crime). The remaining 101 incidents, while some may have included the seizure of goods/money, also had significant political elements. This finding may seem to contradict aid workers' insistence that most of the threats they face are criminal rather than political, but it is not as counterintuitive as it may first appear. This data considers only major incidents of violence leading to grave outcomes, while the majority of economic crimes against aid workers and others – robberies, banditry, looting – can be carried out

without the need for severe violence. Within this limited set of 159 incidents, the occurrence of both direct and associated political targeting increased by 208% over the time period.

2.5 Conclusions and operational implications

Our analysis of the incident data has demonstrated that, when the aid worker denominator is factored in, the results debunk certain common perceptions and beliefs. These include that the relative risk of violence against aid workers has risen dramatically across the board, that aid worker risk increases where an integrated mission approach is used, and that US and other great power interventions or global terrorist cells have directly contributed to increased risk for aid workers.

Nonetheless, the political targeting of aid personnel is indisputably a reality, and seems to be increasing relative to economic targeting. In extremely volatile environments – Afghanistan, Iraq and Darfur, for instance – the threats facing aid workers (and other international workers) are clearly linked to overlying political contexts and processes, and are potentially exacerbated by the lack of a single locus of authority/ responsibility for the security of international actors. While it is by no means a guarantee or even a strong likelihood that operational independence will make aid agencies safer in these contexts, the perception of association with political processes clearly exists in the minds of local belligerents. Seeking not to heighten this perception is thus a legitimate concern.

On a practical level, NGOs should take note that their personnel, relative to the UN and ICRC, have become increasingly at risk of attack. This could understandably be cause for concern, especially in light of the fact that UN agencies are resisting efforts to include NGOs – the primary implementers of their programmes – in shared field and funding arrangements for security.

The most statistically significant finding overall was that, in the most insecure cases, national staff members are being placed at disproportionate risk relative to international staff. This finding potentially belies the assumption that, in many cases of insecurity, nationals face lower risks than internationals, and calls certain 'remote management' programming adaptations into question. It particularly underscores that the discrepancy between nationals and internationals in their access to training and other security-related organisational resources is increasingly unjustifiable.

The last two conclusions in particular point to a significant trend within the international aid system, which might have remained hidden without the benefit of the numerical evidence: the level of risk in highly insecure environments has been effectively (albeit unintentionally) transferred from UN agencies and international organisations to international NGOs, and from international NGOs to their national staff and local partners. The mechanics of this phenomenon become clear when one examines the background and development of security policies and practices across the aid system, and the increasing reliance on localised aid responses in highly insecure environments. These are the subjects of the next two chapters.

Chapter 3
Operational security: a comparative analysis of policy and practice

The issue of violence against civilian aid workers has gained currency in aid policy debates in recent years, both as a subset to discussions of the linkages between aid and international security, and as a practical response to the perception that aid workers are being increasingly targeted. The development of institutional mechanisms for enhancing staff security began haphazardly in the mid-1990s, and gained new momentum in the post-9/11 context, when organisations seemed suddenly to be facing new threats in uncertain operating environments. This perception, and the variety of evolving policy responses to it, has influenced operational approaches to security and aid delivery, with direct implications for the welfare of populations in need.

This chapter maps policy and operational trends in security management across the international aid system. It examines the drivers of the new professionalism in security management within humanitarian agencies and the ongoing challenges, which derive from both intra-organisational and external, political sources. It then analyses developments in policies and guidelines over the past five years, including in the critical areas of security information management and inter-agency coordination. It examines how security approaches are evolving in the field, including a shifting emphasis on certain elements of the traditional security 'triangle', and the implications of these changes. Finally, it discusses the role that states have and could potentially play in aid worker security.

3.1 Recognition and reaction: approaches to aid worker security in the 1990s

Although violent crime and collateral damage were by no means unknown to aid agencies before the 1990s, it was during that decade that an increasing number of organisations became engaged in responding to situations of violent conflict, and thus became more exposed.[19] Previously, the ICRC was virtually alone in working in active conflict zones, while other humanitarian agencies, such as the UN and international NGOs, remained largely at the periphery, working in government-held territories or in neighbouring countries where conflict-affected populations sought asylum as refugees (Duffield and Prendergast, 1994). As the Cold War thawed and the great powers began to take a more interventionist approach to addressing conflict in the developing world (Slim, 1997), official donors began supporting a more diverse range of agencies in their efforts to reach populations on all sides of a conflict. As a result, the UN and international NGOs became more prominent in conflict settings and, according to Duffield (1994), reached an 'accommodation with violence' which made them prepared to work within wars, not simply around them.

Delivering assistance in situations of ongoing conflict meant increasing security risks for humanitarian action and its practitioners. These increasing risks were perceived to be not only related to the increased direct exposure of aid workers to violent contexts, but also to stem from the emergence of new protagonists and armed groups with differing tactics and targets; the increasing identification of humanitarian action as a Western pursuit, and its manipulation by belligerents in conflict settings; a sense that the goals of humanitarian aid were becoming blurred due to the increasing range of providers; and the competing political and humanitarian agendas of the states that were funding assistance (Schmidt, 1997).

A number of high-profile security incidents in the 1990s, including the killings of UN staff in 1999 in Somalia, Burundi and Kosovo, the assassination of ICRC staff members in Burundi, Chechnya and Cambodia, and a number of incidents affecting international NGOs led some humanitarian agencies to recognise a significant gap in their thinking and practical approaches to staff security issues within their organisations. This deficit not only threatened staff, but also hampered aid efforts.

In interviews, those international NGO staffers with longer institutional memories pointed out that a serious incident would result in a surge of heightened concern and momentum, but that this would gradually dwindle, leaving no systemic change behind. In 1993, however, a group of programme staffers from a few of the largest international NGOs active in dangerous settings – CARE, World Vision, Save the Children and the IRC – established an informal experts' forum called the Security Advisory Group (SAG), which played a key role in moving the agenda forward and addressing the growing challenges of field security and training for staff. Although the community as a whole was slow to institute major organisational change,[20] the ideas that were incubated among NGOs during this period paved the way for a significant development in security thinking and approaches throughout the sector, and generated products such as the security training now run by RedR, one of the leading organisations in this area. It also informed Koenraad Van Brabant's widely influential Good Practice Review, *Operational Security Management in Violent*

19 In 1995, humanitarian agencies were responding to a total of 28 complex emergencies around the world, compared to five in 1985 (Bradbury, 1995, in Slim, 1996).

20 The one exception during this period was World Vision, which invested considerable financial resources and created a senior position charged with 'corporate security'.

Environments ('the Bible', as several international NGO security managers referred to it). By the end of the decade, a growing number of senior executives had recognised the 'costs [in lives and liability] of doing nothing', and significant reforms began to follow in some of the major organisations.[21]

In a parallel development, the UN established the first Security Coordination Office (UNSECOORD) in 1988, with 13 staff in the field and at headquarters in New York. UNSECOORD devised a UN-wide security management system, in which all agencies were obliged to follow the same basic rules and procedures. The Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) were established to provide a baseline for security in offices and residences. MOSS apply to all UN entities once a security phase has been attached to a locale.[22] According to UN agencies, however, the MOSS were more relevant for offices and activities in capitals, and did not tackle the security challenges facing humanitarian operations in the 'deep field'. For agency staff, the latter half of the decade was marked by a growing number of temporary evacuations as a response to insecurity. From 1996 to 2000, the UN fully or partially evacuated staff from more than 25 countries (Powe, 1999). Meanwhile, resources were stretched. UNSECOORD had a budget of only $600,000 in 1999 and a staff of 40 field security officers for 180-plus duty stations, with no capacity for a 24-hour emergency service.[23] Given the inadequacies of coverage, a number of UN agencies took steps to ensure that additional resources were channelled into staff security. In 1995, for example, UNICEF established an emergency operations centre in New York; in 1999, this was staffed 24 hours a day, making it available for any crisis in any time zone. For many years, this was the only 24-hour-a-day operations centre in the whole of the UN system, including the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNSECOORD. WFP allocated all of an additional $1.2m from the US government in 1999 to security measures for its 4,000 staff. These investments sought to ensure that agencies were not only MOSS-compliant, but also possessed additional security expertise in the form of in-house advisers and field liaisons. In addition to providing resources to better address their own security concerns, the larger UN aid bodies in many cases provided security resources to the wider agency community, including field security professionals, facilities and material inputs.

21 A 1996 SAG-organised conference on liability issues for NGO senior managers has been credited as the turning-point for NGO action on staff security. As one founding SAG member put it: 'Once CEOs and lawyers got involved things started happening'.

22 Security phases (which go from 1 to 5) are recommended by the in-country Designated Official. Within a country, any or all phases can be applicable to different locations at the same time. Phase 1 is precautionary, Phase 2 is restricted movement, Phase 3 signifies the departure of non-essential staff and all dependants, Phase 4 is relocation of all remaining non-vital international staff members, with activities primarily carried out through the national staff, if they are willing to do so, and Phase 5 is evacuation of all internationals, with some programming continuing through local staff. Phases 3–5 require authorisation from the Secretary-General.

23 When the security professionals employed directly by each agency were included, the total number of field experts available was about 1,000. By comparison, the US State Department employed more than 300 security professionals on behalf of its 4,500 staff abroad (Powe, 1999).

Other agencies were also taking steps to address security challenges. The ICRC, perhaps the most intrinsically vulnerable aid provider by virtue of its special mandate to work in war zones, produced its safety and security guidelines – entitled 'Staying Alive' – in 1999 (Roberts, 1999). Across the aid community, aid agencies established protocols and guidelines for field-based personnel, generally in the form of security management checklists, templates for security plans, telecoms handbooks, vehicle safety and security measures and guidelines for surviving abductions and hostage situations.

These initial endeavours notwithstanding, the aid community did not substantially construct security management systems during this period (Van Brabant, 2001). The vast majority of agencies did not institute security policies, and those that did often ended up with 'dead' documents that were not consistently updated or referred to, and were potentially dangerous by leading agencies to believe they had already 'ticked the box' as far as security was concerned. Many agency decision-makers were concerned about the costs of equipment, training and insurance, and how these would be supported. Very few agencies wrote security expenditures into operational budgets. Incident reporting, where it was undertaken at all, was weak; field staff were concerned about subsequent headquarters interference, or about the potential damage to career prospects if an incident was considered a management failure.

Common rationales for not prioritising and investing in staff security measures were that the agency in question was not in the emergency or life-saving business, that it had no record of staff fatalities due to insecurity or, more commonly, that risk was an unavoidable part of the work and there was no need for additional or new measures (Van Brabant, 2001). In cases where investments were made, resulting instruments were often inadequately implemented, and rarely took into account the needs of the growing number of locally recruited staff (Van Brabant, 2001).

For donor governments, the issue of security was not core to decision-making regarding partnerships with humanitarian agencies, or *vis-à-vis* their own staff. This was partly because such matters were deemed to fall exclusively within the responsibility of operational agencies (and agencies were loath to raise the issue with donors in case they used security-linked funding to influence where agencies deployed), and also because very few governments were deploying their own staff to high-risk contexts during this period.

3.2 Security management today: towards a new professionalism

Today, the issue of aid worker security figures much more prominently in the concerns of aid agency policymakers and practitioners. A number of factors, both external and internal to aid organisations, have contributed to this.

3.2.1 The changing security and political context for aid operations

If the revelation of the 1990s was that humanitarians were not exempt from violence by virtue of their motives, principles and 'protected status' under international law, experiences in ensuing years have led many to suspect that they may in fact be especially vulnerable for a variety of reasons beyond their control. First, conflicts are increasingly being fought by non-state armed actors, which are generally less disciplined and less inclined to respect the rules of war. The shock value of singling out for violence organisations that are present in a distinctly non-violent, welfare-oriented capacity is surely not lost on conflict parties. In a highly politicised context, an attack on the humanitarian enterprise may simply be viewed as a strike against one of the 'tools' of the enemy.

While it is far from the main source of threat against humanitarian operations, most respondents agree that the religious and political polarisation that has developed, particularly post-9/11, has added a new, global dimension to the range of threats that were once specific to individual countries or localities. The sense of rising threat has been fuelled by recent high-profile incidents, including the bombing of the UN's office in Baghdad, and sudden peaks in insecurity sparked by incidents such as the controversy over cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad that were published in a Danish newspaper in September 2005. While globally-connected terrorist cells have seemingly proliferated, as have their violent acts, there is no evidence that they have especially targeted aid workers over other civilian actors, as the data analysis bears out. In Iraq, for instance, incidents involving commercial contractors outnumber those of aid workers by about eight to one.[24] The bombing of the UN, and more particularly of the ICRC's offices in Baghdad, made clear humanitarians' status as associated political targets, but humanitarians have not been singled out to a greater degree than other international targets, although it should be noted that, by 2006, aid workers represented 'an almost negligible proportion of civilian foreigners in Iraq' (Carle and Chkam, 2006).

Perhaps unwittingly, Western donor governments have contributed to considerable security pressures on aid agencies in recent years. Aid agencies have been expected to respond to certain strategic crises, signalling an explicit expansion of the security agenda into the humanitarian enterprise. This is perhaps best exemplified in Iraq and Afghanistan, underscored by the now infamous comments from the then US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, who identified international NGOs in Afghanistan as 'force multipliers' in the war on terror. This politicised their role in these contexts, thereby exposing them to perceptions of partiality and threatening to erode the principles of neutrality and independence. US-based international NGOs in particular have felt the effects of this politicisation in terms of public perceptions and potential security risks, but so too have many non-US NGOs, as well as the ICRC and the UN. Some argue that, by incorporating humanitarian response into the strategic agenda (and the willingness on the part of some agencies to be so co-opted), the post-9/11 US-led global security campaign has had the perverse effect of making aid actors and humanitarian operations less secure. In fact, as highlighted in Chapter 2, the data analysis points to no significant statistical correlation between incidences of violence against aid workers and a force intervention by a UN Security Council Permanent Member. However, the fact that political targeting is a real and growing concern makes it a reasonable precaution for agencies to continue to stress their independence from political and military agendas.

In addition, the study found that most aid actors consider the most prevalent threats to be those they have always faced, that is, economic crime and local political strife. In cases like Somalia, DRC and to a large extent Afghanistan, field workers maintain that the principal threats are economically motivated and/or opportunistic, of the kind that thrive in a 'failed state'-type environment, where there is a culture of impunity and no centralised responsibility for security. This may well be true when considering all possible security incidents that might occur, both major and minor. For only the major violent acts that this study examines, however, the data in fact points to the opposite conclusion: that political motivations play a large and growing role in targeted attacks.

Specific institutional losses also continue to play a role in fostering a sense of threat and a momentum for change. One humanitarian international NGO, for example, recently lost five staff in just one year, all in differing contexts, bringing a wide range of security concerns to the fore.

Finally, within the international aid system, there has been a further increase in the number and diversity of actors responding to complex emergencies over the last decade. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the number of aid workers in the field has increased by over 77% from 1997 to 2005. A wide range of peacekeeping forces, political actors and private contractors are also present. The increased footprint of aid agencies reflects the significant amount of aid being channelled outside the recipient state in protracted crisis contexts (Macrae and Harmer, 2004). It also reflects a strategic shift on the part of multi-mandated agencies to increase their capacity and public profile in the relief sector. The increased range of actors and engagement in differing types of aid and relief work has contributed to a confused understanding of the distinctiveness of the goals of humanitarian action in conflict contexts, and the principles that guide the allocation of humanitarian aid. This trend has thus increased the need within aid agencies to focus more concretely on security and on how their operations are perceived (Donini et al., 2005).

24 Commercial contractors killed, wounded or kidnapped in Iraq in 2004 numbered upwards of 269, compared to 33 aid workers (US State Department, *Country Reports on Terrorism*, 2004). Commercial actors have a larger presence than aid workers, particularly after the Canal Hotel bombing, but the exact ratio is not known.

3.2.2 Intra-organisational factors in security reform

Certain internal factors within some organisations created a deep ambivalence regarding the professionalisation of security. Some managers and board members saw security and programming goals as being in direct conflict, and were fundamentally reluctant to shift attention and resources away from aiding beneficiaries and towards securing staff and assets. Others feared that, by highlighting and emphasising the potential dangers to staff in the field, they would scare away new recruits and create an overly securitised environment in their field operations.

In the end, a combination of financial imperatives and a growing awareness of the need to fulfil a 'duty of care' to staff in dangerous settings drove the development of security management structures and policies within organisations. As one example, in the mid-1990s many international NGOs awoke to the realisation that the insurance they provided for field staff did not cover 'acts of war'. A lawsuit brought by an IRC field staffer who suffered a double amputation after his vehicle hit a landmine was a cautionary tale for the entire community, and agencies began to increase their insurance coverage with additional costly polices and riders. Because most policies require evidence that the organisation maintains and follows a set of security guidelines before paying out on claims, the insurance industry was an important driver of policy in many aid organisations (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006).

Today, the majority of large international aid actors recognise that change is needed to address the challenge of operational security, and most are in the process of self-assessment, or are establishing new structures and policies. The most common problem cited throughout the community is that, while the instruments are sound, they have yet to be fully disseminated, understood and implemented, and new attitudes have yet to be adopted at the field level. Indeed, many organisations have sought to upgrade or revisit their policies primarily because documents were largely unknown within the organisation, and there had been no substantive efforts to promote these policies and use them for decision-making or training. UNHCR's 2004 review of its security policy and policy implementation, for instance, highlighted that the agency had 'failed to integrate the issue of staff security into the organisation's management practices, procedures and culture', and that it needed to promulgate a culture of security in all aspects of its operations, both at headquarters and in the field (UNHCR, 2004). Some agencies have identified specific vulnerabilities of groups within their organisations. The SAG in InterAction and a number of individual agencies have noted the weak approach to the management of national staff security and the growing need for security measures for national staff members in situations in which international staff are evacuated (InterAction, 2002). UNHCR has noted that its policy requires updating in relation to gender and the specific security needs of women (UNHCR, 2004), and a working group on the subject has been created under the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN).

It should be emphasised that the institutionalisation of security measures has taken place mainly in the 'major' agencies, that is the 20 or so largest and most ubiquitous international aid providers. The SAG participants are now actively seeking to 'broaden the audience' to include small and medium-sized agencies, which have reportedly not yet begun to take any serious steps regarding staff security.

3.3 New policy developments and evolutions in approach

Aid agencies' efforts to professionalise and institutionalise security management have included the development or upgrading of security policies and guidelines, instituting training and resourcing senior posts as security managers and advisers, and developing technical and systematic means to capture security incident information.

3.3.1 From risk avoidance to risk management: UNDSS and the goal of an 'enabling' security environment for relief work

Of all aid providers, the UN has probably experienced the most far-reaching policy transformations regarding security over the last few years. In 2000, on the basis of a sharp escalation in threats against UN personnel, staff security procedures were reviewed, and the Secretary-General announced a two-year programme to reinforce the UN's Security Management System in his report to the General Assembly, 'Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel' (A/55/494). This did not result in any significant change in approach to security management, other than encouraging each UN organisation to develop and introduce a security policy which mirrored a more generic policy statement designed at the inter-agency level (UN A/57/356, 2002). Three years later, in response to the Baghdad bombing, plans to reconfigure, strengthen and modernise the UN security apparatus were seriously addressed. The process ultimately began in early 2005 under a new department, the Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), led by an Under-Secretary-General (an elevated appointment) (UN News Service, 2004). A number of UN agencies responded to the Baghdad incident by establishing steering committees on security policy and implementation (UNHCR, 2004; OCHA, 2005; UN interviews, 2006).

With the help of over $85m in new resources allocated by the General Assembly, UNDSS is attempting to staff and modernise UN security. In particular, it has outlined a new approach to operational security, stressing that its role is to provide an 'enabling' security environment for programming, not a restrictive one, with a view to finding ways to continue operating and safeguarding personnel in some of the world's most unstable situations. This has been driven by a growing recognition by agencies that security should no longer be treated as a technical support function or add-on, which

comes into play after the humanitarian plan has been finalised (UNHCR, 2004). The key mechanism in the 'enabling' approach is the concept of *risk management* analysis and strategy. The centrepiece of the risk management framework in the field is the Security Risk Assessment (SRA). The SRA examines threats and vulnerabilities, taking as a starting point agencies' humanitarian priorities and seeks to institute the necessary security conditions, where possible, to allow programming to continue. UNDSS interviewees note that the SRA has become the fundamental element of all UN security activity, the lynchpin of the reform of the security framework and, in the words of one staffer, 'the most important document in the department'. All tools used to mitigate risk in the field – MOSS, security clearance processes, staffing levels, equipment and funding – are meant to stem from the findings of the SRA (UNDSS interviews, 2005).

The adoption of a risk management approach in the UN is, however, far from complete. Many UN agency staff and partner agencies claim that restrictions on movement and evacuation remain the principal security strategy for the UN in the field. UNDSS acknowledges that the existing MOSS and phase system are limited in flexibility and timeliness, and are particularly weak in the contexts in which humanitarian actors operate. Plans to develop a more subtle, updated mechanism which takes account of growing threats such as terrorism and integrates programming concerns have been one of the more difficult and delayed reforms UNDSS is aiming to achieve. Phasing was designed for situations of increasing internal unrest and ambient violence, with evacuation as the final option. In the post-9/11 world, with political targeting appearing to increase, it has become clear that risk cannot be managed through a process of evacuation. An evacuation plan would be of no help, for example, in dealing with the eventuality of a large truck bomb detonating without warning. Furthermore, evacuation can increase risks to staff in the longer term. When an organisation evacuates an area, even briefly, staff lose a sense of the political landscape and rapport with the host community and beneficiaries is disrupted. With a strong risk assessment mechanism, however, it ostensibly becomes possible to invest heavily in measures that will allow organisations with specific life-saving programmes to continue working, despite the risk. Resilience and continued presence in situations of risk is therefore seen as a security plus – the target has hardened. This is what banks and airlines do. The current MOSS may be a reasonable set of universal precautions while more sophisticated tools are developed, but it is a 'one size fits all' approach and does not facilitate the necessary strategic investment of assets against the particular threats that are likely in any given situation.

That the phasing system entails political sensitivities is a longstanding and familiar problem. Host governments have been known to exert serious pressure to prevent a situation from being assigned a high-security phase, which sends a negative signal to tourists and investors, and may complicate political relations and/or peace processes (UNDSS interviews, 2005). Conversely, some have accused UN aid agencies of using UNDSS, MOSS and the security phase system for ulterior purposes, for instance in cases where programme managers seek phase reductions primarily to release funds and allow for new programming (with the implication that, if anything happened, the programme would not be at fault, since the phase indicated that it was safe to operate).

The most common complaints regarding the UN security approach point to an overly restrictive mindset, not attuned to the programming needs and approach of relief work. UNDSS have been frank in acknowledging this particular shortcoming. In the words of one headquarters official:

> *UNDSS is rightly accused of being overly risk averse and bossy. The easiest way to ensure security is to stop people from going out, but this is totally unacceptable. Our ethos should be that we are here to allow staff to do more things, not less. Our job is to come up with innovative ways to do that.*

UNDSS has set itself this mandate, but as with all paradigm shifts new thinking will take time to penetrate all levels of the organisation. To be successful, all UNDSS officers in the field will need to gain a deeper understanding of the nature of aid programming in conflict settings. Field security officers, who often come from military backgrounds and suffer from a lack of training and familiarity with the role of UN aid agencies and NGOs in the field, are at the heart of much of the friction (IASMN, 2006). In addition to training, the recruitment process for field security officers could be geared more towards seeking out professionals from within the humanitarian programming sector, or those with experience of working with this community.

Others point out that the responsibility for security also lies with the operational agencies. Programme assessment, intended as the foundation of the SRA, remains agencies' weakest area, simply because many are unable to articulate their operational strategy in a country, and communicate what they need to do based on their assessment of humanitarian needs. In cases where agencies cannot be clear about their programming goals and life-saving priorities in crisis situations, an enabling security approach cannot be constructed even by the most forward-thinking security manager. Adequate programme assessment has not happened in a number of recent cases including Iraq, as agencies, flush with funding, rushed in to set up an operational presence without clear plans and priorities (UNDSS interviews, 2005).

3.3.2 From risk acceptance to risk control: refining and building on the NGO approach to security

Humanitarian and multi-mandated aid NGOs have largely tackled security reform from a different direction, focusing their energies on risk prevention and mitigation. For many

organisations this has involved a recognition that certain incidents could have been prevented or handled better, and that security awareness in the field has not been as sensitive as it needs to be. Most managers have also acknowledged that past attitudes, which treated risk as simply an unavoidable feature of aid work, needed to change. As a result, the assumption of risk has come to be seen as institutional rather than personal, and management responsibility has focused on developing more systematic and comprehensive means to enhance staff security in all aspects of programming.

MSF sections, for example, are heavily reliant on the spirit of volunteerism, and the MSF Charter reflects the individual responsibilities staff are asked to bear. Only recently has there been a greater recognition of the boundaries between individual and institutional responsibility. This has included the adoption of risk prevention strategies, including identifying the roles and responsibilities of management in ensuring staff security, comprehensive security training and a greater appreciation of the security risks inherent in each programme. Even so, MSF more than other humanitarian organisations has had difficulty in reconciling the institutionalisation of security responsibility with its core principles. Debates have arisen around whether it is ethical to restrict programme activities when a staff member has indicated that he or she is willing to assume personal risk. The question becomes whether the organisation can legitimately curtail that individual's right to take humanitarian action (MSF section interviews, 2006).

As previous literature on security management has noted, much of the business of enhancing security (and general safety) is procedural: as one respondent put it, making sure 'due diligence' on security is carried out throughout the organisation. Many security officers insist that the majority of incidents reported to them could have been prevented if the proper procedures and guidelines had been followed. For some aid agencies, this has resulted in an investment in standardising security procedures through plans and templates for risk assessments. InterAction's SAG has its own Minimum Operating Security Standards, which seek to assist members in their respective institutional approaches to security. Unlike the UN's MOSS, this is not a list of operational and material requirements corresponding to levels of security in field settings. Rather, it is an acknowledgement of the issue's critical importance to an organisation's operations and governance. InterAction's standards also outline parameters for security policies, hiring policies and personnel procedures to prepare and support staff operating in insecure environments, as well as encouraging members to operate in a collaborative manner, including participating in security fora, working with UN structures where appropriate, sharing security information and maintaining awareness of, and when possible mitigating, the negative impacts of operations on the security of other members (InterAction, 2006).

Box 2: InterAction's Minimum Operating Security Standards

Standard 1: Organizational Security Policy and Plans
InterAction members shall have policies addressing key security issues and formal plans at both field and headquarters levels to address these issues.

Standard 2: Resources to Address Security
InterAction members shall make available appropriate resources to meet these Minimum Operating Security Standards.

Standard 3: Human Resource Management
InterAction members shall implement reasonable hiring policies and personnel procedures to prepare staff to cope with the security issues at their post of assignment, support them during their service, and address post assignment issues.

Standard 4: Accountability
InterAction members shall incorporate accountability for security into their management systems at both field and headquarters levels.

Standard 5: Sense of Community
InterAction members shall work in a collaborative manner with other members of the humanitarian and development community to advance their common security interests.

Extracted from InterAction (2006).

3.3.3 Need versus risk: an evolution in thinking

Van Brabant's Good Practice Review defines all security management as essentially the practice of controlling risk or reducing it to an acceptable level. International NGOs and other international aid agencies have grappled with the question of where the threshold of 'acceptable' lies. A commonly used graphic asks managers to plot the likelihood of threats on one axis, and the severity of their consequences on the other, with an eye towards defining a 'comfort zone' in which programming may take place.

Some have countered that it is not helpful to speak of absolute risk thresholds (or the idea that staff safety is always paramount). Risk assumption must vary according to the context, and 'programme criticality' must be the key determinant. In other words, an organisation may decide that it is not worth risking staff lives to undertake educational programming or to deliver non-essential items in areas of active combat, but if an epidemic or acute famine was occurring in the same area the risk would then become acceptable.

There is something disingenuous, however, in the discussion of risk acceptance within humanitarian organisations. Despite working in some of the world's most dangerous places and

Figure 11: A typical risk threshold analysis (tolerable risk environment)

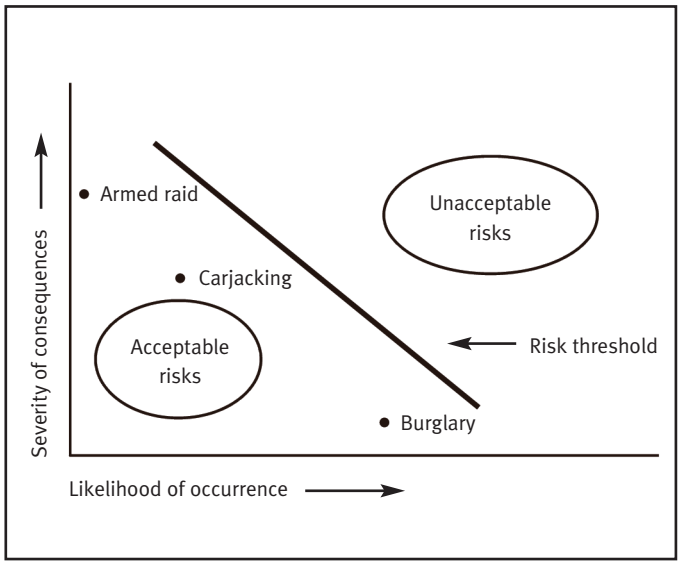
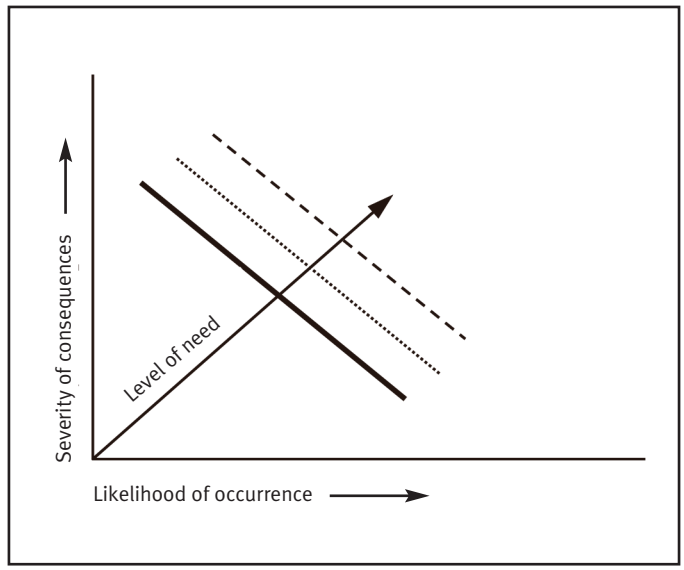


Figure 12: Adjusted risk thresholds, accounting for criticality of need



acknowledging a high level of risk, no organisation would be prepared to say openly that the loss of even one staff member would be acceptable in meeting programme goals. One report has hinted at this tension in its conclusion that 'the risk-thresholds of many agencies are not suited for the compliance of their mandates in hazardous areas' (SMI, 2005). As a UNDSS officer observed, one could not realistically broach the topic of estimating 'force depletion' rates and casualty thresholds for humanitarian organisations, as is done in military planning. However courageous, aid workers are not soldiers, and nothing in their mission or their organisational culture would allow for such a calculus. What this means in practice is that the rhetoric of risk acceptance allows for an aid intervention to be launched, but when a major violent incident occurs it often shakes the resolve of the affected organisation and the aid community at large, causing some to pull back and the overall aid effort to falter. Risk is acceptable only when hypothetical; as soon as someone is killed that risk becomes intolerable, and staff members are generally pulled out. These issues are explored further in Chapter 4.

3.3.4 New dimensions to the security 'triangle'

Changes have perhaps been most significant in the practical operational strategies agencies have adopted – or adapted – to maintain operations in insecure contexts. Traditionally, the theory of enhancing the operational security of aid workers was based on a 'security triangle' paradigm, comprising three components – protection, deterrence and acceptance – with each component emphasised to varying degrees by different types of organisation and in differing security contexts (Van Brabant, 2000). *Protection* seeks to reduce vulnerability to targeted and random attacks, by 'hardening' or reducing the visibility of the agency. *Deterrence* entails presenting a counter-threat, such as the presence of armed escorts or proximity to military forces. *Acceptance* entails the aid agency becoming a familiar and trusted entity among the host community and the beneficiary population, cultivating a network of contacts and intermediaries to maintain open lines of communication with key parties. It usually requires a long-term presence before, during and after conflict. The three components were never intended to be an either/or set of options. Rather, they were to be used mostly in combination, but with an emphasis on the 'acceptance' dimension.

Acceptance and 'assumed' acceptance

In recent years, while acceptance has remained the bedrock of the approach of NGOs and the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement to operational security, it has not been solidly understood and applied. As Van Brabant observed six years ago, 'acceptance cannot be assumed; it has to be won and actively maintained' (Van Brabant, 2000). Yet the research for this study revealed two fallacies regarding acceptance:

1) Passive or assumed acceptance – when acceptance is defined merely by the lack or absence of deterrent or protective measures. Many problems occur because NGOs 'assume acceptance' without being proactive about it. The acceptance approach in fact requires a strategy, resources and deliberate action – it cannot be treated as a default position.
2) The exceptionalist concept of acceptance – when an organisation simply reiterates humanitarian principles and proclaims its neutrality and independence from all belligerent parties. It is not enough for an aid organisation to be apart from political actors; to achieve acceptance, it must belong to the community, in other words reaching out, not standing out. Moreover, acceptance grows out of perceptions of the organisation, and is therefore dependent on individual behaviour as much as on official organisational communications (Donini et al., 2005). As the

ICRC security guidelines note, this depends on 'our ability to listen, as opposed to preaching' (Roberts, 2006).

There are many reasons for a decline in the practice of active acceptance strategies. First, many agencies have underestimated the cost of acceptance – maintaining acceptance is very costly in terms of staff time and resources. Second, acceptance is especially hard to achieve amid the highly fluid local dynamics of war and conflict. In particular, a lack of unified insurgency command in many situations has meant that negotiations with armed actors take considerable time, and agreements once secured have to be constantly reinforced. This is all the harder when agencies, particularly the UN and international NGOs, deploy staff with very little field experience and an inadequate understanding of the dimensions of the conflict setting they operate in. That it would be impossible to foster acceptance for international aid entities in post-invasion Iraq, for example, was all but a foregone conclusion. The UN in particular was perceived as political by Iraqis, seen first as the enforcer of sanctions during the years prior to the war and later as a tool of US occupation. In this light, the UN was an unsurprising choice of political target, especially given the escalating threats, both verbal and in the form of attempted incursions, that were levelled against the organisation, and which increased after the Special Representative of the Secretary-General made public appearances with the head of the Coalition Provisional Authority, L. Paul Bremer.

Even in less highly contested cases than Iraq, the UN inherently faces a more difficult relationship with acceptance approaches because of its dual nature as both a political and humanitarian body. In some cases, the presence of a UN integrated mission has resulted in many non-UN agencies stressing high visibility and branding to differentiate their mandates and goals from political and military actors (Durrant, unpublished, 2006; interviews, 2006). Empirical and policy analysis to date does not suggest that a security implication necessarily follows from association with a UN integrated mission. Evidence is also scant as to whether association with UN missions is as problematic in general as NGO opinion has suggested. Nonetheless, the acceptance strategies of some non-UN agencies have focused particularly on differentiating and distancing themselves from the UN for these reasons.

Third, some commentators have questioned whether acceptance has ceased to be a useful concept to underpin a security strategy in highly unstable environments, where there are uncertain threats and unknown adversaries. The threat of terrorism, for instance, means that aid agencies face a risk that may have an origin anywhere in the world, and as such does not fit well into an acceptance approach to security that emphasises local knowledge and analysis. As the head of emergencies in one international NGO commented: 'even if you accept the principle that all NGO strategies are independent of political influence, if you're working in an environment where NGOs are seen as a soft target – it doesn't really matter how loud you shout your principles. Acceptance just doesn't fly in these situations and you have to beef up your security apparatus' (INGO interviews, 2006). In addition, in highly contested environments strongly branded humanitarian organisations such as the ICRC can be at greater risk than NGOs simply because of their status: attacking the ICRC 'makes a bigger point' (INGO interviews, 2006).

Finally, the explosion in the number of NGOs in contexts like Iraq and Afghanistan, with a multitude of multi-mandated players, has made it difficult to carve out and/or maintain the independent identity of an individual agency. This was especially the case when agencies had no history of working in the country in question, as in Iraq. Acceptance models in these situations have focused on some basic principles, including only hiring internationals from the Middle East or Islamic countries.

Most security experts maintain that security management, and the acceptance approach in particular, must flow from a deep knowledge of the context. Factors that promote acceptance include:

- Long-term organisational presence and familiarity with the area of operation.
- Local language ability and cultural knowledge.
- Close relationships and communications with local staff.

Factors that inhibit acceptance include:

- High staff turnover.
- Projects that deal only with beneficiary groups without engaging with or making inroads into the host or wider local community.
- Divisions and poor communications between international and national staff.

Some of these challenges have been recognised and addressed. The ICRC and a number of humanitarian agencies, including ACF and several MSF sections, have reaffirmed traditional acceptance approaches. These organisations argue that acceptance is the cornerstone of reducing risk, and that if people are aware of the values of the organisation, and if the activities being undertaken are relevant to the needs of the community, this is a vital – albeit not cast-iron – guarantee of their security. These organisations have begun to invest more heavily in negotiations with armed groups regarding access to new areas. This approach has also involved paying greater attention to local social norms being sensitive to perceptions of aid workers' relative affluence or the wasteful use of resources, and ensuring transparency in programming decisions.

Increasing reliance on protection and deterrence measures

Other agencies have found it necessary to adopt protective measures more extensively than was previously their custom.

In extreme cases – Chechnya, Iraq and Afghanistan – some agencies have adopted very low-profile or even 'clandestine' modes of programming. This involves no organisational branding, the use of private cars and limited movement. In the case of Iraq, the practice in some agencies is that staff have no fixed operating address, do not use their real names and operate without knowing the identities of their colleagues. Beneficiaries are not made aware of the source of assistance. Even the ICRC had to resort to a covert approach in Iraq: 'when acceptance is low and risk is high, the clandestine approach is unfortunately necessary' (ICRC interview, 2006). This is not seen by the ICRC or others as a 'way of the future', and there is no evidence of these extreme measures being replicated in other contexts; rather, it is viewed as an exceptional and time-limited means of conducting operations. A low-visibility approach is particularly hard to maintain when financing comes from donor governments with a political interest in maintaining their visibility as a funding source. Agencies have experienced such challenges in the Middle East and South Asia.

In high-risk environments, the only alternative to the ultra-low-profile approach may be adopting its polar opposite: deterrence via military cover and armed escorts. Indeed, recent years have also seen an increase, albeit *ad hoc*, in humanitarians' reliance on deterrence mechanisms, often in the form of commercial security providers (Cockayne, 2006). This has been particularly the case in high-risk environments such as Afghanistan, but it has also been a standard mode of operations in contexts such as Somalia and Chechnya. Once adopted, it is often very difficult to go back, to lower the agency's profile or encourage acceptance because the removal of these measures automatically signals that a target has become 'softer' (Harker, 2006). As one ex-INGO Country Director noted, 'most agencies operate like turtles: they roll up in as hard a shell as possible, and keep moving' (INGO interviews, 2006).

Implications for changing operational strategies

The long-term impacts of these changing security strategies remain unclear. All three approaches – heavy protection, deterrence and covert programming – are treated by most agencies as a last resort when security risk becomes severe. However, like the evacuation option, these modalities can in fact compromise security in the long run. Once an organisation has confined its staff to a compound, taken shelter under a military security umbrella or gone underground with clandestine programming, its access to security information becomes extremely limited (Anderson, 1999). Increased isolation from beneficiaries and the host community has the dual effect of increasing programming challenges (via a decreased ability to target and monitor aid deliveries, for instance), and distancing the agency from the very sources of information that might otherwise enhance its security. A vicious circle is created whereby the security picture becomes ever cloudier, analysis and planning are made more difficult and the distrust and distance between aid providers and local communities increase. Additionally, by visibly increasing protective or deterrent measures, there is a possibility that other aid actors relying on softer security measures will become more insecure – particularly in contexts where militant movements view aid operations as opportune targets for violence.

3.4 Inter-agency security coordination

Although aid practitioners share a general understanding of the factors that have led to changes in the security context for aid operations, there is less agreement within the community that this might necessitate a more coordinated response to policy-setting, information sharing and specific operational strategies. As one interviewee noted, 'we recognise we are all in the same river, though maybe not in the same boat' (ICRC interview, 2006). In general, humanitarian actors have a peculiar relationship with each other, one which is simultaneously competitive and mutually dependent (in the sense that no agency alone can meet even a fraction of the needs in a humanitarian emergency). In security coordination, as in other aspects of humanitarian coordination, there are only two reliable motivators to drive coordination – urgent need and donor pressure. Yet even these have been insufficient to create viable security coordination structures. The key challenges that respondents identified include the sensitivity of the information being shared, as well as the possibility of local sources being compromised and their confidentiality being breached. This makes agencies cautious in their approach to security coordination.

At the headquarters level, the SAG is one of the few examples of a strong, consultative network on security issues. Since its establishment in 1993, it has assisted its diverse membership to develop capacities in security, disseminate information and new thinking and promote security initiatives. The RedR training programmes, NGO security standards and earlier initiatives to increase security measures for national staff members, for example, are all due to the efforts of the SAG membership. In the UK a more informal group of security professionals was established in late 2005. However, it is unclear whether this network will develop in the same way as the SAG.

Within the UN, the IASMN has provided a useful space for UN agencies and UNDSS (and previously UNSECOORD) to address issues of concern in inter-agency relations. It has allowed the major operational aid agencies of the UN – those most likely to find themselves in insecure environments – to assert their concerns and priorities. The IASMN has also served as a sounding board for tensions among agencies, and between agencies and UNDSS, and as such has illustrated the considerable coordination challenges that remain. A case in point is the disconnect between agency desires to see UNDSS become more responsive to the needs, capacity and resources of individual agencies, and UNDSS' tendency to prioritise uniformity and standard approaches (UN interviews, 2006). Being an intra-UN body, the IASMN does not engage NGOs in

security dialogue – a serious deficiency in terms of operational security, since most UN agencies rely heavily on NGOs to implement their programmes on the ground. In fact, there has been marked resistance among UN agencies to engage NGOs in the consultation process around security financing.

Relations between the UN and international NGOs are more fraught. In 2001, the IASC, in close collaboration with what was then UNSECOORD, established a Menu of Options for security collaboration between the UN, NGOs and inter-governmental organisations. The Menu of Options was a list of potential risk-mitigating strategies to improve the collective security of the humanitarian community. It was, however, ineffective due to resource constraints, diverse approaches to security, the indiscreet use of sensitive information, priorities and time constraints, and a clash of personalities between key actors, resulting in a lack of trust and understanding of respective mandates and mission goals. There was also a significant lack of knowledge of the Menu in the field. There were some examples of implementation, but these appeared to be limited to situations of extreme insecurity. Furthermore, there was no evidence that lessons learned were shared or adopted routinely as good practice. Nonetheless, the IASC Task Force on Collaborative Approaches to Security, established in 2004, decided that the Menu of Options still provided a framework for improving security collaboration between humanitarian actors in the field and, as such, should be relaunched. In 2006, it was updated, revised and renamed (it is now called *Saving Lives Together: A Framework for Improving Security Arrangements Among IGOs, NGOs and UN in the Field*, to better reflect its purpose and intent) (IASMN, 2006).

Despite the re-launch and the newly re-titled framework, the UNDSS is unlikely to be able to provide a security umbrella to a wide range of operational partners in the near future. UNDSS still suffers from considerable distrust among international NGOs, both in terms of capability and intent (INGO interviews, 2006). A change in perceptions will be based on performance in the field which, as UNDSS acknowledges, is an area of weakness at present. International NGOs have often been frustrated at the lack of openness on the part of UNDSS field staff, and examples where the UNDSS–NGO relationship has worked well are usually put down to individual personalities. UNDSS counters that international NGOs seem to want it both ways: they frequently rely on UN security structures and inputs, but resist any formal coordination. Most of those interviewed for this study, on each side, expressed cautious optimism about future relations.

Coordination and information-sharing among NGOs in the field remains for the most part informal, and varies across countries and emergencies. There has been some progress through the establishment of coordination bodies such as the Afghanistan Non Governmental Organisation Safety Office (ANSO) in Kabul, the NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq (NCCI), the Centre de Communication (CDC) in eastern Congo and the Joint Security Network in Haiti. However, these have primarily acted as storage centres for security incident information, not as security policy or programming coordination entities. The ongoing discussions over a coordination mechanism in Darfur perhaps best illustrate the challenges facing field security coordination for NGOs. The key difficulty has been finding an agency with the willingness and staff capacity to spearhead the initiative, as well as concerns around how the entity would be perceived by the authorities. These challenges have resulted in two years of protracted discussions, despite the fact that resources are available from a number of donor governments. ECHO's forthcoming (2006) guide to security collaboration in the field is being designed in part to examine these challenges, and to offer practical guidance to NGOs on establishing security collaboration mechanisms and apparatuses in the field. It is unclear, however, whether at a practical level many of the issues that hinder closer cooperation can be addressed through this initiative.

3.5 The critical role of security information mechanisms

Without exception, this study found, both in interviews and in the six case-studies, that the lack of strong incident recording has created a major impediment in the conduct of security analysis. When an incident record was available in any given country going back for a year or more, this was generally due to an individual's personal initiative rather than any system of standard practice. Institutional memories tend to be short in settings with high staff turnover, and the study found that even some major violent incidents in the recent past were unknown to current field staff. The value placed on reporting security incidents has increased in the last few years, and there has been significant investment in software to report, collect and share incident information at a central level. Three examples are the UN Security Incident Reporting Service (SIRS) initiative, the World Vision-led Virtual Research Associates (VRA) system and the CARE-developed SIMS.

Before the UN SIRS initiative began in 2003, there was no uniform, standardised way of reporting security incidents in the UN. This meant that there was no way of rapidly accessing information and identifying trends. All reports went into paper files, where they mostly remained. SIRS provides incident reporting templates for field security officers to enter incident details according to preset parameters and definitions. This latter aspect has proven unexpectedly difficult, as interpretations and descriptions of incidents vary widely. For that reason, SIRS has taken longer to establish than hoped, and it is expected to be some time before it is directly accessible by UN agency security focal points. In addition, it is not clear how extensively NGO incidents will be included in the SIRS database, if at all. At the moment, it is planned only to include incidents involving international NGOs under direct contract with the UN (i.e. implementing partners). This would limit the system's capacity to comprehensively track and spot trends and to do forecasting – which is the ultimate goal of the SIRS mechanism. OCHA is also in the early stages of

developing a process to capture and analyse information from UN field staff under the 'Protection of Civilians' mandate, a subset of which concerns the safety and security of aid personnel (OCHA, 2006).

World Vision's VRA system is a web-based interactive reporting platform that can be used by any NGO. Similar software products have been developed by the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (the Operational Activity Security Information System (OASIS)) and by the Crisis Management Initiative (the Safety Information Reporting Service (SIRS)) (VVAF, 2006; CMI, 2005). At the time of writing, both projects were still in the very early stages of development.

Unlike the dataset in this report, the majority of these systems have no backdated incident data, and most started collation only in the last year or so. All have struggled to get consistent data input from the field, and acknowledge that more investment in training field staff on standard ways to report incidents would be valuable. Thus, while to date the new systems show promise independently, it is not clear that they will be able to communicate with each other and share data. Another critical concern is the lack of analysis of trends and assessments of the strategic implications of the incident data. As one field consultant noted, 'reports are often a mere collection of security events' (Carle and Chakm, 2006). Both these factors may be addressed over time, but both require a change in organisational culture and a willingness at the inter-agency level to cooperate and share basic security information; this has proved very difficult.

Box 3: Lessons from crime tracking?

It may prove helpful to ask where lessons may be drawn from other fields. During the 1980s, police departments in the US began to centralise their crime statistics on computerised tracking systems such as CompStat. This approach to incident mapping has been credited with dramatically reducing crime in New York and elsewhere (Smith and Bratton, 2001). Its three main principles are:

- getting the complete picture: understanding the type and source of threats through a centralised statistical analysis/mapping of incidents;
- based on this analysis, strategically allocating resources to high-need areas; and
- accountability of area commanders for reducing incident numbers in their purview.

In a policing context, reducing incident numbers would arguably (though not necessarily) rely mainly on a deterrence approach, in other words putting more officers on the street in places where crime is higher. This may have limited application in the humanitarian context, but the basic principles could still apply. Getting the picture would be a good start. A strategic allocation of security resources could involve protective measures, but could also pinpoint the need for more community outreach and negotiation in certain areas. The third principle, accountability, is a more difficult issue, and needs to be addressed within a wider policy framework.

Inter-agency reporting mechanisms have also been developed specifically for the field. ANSO in Afghanistan is one of the first independent bodies that focuses exclusively on NGO security. However, it has been criticised for being simply a data focal point, rather than a more analytical unit with the capacity to examine trends and inform agencies in a more comprehensive and strategic manner. In Iraq, security reports have become highly militarised and agencies suffer not from their absence, but from their abundance. The risk in Iraq is that agencies rely almost exclusively on the security reports they receive from international sources, and have limited local information. Low-profile strategies have also hindered the exchange of information, as has a lack of trust among agencies and between agencies and other actors.

Overall, while there is an acknowledged need for better incident data reporting and analysis, incident tracking across the aid community is still very weak – many organisations have no systematic way of collating data and tracing trends, and those that have invested in this area have found that this investment often does not facilitate analysis. The work is time-consuming and may not be the best use of scarce resources. Many incident reports are little more than cumbersome chronologies of disparate events. The resulting product often takes too long to read, let alone analyse and draw conclusions from – a task that is left to the reader. Furthermore, the raw incident information, presented without nuance or gradation, can create skewed impressions of the actual risk environment.

Many of the problems in sharing information and developing accurate incident records are also present in general security coordination, as noted above. While admitting that information sharing is vital to security, some organisations have been reluctant to participate in field security networks because, in the past, there were occasions when 'information shared in collaborative forums has turned up in the press' (IASMN, 2006). Other concerns include personnel and litigation/liability issues, and a reluctance to portray the organisation in a negative light. However, given that security for the entire community stands to benefit from a complete, shared knowledge of incidents more than any individual agency stands to lose, it would seem imperative that ways to share information – sanitised of certain details that might prove sensitive – should be pursued. The goal of individual organisations and the community as a whole should be better security management through better reporting and analysis. This is not just a technical fix: it requires a cultural shift in the way senior managers think about security issues in aid programming.

3.6 Accountability issues in security

Another key finding from Harvard's Security Management Initiative project (2005) was that 'accountability frameworks and command structures are generally not suited to operations in hazardous areas requiring adequate crisis management capacities'. The question of accountability in humanitarian security raises the concern that humanitarian access will be unduly impeded if managers take an overly conservative approach in the belief that they will be blamed for security incidents that occur within their area of responsibility. Nonetheless, it is widely agreed that accountability is key to creating and enhancing field security, and methods have been found to institute accountability systems.

UNHCR stresses the concept of due diligence as a critical feature of an accountability system. In such an approach, responsible parties need not answer for any and all security incidents, but instead must show that all reasonable security precautions and protective measures were taken before, during and after the incident. CARE has a policy of appointing mainly national staff to act as security focal points in charge of incident reporting, dissemination and follow-up. These focal points work under the staff member responsible for security, and they are not accountable for security implementation and outcomes. Hence they have no incentive to hold back, downplay or otherwise reinterpret security incidents. (The fact that national staff turnover is lower and national staff have a better feel for the local context is an additional major benefit.)

3.7 National staff issues

Despite the critical role national staff have come to play in security management, their security needs do not figure highly in agencies' security policies, nor do they attract significant management attention. One of the key findings from Harvard's Security Management Initiative project was that 'security training is generally not made available to nationally recruited staff' (SMI, 2005). Our case study conclusions strongly support this view. In Chechnya, for example, it was found that 'security and awareness training, when it takes place, is almost exclusively directed at internationals first, and national management/coordination staff second. Security and awareness training rapidly diminishes to zero outside of management/coordination staff' (Harker, 2006). This is despite the fact that national and local staff in highly insecure contexts experience a significantly greater share of incidents than international staff, as outlined in Chapter 2. In the DRC, for example, the study found that the majority of incidents affect national staff, but the majority of security procedures and most training focus on international staff. Financial and procedural inputs for national staff were found to be 'underdeveloped and of low priority' (Durrant, unpublished, 2006).

Organisational culture may foster a separation between national and international staff. Further problems may stem from language barriers or an abiding distrust of engaging openly with nationals – either for fear of what might happen to the national staffer as a result, or more usually because of concerns that he or she will pass the information to local belligerents and place the agency at risk. The results of this segregation are that local staff are not fully used as a security resource, or as transmitters of the agency's message to the local population – a key tool of building acceptance (interviews, 2006).

InterAction's SAG forum took up the issue of national staff in 2001, and drafted a series of 'Essential Steps'. These called on agencies to:

- increase the involvement of national staff in the formation and implementation of security policies and plans;
- identify threats to national staff, then reduce their vulnerability to these threats;
- establish clarity on security procedures and benefits, especially with regard to evacuation and relocation options; and
- include national staff in preparedness, training and human resource management procedures.

These issues are explored in more detail in Chapter 4.

3.8 Financing security and the role of donor governments

The costs of investment in security have always been weighed against programming costs, and security has often been the first to go when budget cuts are called for. Many agencies argue that this has been at the behest of donors. However, in contrast to earlier years, there is greater consensus today around the need to dedicate resources to security. The major government donors, in particular ECHO, USAID and DFID, have signalled that they will support the costs of security measures. However, challenges remain.

In the case of the UN, donors have questioned the need to maintain funding for the individual security arrangements of UN agencies in light of the increased costs being incurred by the centralised UN security function. Not surprisingly, donors do not want to be funding what are seen to be duplicate systems. UNHCR warrants special mention in this regard. Beginning in the 1990s in Bosnia, the agency has been at the forefront of the UN presence in highly volatile environments, and for this reason has had to develop its own security systems in parallel to – and in advance of – the rest of the UN system. UNHCR states that its security system was designed to be decentralised and field-based (with no security focal point in capitals), and deals with issues unique to the agency. This makes it complementary to UNDSS, not redundant to it. Agencies have also raised concerns that the increasing costs

Box 4: Innovations in financing security measures

- Some UN agencies, notable UNHCR and WHO, have supported the training costs of international NGO security posts, in return for additional standby capacity.
- UNHCR has regional security budgets which serve as a contingency reserve for responding to new situations of insecurity.
- CARE builds security funding into project budgets as a percentage benefit per staff member.
- Mercy Corps International typically puts an extra two percent on expatriates' salary lines, spreading the cost of security funding.

they must shoulder for a centralised system do not necessarily bring the required operational value. WHO's contribution to UNDSS, for example, has increased by 148% since 2002. In a broader cost analysis, WFP has doubled its security investment every two years in the past six (UN interviews, 2006). Insurance costs have also dramatically increased – for UN agencies they have more than tripled since 2002 (WHO interview, 2006).[25] According to one UN agency, UNDSS offers an administrative service, but only very rarely supports agency teams by deploying security personnel to assist missions. Instead, its staff are based in capitals, in Phase 1 and 2 contexts.

Very little of the extra security funding within the UN has resulted in extra security budget lines for the UN's NGO implementing partners. The major donors have financed joint training initiatives for international NGOs, and some support has been provided to coordinated security management in the field. However, this has not been a core priority for NGOs.

Donors with strong programming ties to international NGOs, and donors that have developed a strong field presence themselves over the last decade, have also become more sensitive to issues of security, both for their partners and for their own staff. ECHO and USAID/OFDA have been among the most active in this context. With a large and diverse group of non-NGO partners, and an increasing number of staff deployed to the field for assessment and auditing, ECHO started to examine security issues in late 2003. It supports partners on 'hard' and 'soft' security, including training and advocacy.[26] OFDA provided all the funding for InterAction's SAG initiative to develop a security training curriculum and pilot courses, and continues to support security management training through RedR (Rogers, 2001).

25 Through the Malicious Act Insurance Policy, the premium increased from $200,000 to $1m (based on the number of staff in the field) (WHO interview, 2006).

26 ECHO's 2004 security review, the *Report on Security of Humanitarian Personnel: Standards and practices for the Security of Humanitarian Personnel and Advocacy for Humanitarian Space* was published in Spanish, French, English and Arabic. Security has been promoted to the level of ECHO's six key work areas in recent years.

USAID's approach to operational security must be seen against the backdrop of the US government's hardening security profile overseas. Former USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios has reflected on the contradiction between the trend to make 'fortresses' out of US embassies and offices in foreign countries, and the recognised need to reach out to local populations. 'Victory in the war against terror will not be achieved because we have adequately protected our embassies and our AID missions and their employees', he wrote in 2006. 'The victory we seek requires communicating ideas, values, and world views' (Natsios, 2006). A cynical interpretation of US behaviour might conclude that, while government entities have been increasingly bunkerised, the non-governmental aid providers that bear the USAID brand have been tasked with spreading 'American values' through their aid programming – and at their peril. As touched on above, a conspicuous disconnect has appeared between the US government's support for aid agency security and its use of aid to win hearts and minds. USAID policies that emphasise branding and visibility in contexts such as Afghanistan are considered life-threatening by many agencies receiving USAID funding. However, the agency can apply a branding 'waiver' to aid providers on the ground.

The research for this study found two opposing views on the issue of security financing. Donors typically state that funding has been made available to enable implementing partners to meet security costs; all international NGOs need to do is include security measures in their project budgets. OFDA has gone a step further, with grant guidelines that require international NGOs to note their security measures in their proposals. On the other side, international NGOs insist that available funding is still inadequate to meet security needs. Some managers complain that donors do not seem to realise that security costs go beyond radios and lead floor mats. In situations of high insecurity all programme costs go up. This might be dealt with more effectively if the UN's annual consolidated appeals better accounted for and reflected the security costs of the relief effort as a percentage cost.

Finally, despite common concerns regarding access, protection of staff and adequate resourcing, donors do not have an inter-governmental mechanism to coordinate specifically on issues of security policy. A shared understanding and coordinated funding policy on security needs among donors would mitigate much of the confusion and perceptions of competitiveness among international NGOs.

3.9 International frameworks and responsibilities of states

The issue of governmental responsibility for aid worker security is, of course, much broader than the monetary support donor governments provide. Responsibility for aid worker security primarily lies with the host state. In contexts of war, this protection is enshrined in the Geneva Conventions

Box 5: Key conventions, frameworks and resolutions on aid worker security

- Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (1994).
- Security Council Presidential Statement on the Protection of UN Personnel in Conflict Zones (2000).
- Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel – Report of the Secretary-General (October 2000).
- Security Council Resolution 1502, which condemned all forms of violence against those participating in humanitarian operations and urged states to ensure that crimes against such personnel did not go unpunished (2003).[27]
- General Assembly Resolution 59/211 on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and the protection of UN personnel (2004).
- General Assembly Optional Protocol 60/123 (2006).

27 The resolution creates no new laws, but reaffirms the existing obligations of all parties involved in armed conflict under existing international law. It does not mention the International Criminal Court or the Rome Statute.

and the principles of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). States have a duty to disseminate IHL, train military and other personnel to apply them and deal with individuals suspected of violations.

A number of key conventions and frameworks have evolved since the establishment of the Geneva Conventions which have sought to outline the security situation for aid workers and the responsibilities of states in providing adequate protection to all civilians (see Box 5). These have been primarily driven through the UN. However, it is only recently that there has been a concerted attempt to engage member states on the issue of impunity and on the responsibilities for security outlined in international frameworks. UNDSS has developed a programme of work to sensitise member states to security issues, particularly through the mechanism of the Host Country Agreement. The G77 group of states and China have noted that the guidance host countries are provided regarding their responsibilities remains inadequately defined (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006; G77 statement, 2003).

A number of difficulties face host states in ensuring the safety of aid workers. There are clear challenges where there is no – or limited – state capacity to ensure access and make facilities available. This is particularly the case when resources for the armed forces and police are limited, officers are poorly trained, salaries are low, corruption is high and there are factionalised groups within the law enforcement service (Middlebrook and Sedra, 2005). An accountable and effective judicial system is also often lacking in such contexts. The lack of law enforcement and accountability reinforces a general perception of lawlessness and impunity which increases the vulnerability of all civilians, including aid workers. In the DRC, for example, some argue that a weak state and inadequate security structures is the biggest single contributor to causes of insecurity for humanitarian workers (IRIN, 2006b). There are also contexts in which, irrespective of capacity, there is a reluctance to dedicate military or police resources to provide for aid workers' security. This poses an equal if not greater threat to field operations.

Our data suggests that an international military presence can result in both positive and negative security impacts. In Afghanistan since 2002, for example, two international military forces have been present: the US-led Coalition and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).[28] Lack of coordination between these two forces has thwarted efforts to improve overall security in the country and to hold warlords accountable, and has led to a reliance on local militias to fight the insurgency. This has been detrimental to overall security and the rule of law (Rubin, 2006; Karim, 2006).

In any given context, but particularly where the state is a belligerent in the conflict, operational aid agencies are sensitive to the role of the state in directly and proximately protecting humanitarian workers. For the most part, agencies do not want the state to provide 'protection' for humanitarian workers directly; rather, they prefer to distinguish between the provision of ambient security (the general security environment in which humanitarian work takes place) and proximate security (such as travel escorts and protection of property). Overly protective state arrangements for aid agencies can, in fact, increase insecurity due to perceptions of partiality, and can in practical terms influence the ability of agencies to respond impartially to the needs of the population by making them dependent on state police or military escorts for time-bound access (Harker, 2006).

3.10 Conclusions and future implications

Looking back at security management over the past decade, it is interesting to ask how much has really changed. The rhetoric definitely has, and a number of new initiatives have pointed to the potential course a comprehensive, needs-oriented approach to security management might take. On the UN side, serious investment has been made in seeing new policy to fruition, and international NGOs have made progress in the ever-difficult realm of coordination. However, the seriousness with which agencies now talk about security management is still not matched by equally serious attempts to develop and mainstream security management within organisations.

Foremost among the challenges aid agencies face is the fact that progress is not being made across the system. Security, more than perhaps any other sector, cannot be achieved by

28 There are an estimated 11,000 ISAF soldiers and some 20,000 Coalition troops in Afghanistan.

one agency in isolation, but requires a coordinated approach, particularly in the sharing of information. The host of new incident tracking systems are promising in their technology, but will be of little use if they each pick up only one piece of the overall security picture.

Donor governments can do a great deal more to promote good policy and practice and increased awareness around security for aid operations. This endeavour could start with establishing a security dialogue among donors themselves. Host governments in particular have a major role to play in fostering secure environments for aid operations. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security has stressed that, once the host country government resolves to take seriously the need to operationalise support for aid worker security, significant changes become apparent on the ground, even if state capacity is weak. From the government down to the police officers on the street, a more protective environment of aid is tangible, and can be felt even in a reduction in the theft of aid resources and corruption.

Coordination remains weak at the headquarters level, and is generally only effective at the local level when significant security pressures compel agencies to work together. Levels of accountability vary and need to be strengthened within a security management framework. Across the board, training and security inputs to national and local staff and partners are at unjustifiably low levels.

In sum, though promising developments seem to be on the horizon, a great deal of security management is done by default, as a reaction to events that have not been forecast, planned for, mitigated or fully understood. The response by aid agencies often lacks a careful strategy, relies heavily on localised solutions and leaves a large burden of the risk with local staff and organisations.

Chapter 4
Service delivery in insecure environments[29]

Both real and perceived changes in the security environment have significantly affected the conduct of recent humanitarian operations. Faced with declining access, humanitarian organisations have been forced to develop new strategies for service delivery. While reductions in access and programming, temporary suspensions and evacuations are not new to the humanitarian community, certain operational adaptations appear more commonplace in recent years. In particular, responses have involved increased reliance on national staff, or a shift to working with local partner organisations to maintain operations. 'Remote management', as this has been called, has had both beneficial and negative effects in terms of addressing priority needs, meeting standards in programming and overall effectiveness. Yet the prevailing feature of remote management has been the reactive and unexamined fashion in which it has been employed by international aid agencies. The steady engagement of local actors in relief efforts over the past few years brings into question the traditional roles of international humanitarian organisations, while also presenting new opportunities and significant challenges.

This chapter examines the obstacles that recent security threats have created for humanitarian aid programming, and the changes in service delivery that agencies have adopted in response. The considerable devolution of responsibility to local actors is explored, along with its attendant risks. The chapter also examines the broader issues facing local actors in conflict contexts, and assesses the sustainability of the phenomenon of 'localisation' in the future.

4.1 Problems of access in insecure environments

In many conflict-related crises, aid worker insecurity poses the most significant challenge to accessing civilians in dire need. Reduced access due to operational insecurity comes about primarily for two reasons. The first, explored in Chapter 3, depends on whether agencies decide that their staff are able to operate with reasonable physical safety. The more insecure the situation is deemed to be, and/or the more restrictive the security policies in place, the less likely it is that an agency will decide to initiate or expand its programming in order to reach the target population. The second, related, reason is to do with the level and nature of financial support for security inputs which facilitate movement in the field. In the DRC, for example, the UN humanitarian coordinator, Ross Mountain, has frequently complained that lack of security funding is hampering humanitarian access and aid efforts (Mountain, 2000).

There are, of course, a number of other factors that can limit access to those in need, which are not necessarily related to or driven by security conditions. These include:

- Poor infrastructure requiring expensive airlift capacity – often only provided by military actors.
- Political and military controls on the movements of aid workers, which might be enforced by the state or armed actors, and which seek to limit access both geographically and temporally.
- Weak international support and pressure to negotiate humanitarian access with the host state.
- The general shift from refugee to internal displacement situations in recent years, which has resulted in complex aid efforts that require political negotiations with the host state in order to secure access.

In the last few years, many commentators have suggested that access has declined specifically due to insecurity (OCHA, 2006b). It is not easy to assess this claim objectively. There are, at best, only proxy indicators to determine levels of access. As concluded in Chapter 2, while security incidents against aid operations have proliferated since the early 1990s, there has been only a small increase in the insecurity of aid workers relative to their rising numbers in field. At the same time, however, there have been some significant shifts in security policies designed to prevent and mitigate risks and 'enable' programming in insecure contexts. These include more sophisticated risk and threat analysis, enhanced training, improved communications equipment and other inputs. In addition, there has been a policy emphasis on maintaining an operational presence and staying engaged, rather than evacuating staff and closing projects. It is reasonable to assume that, in some insecure contexts, this has increased access. The reality remains, however, that violence against aid workers has the power to rapidly and drastically curtail relief operations. In one example, in August 2005, MSF Switzerland announced that it was halting aid to 100,000 Congolese in the province of Ituri following the abduction of two of its staff members (MSF, 2006).

The inherently reactive way in which the international aid system deals with operational insecurity has contributed to severe disruptions of large-scale humanitarian responses. In Darfur in 2004–2005, for example, there was a dramatic increase in staff presence, from 228 humanitarian workers in April 2004 to 11,219, including 915 international staff, in April 2005 (OCHA and IASC, 2005). This reflected the need for an urgent mass intervention to meet the humanitarian crisis stemming from the conflict there. Planned projects were wide-ranging and ambitious, encompassing every sector and costing almost $2 billion (UN and Partners, 2005). Relatively

29 This chapter draws on the significant contributions of Barnaby Willitts-King, who undertook background research and analysis on remote control programming and localisation in insecure environments for this study. It also draws on the findings from the six field study background papers.

high levels of insecurity in Darfur did not overly limit the scope of planned work or the funding appeal; when the security situation was considered, it was generally perceived as more permissive than contexts such as Iraq and Afghanistan (interviews, 2006). However, shortly after deployment access was constrained in West and North Darfur. In these cases, there was a reactive programming response: overall programme budgets were revised downwards, operations were temporarily halted and staff were evacuated.[30] In West Darfur, for example, UNHCR announced a 44% reduction in 2006, from $33m to $18.5m, due to access and insecurity (UNHCR, 2006). Access was just as limited for local NGOs and the Sudanese Red Crescent as it was for international agencies (interviews, 2006). Likewise in Iraq following the US-led invasion in 2003, humanitarian programming was ambitious, and support for the humanitarian response was unprecedented: the appeal for Iraq was for $2.2 billion to cover the first six months' worth of emergency needs after the invasion (OCHA, 2003). Four months after the invasion, there were 4,200 national and approximately 650 expatriate UN staff in Iraq. International NGOs numbered up to 200 by July 2003. After the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad in August 2003, the number of UN international staff in Baghdad fell to 40, with another 44 in the safer northern governorates.[31] International NGO numbers also fell rapidly (Carle and Chkam, 2006).

These two examples illustrate the influence of insecurity on programming and service delivery. Whilst aid agencies operating in conflict zones are keenly aware of the challenges they face, there has been surprisingly little effort to incorporate security-related factors into pre-programming decision-making, or to develop more strategic, policy-based responses to operating in highly insecure contexts. There has also been a significant shifting of the burden of programming responsibilities to nationals, based on assumptions about the level of access local actors may have as compared to international staff, and their security needs. The rest of this chapter explores these issues in more detail.

4.2 Remote management as a programme adaptation to insecurity

4.2.1 Terms and definitions

There is no commonly agreed terminology or classification of the various means by which aid agencies maintain their operations in highly insecure contexts. Approaches generally fall into one of two categories: off-site programming, which is variously known as 'long arm programming', 'remote control', 'remote management', 'remote support' or the increasingly preferred term 'partnership'; and cross-border or one-off operations, described in the past as 'hit and run', 'aid on the run', 'give and go', or 'window of opportunity'.[32]

Operating with reduced international staff presence and a reliance on other means to provide aid is by no means a new phenomenon. One of Oxfam GB's earliest responses, to the droughts in Bihar, India, in 1951, was through local partners and had some elements of the type of programming that is evident today in insecure environments. Cross-border programming was also used in Ethiopia and Eritrea in the 1980s. For aid agencies in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s, low visibility and increased reliance on local staff and partnering with local agencies were widespread both during the *mujahideen* and the Taliban periods (Karim, 2006). 'Long arm programming' was a term familiar to agencies conducting operations in Somalia in the early 1990s and in Afghanistan in the late 1990s during the US bombing campaign. Quick runs – 'hit and run' and 'aid on the run' – were used by Operation Lifeline Sudan in southern Sudan during the late 1990s. 'Remote control' programming has been used in recent contexts, such as Iraq (where programmes have been managed from neighbouring Jordan) and northern Uganda, but the term is resisted by some on the grounds that it has a negative 'command and control' connotation. For this reason, some agencies have recently opted for more benign phrases, such as 'remote management' and 'remote support'.

Despite the variety of labels, the actual tactics employed generally have one common ambition: to ensure that aid continues to reach the beneficiary population despite security or access constraints. Most involve international staff acting as the key decision-makers designing and programming the humanitarian response at a distance from the crisis-affected area, or in some cases outside the country in question. They involve national staff taking on increased responsibility or in some cases a shift to working with local partner organisations, local authorities, private contractors and community-based organisations (CBOs). This broad set of approaches is referred to here as 'remote management'.

The principle behind remote management is that local actors, through their (assumed) greater knowledge of local conditions and greater acceptance within the local community, can maintain a presence at a reduced level of risk than that faced by international staff. When an agency adopts the remote management approach, it is generally with the understanding that it is suboptimal and temporary. While programme quality, monitoring and impact might suffer, it is deemed better than providing no support at all.

It is important to distinguish between deliberate local partnering and capacity-building, for instance in the context of development or natural disaster preparation, and the reactive operational modifications examined here. Many organis-

30 See, for example, media releases by ICRC (January 2006), UNHCR (March 2006) and MSF (August 2006).

31 As of April 2006, the UN mission had about 140 staff in Iraq, the majority of them security personnel (Carle and Chkam, 2006).

32 A further type of adaptation involves suspending service delivery and focusing instead on advocacy or 'witnessing' efforts on behalf of victims.

ations, particularly multi-mandated ones, have increasingly sought to work through national staff and local partner organisations as part of their overall organisational objectives.[33] This phenomenon is seen particularly among international NGOs, which have decreased their percentage of internationals in field positions over the years, from about 10% international staff in 1997 to 8% in 2005. The major UN humanitarian agencies, by contrast, have kept a stable ratio of international field staff over the past decade, at around 12%. In general, the older and larger the NGO, the larger the percentage of national staff. The six largest international NGO federations had a combined average of 7% international staff to 93% national in 2005, and the two largest, World Vision and CARE, now have just 2% and 3% internationals respectively.[34] One exception is MSF, which maintains a large expatriate field presence of about 11%; this organisational structure probably reflects MSF's philosophy of '*temoinage*' or 'witnessing', which requires international staff to be present so that they can speak out on behalf of vulnerable populations.

In contexts as diverse as northern Uganda, Chechnya, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, northern Pakistan, Aceh in Indonesia and Sudan, a range of remote management approaches have been implemented, from short missions to the affected area to

Table 5: Types of remote management and other programming approaches

Approach	Agent	Description	Potential benefits	Potential weaknesses
Remote control*	National staff	Agency senior staff direct programming and manage local employees from a distance	Continuity of leadership Better oversight	Communications problems National staff bear great responsibility but have little authority
Remote support	National staff	Local staff assume decision-making authority	Capacity-building (individuals) No time lag for decision-making More flexibility	Lack of oversight Dearth of experienced national staff Corruption risk
Sub-contracting arrangements	Local NGOs	Programmes formerly implemented or managed by international agency turned over to local NGO	Capacity-building (organisations) Greater acceptance Better targeting	Partiality Lack of contextual analysis Difficult to identify/ screen
Community partnership arrangements	CBOs/community leaders	International agency arranges for community group or leaders to implement some portion of its programme (e.g. aid distribution)	More stable and familiar presence to local population Better targeting of beneficiaries Community ownership More resilient to insecurity	Partiality May not be representative Risk of elite capture
Government partnership arrangements	National or local government authorities	INGO develops programme in consultation with government authorities and/or hands over existing programme as 'exit strategy'	Promotes long-term development May promote security via increased community acceptance	More suitable for development aims than emergency relief Independence, neutrality suffer Government may not have local support Corruption risk
Outsourcing	Commercial contractors	Fee for service arrangement with private firm (e.g. trucking company) to do basic provision		

* Although 'remote control' has negative connotations to some, we include it as the most appropriate term of reference, particularly to distinguish the direct management nature of these arrangements from more hands-off 'remote support' operations.

33 Some organisations operating in protracted crisis contexts may already be implementing programmes via partner agencies and/or governmental structures according to more long-term development models. Increased insecurity causes them to rely more heavily on those partners.

34 As described in the methodology section of Chapter 1, these figures were obtained from agency interviews, annual reports and systematic inference. Figures cover field staff only, not headquarters staff.

Table 6: Remote control working (adapted from ECHO, 2004)

Strategy	Modality	Implications for security, acceptance and quality
Removal of all or nearly all staff	Provision of funding and/or in kind goods for humanitarian response to local NGOs, churches, mosques and/or the national Red Cross or Red Crescent society. There are some examples of international NGOs handing over programmes to other international NGOs.	May generate acceptance. Quality of programming and financial management may suffer.
Removal of expatriate staff	National staff run programmes, and international staff may make occasional visits to bring funds, monitor programmes and give technical assistance. A variation on this model is the use of expatriates from developing countries, who may be less at risk than Westerners.	May expose expatriates to higher risk when visiting due to lack of security infrastructure/ carrying cash for programme. May expose national staff to higher risks when expatriates absent.
Removal of programme staff and infrastructure from insecure area	Normally to a town or city where security can be managed more easily. This may be temporary or intermittent. In this model, some beneficiaries may access programmes by travelling themselves.	Beneficiaries exposed to risk in accessing assistance.
Removal of programme staff from insecure areas	Use of contractors to deliver assistance.	Quality of programming may suffer.

handing over programmes to national staff to working with local partners, the local community, local or national government authorities or private contractors. Table 5 provides a typology of remote management approaches.

4.2.2 Policy and analysis

There has been little policy formulation or strategic thinking behind the varying 'remote management' strategies that have been employed over the past few years. There are very few documented policies or published evaluations on remote management or any other form of remote control/support approach. This is true for both donor governments and operational agencies. In part, this is because the approach has been seen as a last resort, or as an anomaly. Yet analysis suggests that it occurs with a level of frequency, for considerable periods of time and in such a variety of locations that a more strategic approach is necessary. Only ECHO and Oxfam GB have tried to map out the differing approaches (see Tables 6 and 7). These classifications are useful attempts to catalogue the differing operational responses over the years, and the risks involved.

4.2.3 Multiple motivators

The factors that drive agencies and sometimes donor governments to consider a remote management approach are multiple.

First, the level of insecurity and the expected duration of insecure conditions are critical. Most agencies note that insecurity for staff is the foremost reason for adopting a remote management approach, alongside whether the insecurity is judged to be an aberration or more permanent (interviews, 2006). Temporary insecurity or expectations thereof often prompt staff, including international staff, to go into hibernation, or see the programme being temporarily suspended and then resumed as before, while the expectation of prolonged insecurity involves investing in a new mode of programming. The size of the programme is also a consideration. Some agencies note that they would be less likely to hand over a large programme to a local partner, but they might try to manage a small programme remotely through national staff (interviews, 2006). The need to maintain presence for solidarity and/or visibility reasons – what World Vision calls 'keeping the light on' – also encourages a remote management approach, rather than the complete closure of the programme (interviews, 2006). This was OCHA's rationale in Aceh during the period of martial law, and provides much of the impetus for agencies maintaining an aid presence in Iraq.

The sector in which agencies are programming appears to have a bearing on the decision to shift towards remote management, although opinions as to which sectors are suitable for remote management differ between agencies. Food aid, for example, is seen as particularly vulnerable to attack. It is easily identified, targeted and redistributed, particularly if in transit, compared to smaller, higher-value inputs such as water or office equipment. These features combined with the fact that food is bulky, often of low value by weight and requires transport logistics, means that some agencies choose not to subcontract to national staff or a local NGO. Instead, local private contractors are often used (as in Somalia, Sudan and Afghanistan). In Somalia, for example, WFP began using private contractors for food transportation in 1997, which enabled the agency to avoid direct involvement in

Table 7: Classification of programming responses to insecurity (Oxfam, 2006)

Presence	Opportunity	Issue	Risk	Examples
International staff – limited access	All staff are able to remain *in situ* or nearby	Solidarity and acceptance	Monitoring very difficult	Northern Uganda
	'Hit and run'	Can take advantage of 'flexible' space to aid people	Poor targeting	South Sudan
	'Aid on the run'	Needs assessment difficult	Outputs rather than impacts	South Sudan
	'Give and go'	Needs assessment difficult	No monitoring	North Korea
	Window of opportunity	Solid planning required	Poor contextual analysis	Angola
	Witnessing	Solidarity and ability to speak	Insecurity due to lack of programme delivery	Aceh Indonesia
International staff – no access	National staff are able to remain *in situ*	Solidarity	Profile/perceptions	Afghanistan
	Coordination of field activities	Must have well-trained national staff	Lack of back-stopping mechanisms	Uganda
	Witnessing	Possible limited ability to speak	Insecurity due to lack of programme delivery	Southern Iraq
International (other organisation)	Partnerships	Transferring exposure	Poor contextual analysis	Iraq
	Consortium	Channelling money	Transparency and neutrality	Eritrea
National staff with offices	Remote control programming	Security of national staff	Staff targeted	Kosovo
	Remote control management	National staff exposure	Staff or office targeted	DRC
	Remote control coordination	National staff exposure	Requires good communication lines	Iraq
	Arms length	Solidarity	Cash	Angola
National staff w/o offices	Remote control coordination	Very little equipment and supplies	Lack of staff consent	
	Arms length	Poor monitoring/record keeping	Lack of transparency	Chechnya
CBO	Partnerships	Solidarity	Lack of impartiality	DRC
	Partnerships	Quality of work	Poorly trained staff lacking technical skills	Uganda
Communities	Partnerships	Solidarity and acceptance	Lack of impartiality	Uganda
	Partnerships	Access to population in need	Fuelling war economy	DRC
	Patronage	Transparency	Monitoring very difficult	Southern Sudan
Contractors	Remote control management	Inspection of works	Monitoring very difficult	Uganda

security incidents (Gundel, 2006). Goods are also more secure because Somali transporters are protected by armed vehicles and their local knowledge, membership of the clan system and access to traditional jurisprudence mechanisms (Gundel, 2002 and 2006). Distribution and some monitoring are then usually passed on to CBOs or other local organisations, which can perform these functions more cheaply than private contractors or INGOs (Gundel, 2006). At other times, the type of equipment and transportation is a factor. Heavy infrastructure and equipment are considered difficult to channel through national staff or local partners. For example, when West Darfur was declared a Phase 4 area by the UN, water remained the most important activity for UNICEF. But because heavy rigs and pipes could not be moved with a helicopter (the only transport mechanism available), very few new pumps were installed. Instead, bringing in petrol to keep the existing water pumps running was the priority, as well as the rehabilitation of existing wells (interviews, 2006).

In contrast to food aid and heavy infrastructure projects, several agencies have found that 'soft services' such as reintegration and psychosocial programmes may be more easily undertaken by local entities. In northern Uganda, for example, with no access even for national staff, World Vision trained community volunteers to carry out a child soldier reintegration programme (interviews, 2006).

Agencies claim that the level of vulnerability and need among beneficiaries is a key factor in determining whether to conduct aid by remote management. As a general rule, most agencies claim that life-saving interventions are prioritised as long as possible, and if this is the service delivery goal then the rationale to maintain delivery by some means is much stronger than it would be if development work was being undertaken. In practice, however, it is not the case that only life-saving programmes are prioritised. In Iraq, for example, many aid actors have chosen to concentrate on areas which are fairly safe and stable to the detriment of the most difficult areas in terms of access and security. Indeed, most agencies tend to work in areas where their resources and capabilities have the greatest chances of yielding results, and where they are able to assume security responsibilities for their staff. This has led agencies to distance themselves not only from the humanitarian imperative, but also from the principle of impartiality (Carle and Chakm, 2006). It has also hindered the collection of reliable data on livelihoods, vulnerabilities, internal displacement and basic welfare needs. Donor governments with programmes in Iraq have contributed to this tendency by not always supporting basic welfare programmes, and by preferring capacity-building programmes that foster democratisation, the rule of law and good governance, because their own political agendas deem these to be the priority issues.

Factors influencing whether an agency switches to remote management can also be highly context-specific. The range of possible local partner organisations and the quality of national staff and their freedom and capacity to operate in a given country or region are factors. In Colombia, for example, WFP works entirely through 1,700 church groups and local community groups. By contrast, in Chechnya, very few local NGOs work as implementing partners due to the general level of mistrust that exists there, although working through national staff is common (Harker, 2006). In the DRC, many international NGOs have found it difficult to identify viable national NGO partners, citing concerns about lack of capacity, political affiliations and the opinion that many NGOs are in fact private enterprises established for financial gain (Durrant, 2006). In the DRC, international NGOs have in some cases embraced partnerships with local government authorities not only because they believe that such initiatives will be more sustainable, but also due to the dearth of capable local NGOs (Durrant, 2006).

4.3 Benefits and challenges

There are a number of evident benefits to remote management. First, it avoids the complete closure of operations and allows funding to continue to flow (a particular imperative for many agencies with operations in Iraq). Second, the security environment is sometimes better upon 're-entry' because local knowledge has not been completely lost, as might have been the case if the office and programme had closed. It can also create an opportunity for closer community involvement in programmes. In Afghanistan, for example, a greater level of involvement on the part of local authorities and shuras in programmes has been shown to have the potential for greater buy-in (Karim, 2006). However, remote management in all its different forms also creates a number of challenges. These are considered below.

4.3.1 Established relations and communication

Strong relations with the local partner or national staff are fundamental to successful remote management. In situations where country programme managers and key international staff are well known to national staff, the organisation has been in-country for several years or even decades, expatriate staff turnover is stable and some travel to the country is possible, trust can normally be maintained between the field and repositioned staff. By contrast, in cases where international staff are young and inexperienced, based in a different country and working with local staff they have never met, in a country they cannot visit, establishing the trust required for successful remote management will be very difficult. This has been the experience of many organisations with no programme history in Iraq prior to 2003 (Carle and Chakm, 2006).

Visits of national staff to the 'remote' location were the most common response to foster relationships. Visits by international staff to the country programmes were also considered essential, if they could be carried out: in Iraq, for example, remote management was described as working 'almost exclusively when expatriates can meet regularly with their staff in Iraq' (Carle and Chakm, 2006). However, opportunities for contact can remain limited when movements are restricted, visas are hard to obtain or staff are not issued with a passport.

Cultural and linguistic differences appear to be given little priority in staff training and support, and this is a significant challenge for the future. On the positive side, the rise of email and mobile phone communication enables remote managers to keep in contact with staff or partners in ways that were impossible in the past. The challenge may be to surmount an over-reliance on such mechanisms, which can be problematic when such technologies function only intermittently. There may also be a tendency to focus on technological fixes at the expense of addressing some of the other issues in distance management described below.

4.3.2 Strategic planning and coordination

Maintaining a strategic focus and direction to the overall planning and programme can be difficult when managers are absent from the country and unable to conduct needs

assessments or measure impact. There is a tendency for remote management programmes to maintain the status quo, rather than responding to emerging needs. This is due to a range of factors, including the information deficit (there is little sharing of information between agencies, or with the authorities), movement and access restrictions and a low-profile security approach. Remote managers are generally cautious when it comes to making radical changes. There can also be considerable coordination challenges, and several interviewees mentioned constraints around networking with decision-makers outside of the context of operation. There are, however, examples of how these constraints can be overcome. Networking may be more straightforward in contexts where agencies are clustered together, as they are in the Somalia programme based in Nairobi, for example (Gundel, 2006).

Remote management also poses challenges for fundraising. Although in some cases donors are willing to reduce monitoring and evaluation requirements in situations of high insecurity, a programme that cannot be effectively monitored is unlikely to attract sustained donor interest, and future fundraising may be difficult.

4.3.3 Service delivery and advocacy

Remote management does not necessarily overcome the operational constraints to service delivery that encouraged its adoption in the first place. Insecurity is likely to still restrict the movement of local partners, staff or equipment in certain areas at certain times. The 'additional' management structures imposed as part of remote management may also create additional operational burdens. Decision-making may slow down due to the need to contact the remote manager, and more time is spent travelling to and from the project areas. More fundamentally, the ability to undertake effective needs assessment is often compromised, as is accurate targeting. Reduced standards sometimes have to be accepted. In the North Caucasus, for example, the British Red Cross introduced blanket coverage instead of targeted aid as the only way to avoid national staff being pressurised or put at risk for delivering aid to the 'wrong' groups, even though this approach resulted in poorer targeting.

Advocacy strategies are also affected by a remote management approach. Agencies undertaking a low-profile approach may be unwilling to advocate in public forums for the needs of those they serve. On the other hand, those agencies that do undertake advocacy have been considered by some to be putting other operating agencies at considerable risk when their strategies have been targeted at one of the parties to the conflict, or generally giving too much visibility to aid activities when a low-profile approach might be preferable (interviews, 2006).

4.3.4 Quality and accountability

For donors and aid organisations, the absence of international staff creates concerns around the quality and accountability of programmes, as well as corruption (Willitts-King and Harvey, 2005). These concerns are more relevant for donor government-funded projects than for work financed privately. All of the organisations interviewed reported a reduction in their capacity to monitor programmes or ineffective monitoring – whether by international or national staff – and most also cited evidence of corruption. At the level of reporting, agencies also identified a lack of capacity among local partners to prepare reports, both financial and in narrative form, though this is highly variable across contexts and between local NGOs. A few respondents reported cases where an international agency required more stringent reporting practices from their local sub-grantees than was demanded by the primary donor (interviews, 2006).

Finding a reasonable way to ensure accountability while accepting that quality and programme standards may drop has been paramount in programme decision-making. For the most part, this has focused on upwards accountability towards donors, in terms of reporting and monitoring systems. One international NGO in northern Uganda set up systems of cross-checking between different national staff, but corruption was still observed on a donor visit in the form of uncompleted work that had been paid for. Another international NGO in Uganda used photographic evidence by contractors, although this is not always applicable since not all projects lend themselves to such documentation.

Downwards accountability towards beneficiaries has had significantly less attention than it deserves, despite the fact that, in remote management contexts where upwards accountability is more difficult, such mechanisms – transparency over entitlements, or community monitoring and systems for complaints redress – may be especially informative and useful for programming. In the North Caucasus, the Danish Refugee Council has implemented successful beneficiary complaints procedures for food distribution (Willitts-King and Harvey, 2005). While arguably more difficult without the presence of international staff, national staff can implement similar mechanisms.

4.3.5 Human resources – recruiting and retaining good-quality staff

Staffing capacity is a common limitation to remote management. This is not, of course, limited to local staff – the dearth of qualified staff globally was identified in the Humanitarian Response Review (2005), and recruitment in high-risk contexts is an even greater challenge than in more stable environments. In Sudan, Iraq and the DRC, it is not uncommon for programmes to operate with empty international staff positions, or with inexperienced internationals.

The case studies in the DRC, Iraq, Somalia and Chechnya also identified major human resource constraints in working through local partners and staff. Recruiting national staff in Somalia, for example, is fraught with clan-related difficulties –

the case study highlighted 'contractual' issues as one of the major challenges, be it the need to employ members of a particular clan/ethnic group or the risk of retribution if a staff member is dismissed. Retribution was a potential risk in Chechnya and Iraq too. Coercion was also a theme in most contexts. In Chechnya, for example, local NGOs are seen as more likely to be influenced by local clans. In Iraq, the low profile adopted by local agencies has meant that advertising transparently for posts is impossible, so new personnel have tended to be recruited through existing staff, increasing the opportunities for nepotism and coercion (Willitts-King, 2006).

4.4 The ethics of localisation in response to insecurity

One of the core assumptions of remote management is that national staff and local partners are at less risk than international staff, or at least have a higher threshold for risk and thus are more likely to deliver against programme goals. This assumption is open to question, however, given the finding of increasing casualty rates suffered by national staff described in Chapter 2. In particular, in the areas with the highest number of violent incidents against aid workers (Afghanistan, Chechnya, the DRC, Iraq, Somalia and Sudan), the risk to national staff appears to be rising significantly year on year, while the risk facing international staff is declining. Qualitative evidence from this study also indicates that local aid workers may underestimate the risk to themselves. While their superior local knowledge and information networks will provide them with more detailed 'situational awareness', it is also true that familiarity can breed over-confidence. Individuals who have lived in a place the longest often find it most difficult to recognise new or growing threats. In Iraq, for example, some international organisations urged more caution and controls over the movement of their local partners than local staff at first thought necessary (Carle and Chakm, 2006).

Partly due to reliance on such assumptions, the ethics of 'transferring' security risks away from expatriate staff towards national or local NGO staff have not been fully considered. Rather, decisions are driven partly by organisational culture, and partly by individual managers on the ground. As ECHO's Security Review (2004) makes clear, however, handing over programmes to local staff or organisations raises inherently difficult questions:

> *The delegation of programming activities to another organisation is an explicit recognition of different levels of tolerance for insecurity. Some humanitarians feel that this strategy takes advantage of the differences between humanitarian organisations in order to effectively meet humanitarian need, and that it is the preserve of each organisation to set its threshold of acceptable risk. Others feel that there is a serious abrogation of responsibility in supporting the exposure of humanitarian personnel in another organisation to risks which have been deemed unacceptable for your own organisation* (ECHO, 2004a).

Is it legitimate for the international leadership of an aid organisation to ask local entities or personnel to expose themselves to threats that they are unwilling to face themselves? The presumed answer of course would be no: remote management will only be employed when the risk is lower for local organisations or staff members than for internationals. But how is this determined? Most agencies do not have set criteria to assess risk or to guide the decision to shift to remote management. Often, what underlies such a decision, at least in part, is a desire not to disrupt funding flows and to maintain a foothold in the area. There are sound programming principles as well as financial reasons to justify this position, but these considerations must be examined alongside honest appraisals of potential threats to national staff, in order to determine whether or not they outweigh the risk.

International decision-makers not only have a responsibility to consider the *level* of risk to national staff; they also have a responsibility to consider the *different kinds* of risk faced by national staff. It must be remembered that local staff are members of the community in ways that expatriates are not, and will stay long after expatriates have left. They will face qualitatively different risks, including the potential loss of income for themselves and their families should a programme be terminated. Both local as well as international staff are autonomous individuals who have the right to take risks in order to provide aid to those in need. And yet, because of the interdependence of security threats faced by members of the same organisation (and indeed, between different organisations operating in the same area, as Chapter 3 demonstrates), this right is not limitless. For these reasons, policies and guidelines should govern staff behaviour in ways that promote the security of staff as a whole. To date, however, most guidelines and practice do not fully take into account the unique threats, incentives and circumstances faced by national staff. This amounts to a failure by agencies to fully consider the ethical questions at hand.

In addition, as Chapter 3 argues, national staff are typically under-represented in security training and in the disbursement of assets, and local 'partner' agencies are given less, and often no, support. Very few agencies have a specific policy on what security-related equipment, such as vehicles or radios, would be handed over to national staff and/or local partners when security deteriorates and international staff have to leave. Some argue that this is primarily due to the specific nature of different programme contexts and the differing capacities of national staff and local partners. Many agencies stated that they do not hand over any equipment to local partner organisations in cases where there is a reduction in expatriate staffing levels (Willitts-King, 2006). This general dearth of security inputs is a grave concern considering not only their increasing vulnerability, but also the fact that a

significant source of security information comes from local and national staff. There were a few exceptions to this lack of investment; Oxfam, for example, has run a security management programme for a local organisation in south Somalia. The programme included identifying risks, teaching staff how to undertake security assessments and developing security plans and procedures. The ICRC and IFRC also provide training to national societies. Box 6 highlights elements of ICRC's Safer Access framework (Leach and Hofstetter, 2004).

A second assumption that drives a shift towards remote management is the belief that local staff are perceived more favourably and have greater 'acceptance' among the host and beneficiary communities simply by virtue of their being 'of the place' (UN and NGO interviews, 2006). Reflecting this widespread belief, ECHO states that 'acceptance has been recognised as key to enhanced security, and having local organisations at the frontline of humanitarian action is one way to achieve enhanced acceptance' (ECHO, 2004). Because national staff are seen to enjoy increased acceptance, security measures employing the other elements of the security 'triangle' (protection and deterrence) are viewed as less necessary.

'Assumed acceptance' (Van Brabant, 2000), however, is just as dangerous when applied to a particular segment of staff as when (as discussed in Chapter 3) it is applied to an organisation as a whole. As an example, a national staff member hired by an international agency and sent to work in a distant part of the country would be no more 'of the place' than his or her expatriate colleagues. National aid workers may also face greater local resentment or perceptions of partiality. Whatever the reasons, it is clear from the high number of incidents affecting local staff that they do not always benefit from unfettered acceptance by the communities in which they work.

Whether a failure to achieve acceptance is rooted in a failure to adhere to the humanitarian principle of neutrality has been the subject of considerable debate. Examples abound in which perceived or actual breaches of neutrality seem to have played a role in prompting attacks. In Sudan, for example, national staff were targeted more often when considered by government or militias to be working for the other side (interviews, 2006). This was also the case in Aceh during the period of martial law. The Iraq case study, and Greg Hansen's evaluation of NCCI, identified major risks in this politically charged environment, 'where relatively minor lapses [in actual or perceived neutrality] can have major consequences' (Chkam and Carle, 2006; Hansen, 2004b).

More specifically, some 'acceptance' strategies employed by local actors may breach humanitarian principles by involving questionable levels of accommodation to the interests of belligerents, such as payment for access and the diversion of large quantities of aid. The risks presented by such actions are amplified when remote management practices are employed.

Box 6: ICRC's Safer Access framework for national societies

National Societies in a conflict environment should incorporate the nine elements for safer access into their operations. These elements are:

Conflict environment
Understanding the general characteristics and trends of conflict, as well as the factors which comprise the existing conflict, is critical knowledge for a National Society to have in order to maintain its safety and have continued access to beneficiaries.

National Society legal and policy base for action
Knowing the legal base of a National Society to provide humanitarian assistance and protection in all types of conflict is crucial foundational knowledge for any National Society.

Acceptance of organisation
One of the most important and essential actions is for a National Society to work towards positioning itself in such a way that all potential stakeholders will accept it to fulfil its mandate in conflict response, should the occasion arise.

Acceptance of individual
Individual staff and volunteers of all components of the Movement are viewed as representatives of the organization for which they are working, on and off duty.

Identification
Inappropriate use and protection of the Red Cross or Red Crescent emblems in peacetime can seriously hamper the image and acceptance of the National Society and other Movement components during conflict.

External communications
National Societies must have a clear external communication plan and guidelines, and train their personnel accordingly in order to avoid any potential use of information as propaganda, any misinterpretation and/or confusion.

Internal communications
Efficient information collection, analysis and management systems are fundamental to the effectiveness of a humanitarian conflict response operation, not only to determine what actions are required where, but also in facilitating safer access to beneficiaries.

Security regulations
All National Societies, even in peacetime, should have security/safety regulations to protect their personnel and assets. These regulations are one important aspect of an overall security management approach.

Protective measures
Protective measures can be described as additional security means to ensure the physical protection of people, goods or places against identified threats or dangers.

It may be especially important for local actors to achieve acceptance by adhering to the principle of neutrality given that their rootedness in the community makes them more likely to be partial, or to be seen as partial. Internationals, by the very nature of their foreignness, may – in certain contexts – be more readily accepted as neutral actors. Despite evidence of the particular importance of neutrality for local actors, this study suggests that international agencies do not give serious thought to whether local entities seek to uphold humanitarian principles. Rather, local entities are assumed to have high levels of acceptance, and insufficient attention is devoted to how and why this may not be the case.

4.5 Best (or simply better) practices for remote management?

Although there may be a scant supply of experienced and technically proficient local professionals in many crisis contexts, there is unlikely to be a shortage of local actors willing to take up the mantle of humanitarian response. On both an organisational and an individual level, there are powerful reasons why these actors will be ready to assume the additional risk. Many established, locally based NGOs find that partnership arrangements with international organisations are their only means of accessing international funding, and will seize every opportunity that arises. Other local organisations are formed around given emergencies and aid influxes. Individuals also have economic reasons to engage in relief work. The importance of humanitarian organisations as local employers in areas of conflict and/or dire poverty is well known. Individuals will also feel a strong altruistic drive to help their neighbours and countrymen, and may forego opportunities to leave or to pursue more lucrative work in order to do so.

The history of humanitarian operations reflects a long and steady movement from simply trying to do good, to trying to do good well. From the days of dumping food off the back of trucks, the aid system has advanced considerably in every sector, as expertise and professionalism have grown, and standards and best practices have developed. It is fair to say that, before each such improvement, there was a prevailing attitude among aid practitioners that lack of time and resources prevented them from doing any better. Security management in general is one of the most recent (and perhaps most difficult) areas for enhancement, and the practice of remote management in particular may be on the frontiers of collaborative improvement.

Remote management may be seen as an unfortunate necessity, a difficult option in difficult situations, but it need not be bereft of prior planning and guiding principles. Specifically, each agency must ensure that its duty of care applies equally to all of its employees, regardless of nationality. This duty of care extends in some degree to partner organisations as well. This last point will no doubt prove contentious, but it should be remembered that the international aid presence begets the local aid presence in many contexts. Many local organisations would not be operational or even exist without international aid funding. In this sense there is a relationship, and thus a responsibility, from the international donors all the way down to the local end-use providers.

The following basic guidelines may serve as a starting-point:

- An agency's risk threshold can rise in line with the severity of need, but should apply equally for all staff regardless of nationality.
- Security assessments should differentiate between risks for national and for international staff, while consciously avoiding faulty assumptions regarding the level of exposure national staff can tolerate. Although national and international staff will face different specific threats (i.e., kidnapping or political targeting), the level of risk tolerated should be the same for both groups.
- So that they can make informed and equitable choices, national staff deserve transparent policies on evacuation, termination pay and the transfer of security equipment after the departure of international staff.
- Security plans should include contingencies for programming with reduced staff presence or from remote locations. These plans will ideally be shared and rationalised with those of other agencies within inter-agency security fora.
- As part of the planning and preparedness process, the agency should identify potential local partners in the event of a reduction or withdrawal – recognising that the most appropriate partner for remote sub-contracting may not be the agency's current partner, but rather the local NGO, CBO or local authority with the greatest capacity to operate independently and/or with the least exposure to the given threat.
- Remote sub-contracting arrangements should include the transfer of security assets, including appropriate communications equipment and vehicles, to partner entities.
- Outsourcing of programme services to commercial contractors should include a security surcharge, to allow contractors to purchase additional protective inputs as necessary.
- Agencies should develop specific and monitored policies on contractors' use of payments for access.

Ultimately, a set of standards and best practices for remote management should be developed by agencies, and materially supported by donors. These guidelines would have as their cornerstone the security of nationals engaged in the aid effort. In this regard, a helpful resource is a 2001 report for InterAction entitled *The Security of National Staff: Towards Good Practices*, by John Fawcett and Victor Tanner. Their proposed steps to enhance national staff security echo many of the points raised in this chapter, and are worthy of reiteration here. They also note that, while it is important to allow space for innovation and adaptation at the local level, the lack of policy on the security of national staff often

Box 7: Extract from *The Security of National Staff: Towards Good Practices* (InterAction, 2001)

- The agency formally states its commitment to the security of all staff without differentiation, and backs up its commitment with measurable resources.
- National staff fully participate in security management procedures, and in some cases even lead them, from the design of security plans to training and decision-making on the main issues concerning the security of all staff.
- Attention to national staff security is a key element for evaluating the performance of managers and supervisors.
- Evacuation should not be the cardinal issue of national staff security: it is not necessarily the best solution in times of crisis, and is often not expected by national staff.
- The agency is transparent in its security and personnel procedures, and is clear on its expectations of national staff; this is critical to promoting the security of all staff.
- Agency-wide policies lay out the agency's general security and personnel philosophy, but consistently defer to field-based practices that integrate local realities.

indicates an agency's failure to fully consider or develop a principled approach to this issue.

4.6 Future prospects: towards the planned localisation of response capacity

Current remote management practices often shift programming responsibilities to local actors on the assumption that they face a lower level of risk than international entities or personnel. As we have seen, this assumption is frequently faulty, and simply shifts the burden of risk to the locals that have stepped into the breach (and without many of the security inputs enjoyed by international organisations). At the same time, this study's findings support the idea that a localised response capacity – if planned and invested in strategically – could lead in some cases to greater security for humanitarian operations.

A large part of the humanitarian endeavour is underpinned by the belief that an international aid intervention amounts to more than the sum of its goods and services. It is often asserted (though without direct evidence) that the presence of international aid entities can lend a measure of protection to civilians and even help to stabilise volatile situations. While this may well be true in some cases, in others, particularly in the current security environment, the reverse can apply. Somalia is one specific example where actors on the ground have seen how aid inputs in some locales have destabilised the security situation, increasing criminality and exacerbating the daily threats facing all inhabitants (Gundel, 2006). In Iraq, where virtually all foreign-based entities are under intense threat, the national Red Crescent has maintained a degree of acceptance and access (Chkam and Carle, 2006). Localised relief response in such cases can be the best way of maintaining critical operations.

The difficulty, however, comes down to the humanitarian dilemma of 'lack of capacity to build capacity'. Whilst there is clear evidence of a growing national component to aid efforts, it tends to be dominated by efforts towards capacity-building in development contexts and in natural disaster risk mitigation; aid agencies underplay the potential for building humanitarian assistance capacity for response in conflict environments (Christoplos, 2005). In relief contexts, the majority of relationships are primarily about the delivery of specific relief items through a sub-contracting relationship, and capacity-building often only extends as far as training to meet the requirements of the contracting agency in terms of financial and narrative reporting (Smillie, 2001; Christoplos, 2005). Support for local preparedness for emergency response has tended to be limited to stockpiling warehouses with plastic sheeting and other asset distribution responsibilities. Even in contexts such as Chechnya, where the development of national staff capacity is a relatively high priority among international NGOs, and is viewed as important preparation for possible future insecurity, agencies rarely have in place contingency plans on exactly how national staff would function should a shift to remote management take place (Harker, 2006).

Organisations that explicitly have local partnership as part of their modus operandi (not merely their rhetoric), including some of the church-networked NGOs which have a low expatriate 'footprint' in the field, have made considerable institutional investment in building long-term relationships. For example, Christian Aid's programme in Afghanistan over the past 20 years has arguably contributed to the development of local NGOs' capacity to become major service delivery organisations, and to scale up in response to acute crises. CARE's Somaliland Partnership project is another example of an initiative that explicitly aims to build institutional capacity within local NGOs (Willits-King, 2006). In addition, organisations with a specific capacity-building mandate, such as the IFRC, which has a responsibility to work with national societies, show what can be achieved in complex emergency contexts. These examples are, however, exceptions to the general rule of an internationally driven and internationally managed response system.

4.7 Conclusion

Faced with changing security threats, international relief organisations have both constrained humanitarian operations and developed new strategies for operational engagement. The implications for humanitarian policy and programming are serious and wide-ranging. The positive and negative effects of remote management are, in themselves, worthy of greater policy consideration and lesson-learning between organisations. More importantly, the increasing reliance on national staff and local entities as implementing partners, combined with the significant rise in the number of casualties among national staff, raises both ethical and operational issues for the international aid community. In particular, the premium

placed on service delivery rather than investment in the capacities of partners is highly questionable, and implies an unacceptable heightening of the risk threshold for non-international staff. More needs to be done by way of strategic policy formulation, to ensure that the development of local capacity is an objective rather than a by-product of such a response, especially where life-saving work is not being undertaken.

Chapter 5
Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

5.1.1 The trickle-down effects of risk control

This report has found that, whereas overall incidents of violence have increased across the globe, the overall relative risk to aid workers has risen only marginally. Moreover, in the most violent cases, such as Sudan and Afghanistan, the number of incidents per aid worker in the field has declined over time. One may conclude from these findings that there has been a net improvement in field security management, and/or that operational polices and practices have become increasingly restrictive.

However, other findings indicate that improvements and/or restrictive practices have not been universally adopted. Whilst the risk to international aid workers has declined, the relative risk for national staff and partner organisations has increased. Although by no means intentional, some of the risk burden has in effect been transferred. UN personnel have become more secure than international NGOs, and international NGOs have in turn seen their international staff become safer, while their national staff and partners suffer increasing casualties.

5.1.2 Significant reforms, but fragmented progress still

Significant changes in security management, including investing in security policies and guidelines, instituting training and the provision of additional security posts, as well as the increased reporting, collating and storing of security incidents, have occurred over the last decade. Although the level of incident reporting, recording and analysis remains poor overall, a few notable initiatives (such as the SIRS and VRA reporting systems) have the potential to substantially improve security. However, the incentives and drivers for sharing information and analysis between agencies remain weak, especially at the headquarters level. This threatens to derail progress in the security field, which requires a high degree of coordination and information sharing to be successful. The aid community stands at a crossroads between substantive security enhancement for the system as a whole, and overlapping, uncoordinated and unproductive efforts, which could do more harm than good.

States have only recently focused on their responsibilities in contexts of insecurity – whether as aid donors or as hosts. Meeting the security challenges outlined here also depends on how security measures are financed, and whether and how donor governments support more coordinated inter-agency efforts, and coordinate security policy among themselves. More critically, the pressures to maintain donor branding and visibility of funding sources, as well as the general pressure on partners to remain engaged in areas of strategic interest, need to be reconsidered.

5.1.3 The challenges of providing aid in insecure contexts

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the most dangerous operational environments for aid workers are not those with the highest level of overall violence. Nor do external, contextual factors – such as the presence of international forces or a UN integrated mission – appear to have a strong bearing on the incidence of violence against aid workers. That said, the security behaviour of aid actors may change because of certain external influences (such as the arrival of peacekeeping forces), and this should be carefully considered in future operational and security planning.

Although no single political variable appears to cause higher aid worker insecurity, the threats facing aid workers (and other international workers) are clearly intertwined with overlying political contexts and processes. While it is by no means a guarantee that the principles of operational neutrality and independence will make aid agencies safer in volatile environments like Afghanistan, Iraq or Darfur, aid agencies should be concerned not to heighten still further the perception that they are associated with political processes in these contexts. International agencies have not prioritised humanitarian principles in identifying partners in these contexts. This requires further consideration.

The increased use of protection and deterrence is evident where a high risk of political targeting is perceived. By visibly increasing protective or deterrent measures, there is a possibility that other aid actors, including local partners, may become more insecure by default – particularly in contexts where militant movements view aid operations as 'soft targets'. Generally poor information sharing and communication on approaches, tactics and security analysis between agencies only heighten this risk. In addition, the increased isolation from beneficiaries and the host community entailed in the use of low-profile protective measures or more explicit deterrent measures has the dual effect of increasing programming challenges, and distancing the agency from sources of information that might enhance security.

Whilst acceptance remains the bedrock operational approach for agencies in most contexts, passive approaches to acceptance – whereby acceptance is assumed rather than brokered and maintained throughout the duration of the mission – have had difficult and sometimes fatal consequences. Subsequently, some humanitarian organisations have increased their investment in this strategy, recognising the need to enhance their understanding of the political economy of conflict, and to negotiate with an increasingly diverse range of armed groups to ensure and maintain access.

5.1.4 A hazardous practice: the need to improve remote management

It should be emphasised that security is not a zero-sum proposition. In other words, enhanced security for internationals does not necessarily cause or entail an increased risk for nationals. Nor is it a conscious decision by international agencies to increase national staff exposure when security conditions deteriorate. However, the widespread practice of moving to 'remote management' in times of heightened insecurity is currently *ad hoc* and unplanned. This creates both physical and ethical hazards. Risks to national staff are frequently underestimated – both by international agencies and by nationals themselves. The relative lack of security training and equipment provided to nationals reinforces false assumptions about their inherent security. Therefore, it seems safe to say that international agencies bear some degree of responsibility for the increase in violence against national aid workers. The solution is not for UN agency and international staff in general to take on more risk, but for aid providers, donors and governments to focus efforts on improving the operational security environment for national aid workers.

Security-adapted programming such as 'remote management' also requires greater policy attention as a programming approach in itself, especially as it looks set to remain in place in many contexts. Whilst it avoids the complete closure of operations and allows funding to continue to flow, it poses programmatic challenges, including for needs assessment and targeting, monitoring, accountability and strategic planning.

More needs to be done by way of strategic policy formulation to ensure that programme effectiveness is maintained, and that the risk to national providers is accurately assessed and mitigated. These findings point to a need to address the problem of building local capacity. The development of local capacities should be seen as an objective, rather than a by-product of operating in insecure environments, requiring a fundamental shift in the way the humanitarian response system is driven and managed. This is not to ignore the attendant risks that come with more localised responses, but to suggest that the current operating environment is an uncomfortable and unsustainable halfway house.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations below attempt to address some of the key areas of weakness identified in this report. The research team did not consider it helpful to address the full range of policy and operational issues that merit consideration by aid providers and donors. While numerous, many of these gaps have already been considered by previous studies, and guidelines for action can be found in the existing literature on operational security (which remains, unfortunately, well ahead of practice). Rather, we have identified areas for action which flow from the main conclusions of the study regarding security management, coordination and financing; overall approaches to aid in volatile and politicised contexts; and the security of national aid staff and partners. The recommendations focus on four main stakeholder groups: individual operational agencies, inter-agency networks, the UN and its humanitarian programmes and funds and donor governments. The recommendations conclude with a section identifying issues requiring further study and strategic thinking.

5.2.1 Operational agencies

- Within each agency, develop incentives for field security incident data reporting. Rather than developing additional parallel systems, make use of software platforms already available (e.g. VRA) to promote centralised data sharing and analysis.
- Develop and invest in proactive 'acceptance' strategies, which are continually pursued and maintained through the life of the programme.
- Identify and support an equitable level of security inputs for local actors, including national staff. This should include proportionate representation in security training and briefings and the provision of security materials in the national language, as well as access to security assets (including for local entities).
- Incorporate security-related adaptations such as remote management options into programme planning and preparedness exercises, and develop criteria covering when to deploy them. Ideally, this should be done in inter-agency security fora at the field level, so that plans can be shared and coordinated.
- Develop guiding principles and a practical knowledge base on remote management and other adaptations in programming used when international access declines. Guiding principles will include considerations of how to accurately assess risk to local staff and ethical issues to guard against the shifting of the risk burden on local entities, who may be less able to ensure their own security and may feel compelled to assume the risk for economic or altruistic reasons. This should be a particular consideration when programmes are not 'life-saving' activities.
- Where possible, explore programmatic ways to emphasise and invest in capacity rather than simply project delivery.

5.2.2 Inter-agency steps

- Increase the sharing and storing of 'desensitised' incident information and analysis – based on indicators agreed through inter-agency fora. This should be done in such a way that it is non-resource intensive.
- Inter-agency field security services (such as that of ANSO) should be set up for this purpose. This should involve more than the dissemination of lists of incidents, to include basic analysis and identification of patterns/trends. Where possible, government authorities should be involved to increase the host state's awareness and overall responsibility.
- Include security resource requirements in the Consolidated Appeals Process as programme-related costs; standardising this costing at the sector level would be helpful.

- Address shortcomings in the dissemination, utilisation and understanding of existing security tools and methods. For instance:
  - survey and promote the sharing of recent innovations in the financing of core and programme security resources;
  - survey and increase the common development of agency policies and procedures in security management and training; and
  - promote and engage in more explicit sharing of operational approaches and security behaviour in high-risk contexts.
- Share and document experience of engaging commercial security providers. This should lead to a baseline for promoting standards in usage.

5.2.3 The United Nations

- Make clear what services UNDSS can provide to UN agencies, and its limitations. Agencies will continue to have sub-field and implementation costs that need to be supported independently. A joint IASMN–donor process might be useful to determine the appropriate division of labour, the comparative costs and possible shortfalls.
- Support UNDSS in its dialogue with UN member states over a clearer set of guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of host governments. A means to incentivise and hold host states to account could be explored.

5.2.4 Donor governments

- Consider and address the implications for partner agencies of insisting upon donor branding and the visibility of funding sources, as well as the pressures placed on agencies to respond or stay engaged in contexts based on strategic interest, rather than according to need.
- Engage systematically with the implications of remote management in terms of costs, quality and impact. There is a general acceptance that quality will suffer when working in insecure environments, but little appreciation of innovative programming approaches to mitigate these effects.
- Given that insecurity is likely to persist in some contexts, and local actors will remain at the forefront of service delivery, consider mechanisms for partnership similar to those in relation to natural disaster preparedness and mitigation support for local entities. These could include encouraging access to multilateral funding pools, such as the Common Funds being trialled in Sudan and the DRC.
- Establish an inter-governmental donor forum to share security information and develop more common orientation across UN agency executive boards and proposal guidelines on security issues. Possible fora for this discussion include the Humanitarian Liaison Working Group (HLWG), OCHA's Donor Steering Group (ODSG), or within the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative.
- Assist in efforts to better define the roles and responsibilities of host states, and support UNDSS' efforts to encourage host states to live up to their obligations (through the Host Country Agreement).

5.2.5 Areas for further study

- A firmer, empirically based understanding of what works in security management, including the effectiveness of security training, is critical to positive developments in the sector.
- The allegedly increasing use of private security companies, along with other deterrence measures, is poorly understood, and warrants an open examination and dialogue among aid actors.
- The scarcity of data on rape and gender-based violence against aid workers limits our understanding of how aid operations are affected. International organisations and academic institutes have done considerable work over the past decade on researching and reporting violence against women. This could prove useful to aid organisations in investigating and establishing a means to report this particular type of violence, while respecting ethical and privacy issues and questions of safety.
- The study found that the road remains the most dangerous place for aid workers, with the majority of violence occurring in the context of ambushes or the targeting of moving vehicles. While not a surprising finding, safe alternative (and cost-effective) options could be explored for the transport of staff and goods, along with a renewed emphasis on practical measures and inputs such as defensive driving training and travel protocols.
- Invest in policy analysis around the implications of low-profile and deterrence strategies – both in terms of their humanitarian and security impacts.

Annex 1
List of interviewees

General study

UN humanitarian agencies

Bill Gent, UNICEF Security Co-ordinator, Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF,
Leon Terblanche, Security Focal Point, UNDP
Patrick Beaufour, Security Focal Point, WHO
Janie McCusker, Security Focal Point, UNFPA
Andrew Lukach, Security Focal Point, WFP
Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, Security Focal Point, OCHA
Sarah Muscroft, Protection of Civilians, OCHA

United Nations Department of Safety and Security

John Almstrom, OIC, Division of Regional Operations, Global responsibilities,
Alan Brimelow, Desk Officer, Asia, Pacific & Middle East Region
Terence Burke, Chief of West Africa Section
Gerald Ganz, Director, East Africa Region
Stephen Gluning, Desk Officer, East Africa Region
Graeme Membrey, Security Coordination Officer Asia, Pacific and Middle East Region, including Tsunami affected Countries and Nepal
Robert Painter, Humanitarian Security Adviser & Communications Officer
Michael Phelps, Special Projects Coordinator
Richard Floyer-Acland, DSS policy
Sir David Veness, USG for Safety and Security
Gary D. Ermutlu, Head, Threat Assessment Unit

IOs

Patrick Brugger, Head of Security, ICRC
Lars Tangen, Manager Security Unit, IFRC

INGOs and inter-agency fora

Sam Sherman, InterAction (formerly IRC, Senior Technical Advisor)
Maret Laev, Security Programme Manager, RedR
Robert Laprade, SCF US
Michael O'Neill, SCF US
Randy Martin, Mercy Corps
Dominic Crowley, Head of Emergency, Concern
Carolyn Miller, CEO, Merlin
Linda Doull, Health Adviser, Merlin
David Wightwick, Head of Operations, Merlin
Ian Gray, Head of Humanitarian & Emergency Support, World Vision UK
Kiruja Micheni, Security Manager, Christian Aid
Heather Hughes, Security Adviser, Oxfam GB
Simon Springett, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Oxfam GB
Sophie Battas, Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Horn, East and Central Africa, Oxfam GB
Frank Catania, Americares
Raymond Bonniwell, Global Rapid Response Team Security Advisor, World Vision
Mike Weickert, World Vision Canada
Otto Farkas, World Vision Canada
Roger Perschino, AAH, NY
Toby Porter, Head of Emergency, SCF UK
Kevin Ulmer, CARE
Kenny Gluck, ex Head of Operations, MSF Holland
Pierre Salignon, Director of MSF France
Marc Poncin, Deputy general director, MSF Switzerland
Marilyn McHarg, Director of Operations, MSF Switzerland
Nick Downie, Global Security Advisor, Mercy Corps
Suzanne Keatinge, Humanitarian Policy Officer, Trócaire
Eva Smets, DRC, Oxfam GB,
Kenneth Flemmer, Bureau Chief for Internal Control and Compliance, ADRA

Donor governments

Shawn Bardwell, Head of Security, USAID/DCHA/OFDA
Miriam Lutz, Humanitarian Coordination Specialist (UN/NGO/Donor Coordinator) Office of the Director, USAID/DCHA/OFDA
Dennis King, Humanitarian Affairs Analyst, Humanitarian Information Unit, US Department of State
Anthony Val Flynn, Head of Security, ECHO
Matt Baugh, PCRU, UK
Meinrad Studer, Senior Advisor, Division of Multilateral Affairs and Special Assignments, Department of Humanitarian Aid c/o Permanent Mission of Switzerland

Independent and academics

Pierre Gassmann, Program Advisor, Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, Harvard University
Vincenzo Bollettino, Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, Harvard University
Shaun Bickley, independent consultant
Dirk Salomons, Director, Humanitarian Affairs Program, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University

Field personnel – Afghanistan

UN

Christopher Alexander, DSRSG, Pillar 1 – Political Affairs, UNAMA
Anne Falher, Relief, Recovery and Reconstruction / Civil Affairs Officer, UNAMA (Gardez)
Jacques Mouchet, Country Director, UNHCR

Sultan Muhammad, Security Assistant, UNHCR
Haris Wahidi, Assistant Field Security Advisor, Jalalabad, UNHCR

United Nations Department of Safety and Security
Gert Keulder, Area Field Security Coordinator Kabul, Central Region, UNDSS
Jean Lausberg, UN Field Security Coordinator, Afghanistan, UNDSS
Craig Harrisson, Senior Data Analyst, UNDSS
Rashid Osman, Database Officer, UNDSS
Christian Friedrichs, Area Field Security Coordinator, Jalalabad, Eastern Region, UNDSS
Rodney D. Cocks, Area Field Security Coordinator, Kandahar, UNDSS

NGOs
Paul Barker, Country Director, CARE
Christian Willach, Operations Coordinator & Head of Office, Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO)
Syed Muzaffar, Operations Manager, Mercy Corps
Thomas Loreaux, Head of Mission, Action contre la Faim (ACF)
Eng. Bahadur Khapalwak, Program Coordinator, Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA)
Abdul Ghani Kazimi, Secretary General, Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS)
Robert Kluyver, Director, Foundation for Culture and Civil Society (FCCS)
Anja de Beer, Director, Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR)
Pashtun Atef, Administrator, COOPI
Rahmatullah Kakar, Head of Office, Mercy Corps
Abdul Salam Siddiqi, Deputy Head of Office, VARA
Dr. Ghulam Sakhi, Head of Office, ADA
Dr. Khalilullah Hikmati, Head of office, NDI (National Democratic Institute)
Nelofar, Head of office, RASA

IOs
Jean Nicolas Marti, Deputy Head of Delegation, ICRC
Muhammad Naim, Security Officer, GTZ

International, local and umbrella NGOs
Khisrow, Deputy of Regional Office, Jalalabad, Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO)
Ammo Wais, National Safety Advisor, ANSO
Eng. Ajab Khan, Field officer, MADERA
Eng. Razi Sha, Director, MSSAA
Dr. Abdul Salam Talib, Director, SHARQ
Mir Emadudine, Coordination officer, ACBAR

Donors
Nick Marinacci, Director of Civil Military Affairs, USAID
John Myers, Head of Office, ECHO

Government
H.E. Eng. Zarar, Acting Minister of Interior and Deputy Minister of Interior, Ministry of Interior
Andreas Schild, Team Leader, Oversight Consultant, MRRD/GTZ, National Solidarity Programme
Dr. Humayon Deputy Governor of Kandahar, Kandahar Governorate
Dr. Muhammad Asif Qazizada, Deputy Governor of Eastern Region, Nangarhar Governorate

Military
Fatih Ulusoy, Political Advisor to NATO, Senior Civilian Representative, NATO/ISAF
Captain Dave Mcallister, PRT Operation Officer, Kandahar,
Sgt. Steven Kling, Head of PRT Jalalabad, PRT (Jalalabad)

Personalities and/or Afghan veterans
Paul Fishstein, Director, AREU
Jolyon Leslie, CEO, Aga Khan Trust for Culture (AKTC)
Robert Kluyver, Ex-Director, UNAMA Kandahar

Private entities
Gazi Darici, CEO, Cukurova, Turkish contractor
Muhammad Omar, Director, MCC
Eng. Khan Muhammad, Director, DEGRA

Local media
Najiba Ayubi, Manager, The Killid Group
Shir Bahadur Hemat, Manager, Spin Ghar Radio

Field personnel – Chechnya/North Caucasus

UN
Joseph Hegenauer, Head of UNHCR NC, UNHCR
Henry Chamberlain, Head of Sub Office, WFP
Nevan Burzic, Head of Sub Office, OCHA
Madina Shanayeva, Assistant, OCHA

UNDSS
Ruslan Elmurzaev, Field Security Coordination Assistant, UNDSS
Vladimir Petrov, Field Security Coordination Assistant, UNDSS
Maxim Kamarzaev, Field Security Coordination Assistant, UNDSS
Area Security Coordinator, UNDSS

NGOs
Mohammad A. Ammar, Head of Office, Islamic Relief
Emir Shomakhovso, Security Officer, Islamic Relief
Azamat Ulbashev, Program Manager, Islamic Relief
Zalina Tsatsaeva, Program Coordinator, ACF
Adam Susarov, Security Officer, ACF
Zhakhman Akbulatov, Head of Centre, Memorial
Tamerlan Akiev, Lawyer, Memorial

Ruslan Zyazikov, Head of Office, CHA
Edilbek Mulaev, Staff Member, CHA
Michael Young, Country Director, IRC
Batyr Parchiev, Director, Open Continent
Leila Dzeitova, Director, Vesta
Madina Kodzoeva, Program Coordinator, Vesta
Sandrine Pont Turco, Program Coordinator, CPCD
Aishat Balkhaeva, Administrator, CPCD
Lyudmila Nikulova, Education PC, CPCD
W. David Womble, Program Director, World Vision
Per Albert Ilsaas, Country Director, DRC
Khamzat Kurbanov, Liaison Officer and Interpreter, MSF (Holland)
Frans Barnard, Country Representative, CARE (Canada)

IOs
Askar Umarbekov, Regional Field Delegate, ICRC
Ozkan Beceren, Head of Office, Ingushetia, ICRC
Peter Mikula, Attaché, RF Humanitarian Coordinator, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Field personnel – DRC

Anneke Van Woudenberg, Senior Researcher DRC, Human Rights Watch
Guy Marriott, Ground Truth Consulting
Robert Roots, Desk Officer, BRCS
Francois Grignon, Head Joint Analysis Cell Kinshasa, MONUC
David Lewis, Correspondent, Reuters
Eva Smets, Policy/Advocacy Coordinator, Oxfam GB
Rachel Scott Leflaive, Head, Field Coordination and Analysis Unit, OCHA
Laurent Guepin, Deputy Head CAS (HAS), MONUC
Simon Ashmore, Assistant Head of Delegation, ICRC
Stephen Blight, Program Director, SCUK
Lise Grande, Assistant to DSRSG, MONUC
Ros Cooper, Human Development Advisor, DfID
Roger Arsenault, CSO, MONUC
Luc VanDamme, Deputy CSO, MONUC
Jay Nash, Representative, OFDA
Richard Snellen, Head CAS (HAS), MONUC
Kevin Ray, Liaison Officer, World Vision
Joseph Gomis, UNDSS/FSO
Daniel Augstburger, Head of Office, OCHA
Patrick Vercammen, Head of Office, ECHO
David Goetghebuer, Head of Mission, MSF-Belgium
Xavier Bardou, Assistant Director, IRC
Eric Le Guen, Global Security Advisor, IRC
Michel Kassa, Representative, Woodrow Wilson International Center
Sarita Bingeman, Information Officer, Goma, OCHA
Patrick Lavand'Homme, Head of Office, OCHA
Fred Meylan, Head of Mission, MSF-H
Demba Dicko, UNDSS/FSO
Linda Edwards, Country Manager, Merlin
Philippe Rougier, Assistant Country Director, Concern
Patrick Evrard, Head of Project, AAA
Nagette Belgacem, Coordinator, Protection Cluster, UNHCR
Anna Kumodzi-Agbeviade, Head of Sub Office, UNHCR
Aya Shneerson, Head of Sub Office, WFP
Jannes van der Wijk, Director, CIF
Earn Grimes, Deputy SO, MONUC
Fura Barrow, Investigations, MONUC
Francois Bellet, Country Director, Solidarites
Karen Bjornestad, Country Director, NRC
Johannes Wedenig, Head of Office (East), UNICEF
Jean-Charles Dupin, Good Humanitarian Donorship Officer, OCHA

Local NGOs – Goma
Hangi Binni, Directeur, B.E.E.D. Eper Suisse
Delphine Ittongwa, Secrétaire Exécutive, GEAD
Ed Vreeke, Directeur, ASRAMES
Kubuya Muhangi, Secrétaire Exécutif, CRONGD
Leopold Rutinigirwa, Chargé des Programmes, Pole Institute
Lyne Lusi, Programme Manager, DOCs
Mtangala Lumpa, Président du CA, Réseau CREF
Nestor Musumba, Coordinateur, BOAD
Sylvie Zawadi, Coordinatrice Adjointe, Antenna Technologies

Field personnel – Iraq

Note: Over 40 additional people were interviewed for this report who wished for themselves or for their organization to remain anonymous; they are not listed here.
Garry Vardon-Smith, Police Adviser British Embassy, Baghdad Hostage Working Group
Major Heide Bronke, MNFI CMO, Executive Coordinator, NCCI, Information Officer, NCCI, Baghdad Coordinator, NCCI, Security Officer, NCCI
John Pace, Former Head, UNAMI Human Rights Office
Yacoub El Hillo, UNAMI Deputy SRSG on Reconstruction and Humanitarian Affairs
Joost Hiltermann, Middle East Project Director, International Crisis Group
Martin Ocaga, IDP Programme Manager, IOM
Eman Siam, Programme Officer, Civil Society, UNOPS
Hazel Siri, Programme Officer, IDPs and Refugees, UNOPS, Security Officer, UNOPS
Schoeman A., UNDSS Amman
Vincent Kennedy, Chief of Iraq Desk, UNDSS

Field personnel – Somalia

Phillippe Lazzarini, Head of Office, OCHA
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Abdulaziz M. Ahmed, HA Officer, Mogadishu, OCHA
Reena Ghelani, Protection Officer, OCHA
Yussuf Abdi Salah, HA Officer, Wajid, OCHA
Sidi Zahabi, ROLS Programme Manager, UNDP
Safia Jama, Hargeisa Liaison Officer, UNDP
Chr. Balslev-Olesen, Head of UNICEF, UNDP HC (Acting)

Zlatan Milisic, WFP
Ibrahim Conteh, Wajid, WFP
Ali, Wajid, WFP
Nadir Benguernane, Security Officer, UNICEF
Chr. Balslev-Olesen, UNICEF
Robert McCarthy, UNICEF
Danielle Keulen, Wajid, UNICEF
Amina Ibrahim, UNICEF
Abukor Sheikh Madobe, Wajid, UNICEF
Mahimbo Mdoe, Hargeisa, UNICEF
Addo Aden, Baidoa, FAO/FSAU
Abdulaziz Aden, Wajid, FAO/FSAU
Simon Narbeth, Nairobi, FAO/FSAU
Joe Gordon, Head, UNDSS
Arve Skog, Deputy, UNDSS
Parakrama Siriwardana, Hargeisa, UNDSS
Salah Omer, Nairobi, UNDSS
Isaak Subuk, Wajid, UNDSS
Patrick Udeh, Wajid, UNDSS
Lex Kassenberg, CARE
Pascal Hundt, ICRC
Jeff Ohanga, Security Officer, NGO SPAS
Yusuf Abdi Hassan, Security Officer, Hargeisa, NGO SPAS
Barry Steyn, Program Manager, NGO SPAS
Zoe Daniels, Country Rep., Mercy Corps
Rosemary Heenan, Director, Gedo Health Consortium
Graham Davison, World Vision
Ulrike Last, Handicap International
Zabebew Zellek, Save the Children/ UK
El-Khidir Daloum, Save the Children/ UK
Reiseal NiCheilleachair, Concern Worldwide
Abdirashid Kahaji, Mogadishu, Concern Worldwide
Gunnar Kraft, DRC
Hugh Fenton, DRC
Nick Bateman, DDG
Xavier Duboc, ACF
Romain Lasjuilliaras, ACF
Josep, MSF/E/NL/B/CH
Edwin Mbagati, ADRA
Abdikadir Diad, Admin/Logistics
Sara Reggio, Novib
Degan Ali, Horn Relief
Abdirizak Gerio, SADO
Mohammed Gani, Hargeisa, Academy for Peace and Development
Hassan, Mogadishu, Centre for Research and Development
Isabel Candela, EC Somalia

Field personnel – Sudan

Gemmo Lodesani, Humanitarian Coordinator for North Sudan, UNMIS
Philip Shetler-Jones, Office of the Principal DSRSG, UNMIS
Niels Scott, Head of Regional Office for Darfur, UNMIS
Daniel Toole, Director of the Office of Emergency Programmes, UNICEF
Roshan Khadivi, Spokesperson North Sudan, UNICEF
Jonathan Veitch, Programme Officer Darfur, UNICEF
Luc Lam, Spokesperson North Sudan, WFP
Radhia Achouri, Spokesperson, UNMIS
Stephen Gluning, Field Security Coordinator Sudan, UNDSS
Wieland Mulders, Security Officer, UNMIS/UMAC
Mark Deasy, Security Officer, WFP
Mark Kelly, Security Officer, WFP
Ron Turnbull, Senior Security Officer, UNICEF
William Harrison, Field Security Coordinator, North Darfur, UNDSS
Grainne O'Hara, Head of Office, West Darfur, UNHCR Zalingei

Sudanese NGOs
Mohamed Mazjoub Fidiel, Country Director Sudan, Practical Action
Ibrahim Mudawi, Chairperson, Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO)
Bishop Adi Ambrose, Vice President, Sudanese Red Crescent Society (SRCS)
Hashim Zakaria, Director-General, Sudanese Popular Committee for Relief and Rehabilitation (SPCR), South Darfur

INGOs/ICRC
Yasmine Praz Dessimoz, Head of Darfur Operations, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
Patrick Hanson, Senior Safety and Security Advisor, CARE
Ellie Salkeld, Project Manager, RedR-IHE
Mark Schneider, Country Representative, Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Donors
Mia Beers, Team Leader Darfur Field Office, USAID
Glyn Taylor, Humanitarian Advisor for Darfur, DFID
Cyprien Fabre, Darfur expert, ECHO

INGOs
Gaya Kezele, Field Coordinator, IRC
Karl Frey, North Darfur Programme Coordinator, Oxfam
Martin Onjerinwa, Security/Logistics Officer, Relief International
Anne Masterson, Darfur Emergency Director, ACT/Caritas/NCA
Sarjo Keita, Security Officer, American Refugee Committee (ARC)
Eyob Gedachew, Head of Mission, World Vision International (WVI)
Lone Clausen, Program Manager, Danish Refugee Council
Abdikadir Mohamud, Head of Office Zalingei, Mercy Corps
Cherine Pollini, Head of Sub-Delegation Zalingei, ICRC

Localisation

INGOs
Nick Guttman, Head of Emergencies, Christian Aid

Oliver Burch, Iraq Programme Manager, Christian Aid
Jock Baker, Quality & Accountability Coordinator, CARE International
Simon Springett, Regional Coordinator, Oxfam
Colin Rogers, Oxfam
Kurt Tjossem, IRC Deputy Regional Director, E Africa
Manisha Thomas, ICVA
Ed Schenkenberg, ICVA
Lola Gostelow, Ex-SCF
Anamul Haque, Head of Emergencies, Islamic Relief

Local NGOs
Dr Costatinos Berhe-Tesfu, Africa Humanitarian Action
Various Iraqi LNGOs via Christian Aid
Dr Waqfi, CHA Afghanistan

UN
Sheila Grudem, Emergencies Unit, WFP
Inayet Madani, OCHA Aceh

Donors
Joanna Macrae, DFID
Eva Grambye, Denmark
Mikael Lindvall, Sweden
Kristen Chenier, Canada
Miriam Lutz, OFDA
Alex Mahoney, Rick Quinby, OFDA Middle East/Europe desk
Joost Andriessen, Netherlands
Moira Reddick, International Programme Advisory, British Red Cross
Various desk officers, British Red Cross
Flemming Nielsen, IFRC Operational Support Advisor
Jamila Ibrohim, Former Head, IFRC Afghanistan
Matthias Fraser, ICRC Somalia
Christophe Driesse, ICRC Chechnya
Juan Saenz, Latin America/capacity building
John Telford, TEC synthesis
Greg Brady, Director, IWG Emergency Capacity Building Project

Annex 2
Results of regression analysis

Percentage change in denominator: Usually this variable had a positive effect on each of the dependent variables. This result does not hold for international victims, however. Controlling for other factors, an increase in the percentage change of the denominator did not lead to an increase in the percentage change in the number of international victims; in fact, it led to a slight reduction (although this effect is not statistically significant).

Civil war: Again, in all cases except the percentage change in international victims the presence of civil war led to a reduction in the percentage change of the number of victims. This result is perhaps counterintuitive – there are fewer victims when there is a civil war.

International war: This variable led to a marked increase in the percentage change of national victims and separate incidents as well as total victims, but again was not at all significant for international victims.

Civil violence: Civil violence led to a smaller percentage change in the number of victims at the national level and in the number of separate incidents, but it led to a percentage increase in the number of international victims.

No violence: The absence of violent conflict led to a percentage reduction in the number of national victims and total victims and the number of separate incidents. It seems to have led to a slight increase in the percentage change in the number of international victims.

Peacekeeping: The presence of a UN peacekeeping mission significantly reduced the percentage change in the number of total victims. However, it also seemed to lead to a slight, but statistically significant, increase in the percentage increase in the number of international victims. The effects were not significant for the percentage change in the number of national victims or the number of separate incidents.

Transition: The effect of transition was not statistically significant at conventional levels. These statistically insignificant results hint that transitions seemed to reduce the percentage change in the number of victims.

Foreign intervention, regional: This variable caused a marginally significant reduction in the percentage change in the number of international victims, but it was not statistically significant. It had no effect on the other dependent variables.

Rule of law: The rule of law variable never worked. It reduced the sample size to only 15 observations because it does not include Somalia, Sudan or Chechnya (half of the contexts for which we have a denominator) and there is some missing data for the three countries it does include (Iraq, DRC and Afghanistan). In all specifications it had no effect on the percentage change in victims.

Military intervention by foreign forces of one or more great power countries; presence of a transnational terrorist organisation; presence of armed groups; use of integrated mission approach by the UN. One of the most robust findings of the analysis is that these variables had no statistically significant impact on any of the dependent variables. It is safe to say that these variables are not important determinants of violence against humanitarian aid workers.

The constant term: In these specifications the constant term can be understood as the 'baseline' percentage change in the relevant dependent variables. All of them are positive, suggesting that there is a baseline upward percentage change in the number of humanitarian aid worker victims in those categories. However, the constant term for 'international' aid workers is negative, suggesting a generally downward trend in victims in that category (precisely the opposite of the other categories). The other factors listed above lessen this downward trend.

In summary, the results for 'Total', 'National' and 'Separate Incidents' behave in an explainable way. The results for 'Internationals' appear to be the exception. The results are consistent with the results from the descriptive statistics, which indicate that two different processes are going on. Being a humanitarian aid worker is becoming more dangerous for nationals and less dangerous for internationals. Peacekeeping missions and the absence of civil violence are mitigating factors that reduce this general trend.

Table 5: Results of regression analysis

	Total	Nationals	Internationals	Separate incidents
Denominator (% change)	11.533*** (3.558)	1.621** (0.695)	–0.028 (0.346)	0.972*** (0.300)
Civil war	–44.538*** (15.660)	–7.620** (3.059)	1.188 (0.787)	–3.346** (1.322)
Int'l War	47.604*** (15.916)	6.705** (3.109)	–	2.725* (1.344)
Civil Violence	–36.061** (15.351)	–6.446** (2.998)	1.361* (0.701)	–2.591* (1.296)
No Violence	–39.409*** (12.715)	–6.945*** (2.484)	1.542* (0.742)	–3.123*** (1.074)
Peacekeeping	–14.918* (7.391)	–2.075 (1.444)	0.903* (0.501)	–0.615 (0.624)
Transition	–22.538 (16.162)	–4.664 (3.157)	–	–1.926 (1.365)
Intervention Regional			–1.543 (1.031)	
Constant	42.568** (15.836)	8.090** (3.093)	–1.531* (0.752)	3.343** (1.337)
Observations R-squared	41 0.73	41 0.62	26 0.30	41 0.62

Standard errors in parentheses
* significant at 10%; ** significant at 5%; *** significant at 1%

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Note: Incident data for the global dataset for 1997-2005 was also obtained from news reports, press releases, internal organization documents and field and headquarters-based interviews. These sources are not listed below.

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