PRESENCE & PROXIMITY

TO STAY AND DELIVER, FIVE YEARS ON

NRC NORWEGIAN REFUGEE COUNCIL

OCHA

Jindal School of International Affairs
India's First Global Policy School

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Independent study

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AWSD Aid Worker Security Database

CAR Central African Republic

CBO community-based organization

CSO civil society organization

DO Designated Official

DRC Democratic Republic of the Congo

DSRSG Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General

ECHO Directorate-General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, European Commission

ERM Emergency Response Mechanism

GHA Global Humanitarian Assistance

HC Humanitarian Coordinator

HCT Humanitarian Country Team

IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee

ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross

IED improvised explosive device

IFRC International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

INGO international non-governmental organization

INSO International NGO Safety Organisation

IHL international humanitarian law

ISIL Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

JOPs Joint Operating Principles

JSIA Jindal School of International Affairs

MSF Médecins Sans Frontières

NGO non-governmental organization

NRC Norwegian Refugee Council

OCHA United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

RC Resident Coordinator

SAVE Secure Access in Volatile Environments (research project)

SLT Saving Lives Together

SMS Security Management System

SMT Security Management Team

UN United Nations

UNDSS United Nations Department of Safety and Security

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund

UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

WFP World Food Programme

FOREWORD

It has always been the greatest of challenges for humanitarians to be able to provide assistance and enhance protection when civilians in conflict and disaster victims need us the most. Yet, the immense risk and complexity of humanitarian operations is putting into jeopardy our ability to help safeguard the lives of the world's most vulnerable people. Civilians bear the brunt of conflicts and humanitarians are not spared.

In 2011, OCHA published a landmark study, *To Stay and Deliver,* which collected and documented humanitarian organizations' good practices in deploying and delivering relief in highly insecure environments. The report provided advice and recommendations in critical response areas such as how to manage risk, build responsible partnerships, adhere to humanitarian principles, and build acceptance and negotiations with relevant actors. The report advocated for further cultural change, moving away from a 'bunkerized approach' towards adopting more nimble, innovative ways to stay and provide assistance despite the odds. As the study and its recommendations gathered momentum among humanitarian practitioners, *Stay and Deliver* became the motto of many organizations in managing risks in field operations rather than putting them on hold. Instead of asking "when do we have to leave" a dangerous place, the question became "how do we stay" for those who need us the most.
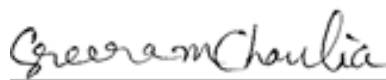
Five years on, as insecurity in a number of complex crises continues to grow and humanitarian access remains incredibly challenging in numerous contexts, OCHA brought together the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA) to take stock of progress made and growing challenges since 2011. This independent follow-up study, *Presence and Proximity - To Stay and Deliver, Five Years On,* captures contextual, institutional and operational changes since 2011. With a focus on practice, it provides insight into what has changed and how and presents areas of progress that can be built on: humanitarians are nowadays present in some areas where most would not have remained a decade ago and making efforts to develop capacity to do so. It also highlights shortcomings that require our further attention. In this regard, proximity to affected-populations is a key issue being raised. Proximity is critical to understand and respond to commensurate humanitarian needs and reach the most vulnerable. It is critical for protection analysis and effective programming. Yet, in several of the world's most complex conflict environments, humanitarian actors see themselves forced to adopt remote management approaches.

The study presents practical recommendations for humanitarians, Member States, donors and parties to conflict to adopt so that, even in the most brutal of conflicts, people in need can access the basics they need to survive and be safer. From strengthening principled and proximate responses to reinforcing duty of care, from questioning our practices to developing collective learning, we must collectively continue to reflect on such questions and other points of attention raised in the report.
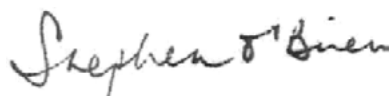
OCHA, NRC and JSIA are committed to strengthen dialogue between humanitarian organizations and with donors, Member States and parties to the conflict to support humanitarian action and put the recommendations into practice. We hope this study will encourage constructive engagement, and renew our collective momentum on improving response in even the most critically challenging environments so that we collectively ensure the world's most acutely vulnerable people are not left behind.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

Humanitarians operating in highly volatile environments face a wide range of institutional, operational, access, and security challenges that necessitate carefully designed responses and mitigation measures. These challenges and good practices were analyzed and subsequent recommendations provided in a landmark study, entitled *To Stay and Deliver: Good Practice for Humanitarians in Complex Security Environments*, commissioned by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in 2011. Five years on, the purpose of the present study is to examine progress in responding to the various issues raised in the original 2011 report.

More specifically, the present study examines the following questions.

→ How have the threats and risks facing humanitarian action in highly insecure environments shifted or developed since the publication of *To Stay and Deliver*, and what other contextual changes have emerged?

→ What institutional, operational, and cultural changes – with a focus on those recommended in *To Stay and Deliver* – have occurred since 2011, and what factors (e.g., institutional, cultural, financial, contextual, etc.) have enabled or impeded the adoption of these recommendations? Similarly, what persistent challenges appear to have remained over the past half-decade?

→ How have humanitarian organizations changed the ways they manage security risks, and what effects – to the extent discernible – have these strategies had on operational security, presence/proximity, and programming?

→ What factors have enabled or discouraged such changes? Have humanitarian organizations adopted new ways to maintain presence and proximity and conduct operations on the ground, and what results in assistance and protection have these achieved?

→ Building on the successes and addressing the complications that have emerged since 2011, what steps could be taken to further the objectives of *To Stay and Deliver*?

In addressing these questions, the authors consulted headquarters, regional, and country stakeholders in New York, Nairobi, Amman, and Geneva. They undertook field-based case studies in Afghanistan and the Central African Republic (CAR) and carried out desk-based case studies on Syria and Yemen. The research team also designed an online survey. These methods provided the researchers with access to a large cross-section of humanitarian actors – more than 2,000 individuals – operating in highly insecure environments. Despite the broad sample size, this study was undertaken over five months and the case studies were limited in number. As such, the study does not necessarily reflect all areas where progress has been made and all challenges that remain; nor can it overcome the deficits in existing data, which are outlined in the full report.

THE CONTEXT

Since the publication in 2011 of *To Stay and Deliver*, new conflicts have broken out and others have recurred, or intensified, in a range of locations. International humanitarian law (IHL) is increasingly disregarded in many of these contexts. Groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have emerged, and factions within long-standing armed groups such as the Taliban and Al-Shabaab have become more hostile toward humanitarians.

While some of the players involved in contemporary conflicts may be different and the geography of humanitarian insecurity may have changed (e.g., with some countries becoming more secure while others have become less so), other contextual dimensions remain similar to those that existed when *To Stay and Deliver* was published. State and non-state armed actors continue to affect, hinder, or deliberately obstruct access in many places, and political factors, including counterterrorism legislation, continue to pose dilemmas for principled humanitarian action.

Among contextual dimensions, three developments were repeatedly highlighted by interviewees and merit attention here.

First, since 2011 humanitarian appeals and funding have increased markedly, generally as a result of rising needs, and the overall humanitarian financing gap – the difference between resources requested and those received by humanitarian agencies – has also grown consistently. Governments contributed roughly 40 percent more in 2014 than they did in 2010, and appeals rose by 39 percent over the same period. These increases in appeals, funding, field-level activity, and funding gaps reflect the growth of humanitarian needs across a range of conflict zones, most notably the CAR, Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. To cite just one statistic from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in 2015 more than 65 million people were forcibly displaced by conflict, compared to 51.2 million in 2013 and 37.5 million in 2005. At the end of 2015 the overall number of internally displaced people as a result of conflict or violence reached the record figure of 40.8 million, according to the 2016 *Global Report on Internal Displacement*.

Second, greater attention to security concerns affecting humanitarian workers has resulted in the creation of a series of policy frameworks, organizations, working groups, databases, and businesses. For instance, a growing number of non-governmental organization (NGO) safety platforms exist in conflict-affected countries around the world. In addition to increased participation in platforms, most humanitarian organizations consulted for the present study noted that they have increased the size of their security teams in high-risk environments and, at the global level, developed or revised related guidelines.

However, these developments remain focused upon and embedded within international humanitarian entities rather than among national and local organizations that are so often present at the front lines. Some interviewees expressed concern that added security policies and positions, where they are seen as out of step with perceived risks, could lead to a greater sense of vulnerability and increase risk aversion.

Third, humanitarians expressed an increased sense of risk and vulnerability, even though most major security incidents affecting humanitarians occur in a very small number of countries and tend to reflect the increased level of humanitarian activity in proximity to ongoing conflict rather than expanded targeting of humanitarians around the world. While weaknesses in available data must be acknowledged, a small number of trends were identified in the data and strongly supported by the case study research. Incidents affecting international aid workers have decreased proportionally, while incidents affecting national aid workers have increased. Furthermore, the types of humanitarian security incidents have also changed, with abductions on the rise (again limited to a small number of contexts). Criminality is seen as a rising threat that humanitarian actors are struggling to address. (For additional statistics on perceived security risks identified by survey respondents, see Annex E.)

KEY FINDINGS AND PRACTICES

This study identified a series of findings related to the overarching issue of whether humanitarian actors have become better at staying and delivering in an effective and responsible manner. In addition, the research delved into specific practices that have enabled or undermined staying and delivering.

OVERARCHING FINDINGS

➔ Humanitarians demonstrate a strong desire to stay and deliver amid insecurity, and it is evident that the key messages of the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* study resonate with and have been internalized by a wide range of humanitarian actors. UN agencies and NGOs are deployed or maintaining a sizable field presence in some highly insecure contexts. They would not have done so five or ten years ago.

Yemen is one context where UN agencies and certain international NGOs (INGOs) strongly reflected this commitment. As the conflict escalated in March 2015, a number of humanitarian stakeholders were forced to evacuate but demonstrated a desire to return at least some staff to certain areas as quickly as possible. Likewise, in Syria UN agencies, national NGOs and INGOs have maintained a presence and engaged in high levels of cross-border and cross-line delivery at great risk. In Afghanistan humanitarian actors have critically examined their approaches to gaining acceptance and, in some hard-to-reach areas like Kandahar and Khost, have expanded their presence through careful, conscious efforts. This expanded presence in certain contexts is likely to bring a range of benefits, including increased accountability, greater understanding of local conditions, an enhanced ability to engage with states and non-state parties to the conflict, greater ability to address needs, and a stronger ability to support national staff and local partners.

➔ At the same time, the commitment of humanitarians to stay and deliver has not always led to maintained or increased presence and proximity in line with the recommendations of the 2011 study.

When violence erupted in Bangui and elsewhere in the CAR in late September 2015, UN agencies resumed operations within days after the violence receded, while some INGOs suspended operations for four months or longer. However, in Afghanistan, after most UN agencies and INGOs evacuated when Kunduz came under Taliban attack in September 2015, the UN struggled for weeks to return and respond to humanitarian needs following destruction of their offices; whereas most INGOs returned relatively quickly and were able to respond to the humanitarian crisis. In parts of Afghanistan, as well as Yemen and Syria, the majority of humanitarian actors were also found to focus their activities on relatively safe areas while neglecting some of the more remote and insecure areas where needs existed.

➔ Many humanitarian organizations were still found to approach risk and key decisions surrounding evacuations, returns, and the use of remote management based on relatively weak analyses and vague perceptions rooted in media coverage of particular crises.

Humanitarian actors were slow to return to particular areas following evacuations, as was the case with many INGOs in Yemen. Those interviewed often pointed to organizational resistance, particularly at the headquarters level, and very subjective approaches to assessing risk as reasons for delay returning to Yemen.

→ The increased use of remote approaches and assistance delivery via subcontractors are growing trends that help certain humanitarian actors to gain or maintain presence while also generating significant risks. Although the mechanics of remote management have improved over the past half-decade, the ease of adopting remote approaches – or working through subcontractors – means that this model is becoming the default choice for some actors in highly insecure environments.

The use of local partners or subcontractors primarily as a risk-transfer strategy – rather than due to local capacity-building agendas – was highlighted as a challenge facing the humanitarian community in many locations. This results from the perception that, first, it is significantly less effective than direct humanitarian programming, and, second, it is being drawn upon even where international humanitarian actors could possibly maintain a more direct presence (e.g., where other humanitarian actors have developed strategies to continue normal operations by investing in acceptance and access initiatives).

→ There is sustained concern among humanitarians regarding humanitarian principles. Behavior and actions on the part of some humanitarian actors have resulted in "self-generated risks."

There has been a renewed attention among humanitarians to informing and engaging with staff and partners on adherence to the core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. Humanitarians have also increasingly engaged with authorities, armed groups, and others actors on respect for these principles. The study identified ways in which certain humanitarian actors have operated in a contrasting manner or counter to these core principles and have otherwise generated additional risks. These include instances where the behavior of humanitarian actors raised tensions with local communities, government actors, and armed groups through a range of relatively basic oversights and missteps, as well as more serious instances which can create further security challenges. These sorts of self-generated risks were raised as a concern by numerous interviewees across the case study countries and beyond. The reasons

underlying such self-generated risks are multifaceted, but include the deployment of personnel with limited experience in particular contexts or in highly insecure environments more broadly; rapid turnover among international staff operating in these locations; and financial pressures to spend donor funds, often within tight time constraints, in volatile environments.

SELECTED OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS AND PRACTICES

The operational developments and specific practices adopted by humanitarians since the publication of *To Stay and Deliver* in 2011 are wide-ranging, and are described fully in Section 4 of this report. The following are particularly notable and merit highlighting here.

→ **Security analysis and security management decision-making:** Increased attention has been given to humanitarian security analysis, and several organizations and platforms have emerged to tackle this issue. This has improved analysis of security risks. However, progress in integrating security-related and programmatic decision-making has been

relatively limited, with only a small number of organizations effectively combining the two.

→ **Humanitarian acceptance and access negotiation:** Gaining acceptance is essential to the security of humanitarian workers. In recent years there has been an enormous growth in acceptance-focused research, access and acceptance position papers, and dedicated access and negotiation personnel/ units within various entities. Several initiatives, for instance, have sought to analyze and build humanitarian capacity to engage with non-state armed groups. Despite progress, the emphasis on acceptance has not always filtered down to the country office and suboffice levels, where understandings of acceptance – and familiarity with organizations' acceptance policies and guidelines – were generally limited.

→ **Remote approaches:** While some humanitarian actors are increasingly adopting remote approaches as a default strategy, the research also showed that many organizations actively developed contingency/continuity plans for remote programming,

guidelines and policies on remote programming, and carefully designed monitoring arrangements. On this last point, humanitarian actors have developed innovative and triangulated means of monitoring programs implemented by their own staff or by partners/subcontractors. However, improvements in the mechanics of remote programming have often resulted in less attention to the broader question: when should remote approaches be adopted, in what form, and how can this be done without resulting in an unacceptable level of risk transfer? These issues require more attention, because this study found that humanitarian workers see remote approaches as significantly less effective than direct programming; furthermore, they often limit attention to certain needs, in particular protection.

➡ **Duty of care:** The study found that organizations have increasingly paid more attention to minimizing the gaps in security provision that, as noted in *To Stay and Deliver*, existed between national and international staff. In general, national staff broadly reported improved engagement on security issues and greater satisfaction with the levels of security support they are receiving in terms of training, briefings, and so on. Some organizations have continued to adhere to the good practices noted in the 2011 report (e.g., enabling staff to work from home, and creating additional suboffices to reduce staff travel on dangerous roads and enhance proximity to affected communities). That said, as recent crises have drawn a growing number of local actors into humanitarian work, some of whom are relatively nascent and inexperienced, international actors have not paid equivalent levels of attention to their security needs, thus resulting in relatively high levels of risk transfer.

The points above are among the most significant highlighted in the full text. They are accompanied by further analysis on protection, the importance of proximity for protection analysis, and how donors significantly influence or can influence – positively or less so – humanitarian organizations' ability to stay and deliver effectively and responsibly.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

➡   The humanitarian community continues to grapple with how to stay and deliver effectively and responsibly in highly insecure environments, and progress has been made in a number of areas.

Humanitarian leaders consistently talk of their commitment to staying and delivering where at all feasible, and we have seen notable instances where UN agencies, NGOs, and others have done so at great risk. These include high-profile situations such as Syria and Yemen, as well as countless other instances where particular humanitarian actors have deliberatively and diplomatically earned the acceptance of local communities, community leaders, and conflict parties alike to enable them to stay and deliver. National and local NGOs and humanitarian actors have been particularly engaged in these sorts of activities – often out of basic necessity – and among the most committed when it comes to staying and delivering. Furthermore, issues like acceptance and remote programming have been institutionalized in a variety of forms, and NGO security coordination platforms have proliferated, particularly due to the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO)'s engagement across more than a dozen countries.

➡   Yet despite these improvements, this study broadly finds that not enough has changed, particularly at the field level, since the *To Stay and Deliver* report in 2011. Recommendations made in the 2011 report remain fundamental and relevant five years on.

A relatively small number of organizations are physically present in the most insecure areas, and too many international humanitarian actors continue to focus on relatively safe areas in volatile contexts or subcontract assistance – operating via various forms of remote management and subcontracting – to local organizations and firms in dangerous locations. Where new handbooks, guidelines, and tools have been

developed at the global level – such as on acceptance and program criticality – impact remains limited at the field level. Staff members with focused training on and portfolios for issues like access negotiations and acceptance remain rare across the humanitarian community as a whole despite being sorely needed. Donors' regulations and practices vary, and have enabling but also constraining effects. Local and national organizations likewise continue to face an inadequate level of support in security and duty of care from their international partners and continue to experience an unacceptably large share of security incidents perpetrated against humanitarians.

→ The humanitarian system clearly still needs to do more and to act on the recommendations embodied in the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* report (see Annex A).

In addition, humanitarian actors require flexible funding to improve their own internal readiness to engage consistently, safely, and responsibly at the field level in insecure contexts. Progress in terms of staying and delivering will also benefit from empowered leadership at the field level with integrated programmatic and security responsibilities. Responses led by experienced senior leaders with long track records in conflict environments were, generally, deemed more effective than those of their less experienced counterparts. Headquarters and field-level leaders will also need to do more to cultivate change at the country office and suboffice levels. Change is most likely to happen when staff in the field are actively engaged in developing or refining new, locally tailored approaches to issues like acceptance, access, self-generated risks, and more. Guidelines and toolkits handed down from headquarters, even where rooted in field-level experience, have had limited impact. Lastly, humanitarian actors are most effective in creating change when they work together on these issues – including sharing practices and experiences to enable joint learning without facing individual reputational, financial, or legal risks.

The report's recommendations (see Section 5) are addressed to UN agencies, national NGOs, INGOs, donors, and multistakeholder bodies such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) and the Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative. They are built on, and help operationalize or complement, many of the recommendations of the 2011 study. The recommendations are divided among six categories: enhancing safe, responsible, and proximate responses; strengthening respect for the humanitarian principles and IHL; integrating security and programming, and strengthening risk management; strengthening duty of care; strengthening donor practices; and getting the right data and analysis in place for informed decision-making.

In sum, they propose a course of action and options for filling some of the gaps identified in the course of the study, though recommendations often point to processes – the need for stakeholders to get together and jointly consider the challenges they face – rather than attempting to put forward one-size-fits-all solutions. Many of the recommendations ultimately and concretely articulate what so many humanitarian actors already know but often struggle to do in practice: that actors must develop structured, field-level approaches to understanding the contexts where they work, must carefully and deliberately approach issues like access and acceptance, must take responsibility not only for the safety and security of their own staff but also that of their local partners, and must continually refine modalities and approaches to highly insecure environments.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 RATIONALE FOR A FOLLOW-UP STUDY

Humanitarian actors are operating in some of the most insecure and challenging environments around the world. These include places such as Syria, where a multitude of armed groups have hindered and at times violently attacked humanitarians. In a range of contexts, military forces have also killed or abducted humanitarian workers and destroyed or looted humanitarian facilities, including hospitals, clinics, schools, and warehouses. In an even greater number of cases, humanitarian actors are caught in the crossfire of ongoing conflict. Humanitarians are also feeling the effects of criminal violence. In places like the Central African Republic (CAR), Colombia, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, and Aden in southern Yemen, crime – whether carried out by criminal elements or armed groups – constitutes one of the main impediments to humanitarian action. In still other cases humanitarian workers, such as the eight medical professionals killed while responding to the Ebola crisis in Guinea, are targeted as a result of sociocultural misperceptions, local grievances, or other issues.

The dynamic risks and challenges facing humanitarians require responsive and locally appropriate approaches. This realization led the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to commission and publish a landmark study, entitled *To Stay and Deliver: Good Practice for Humanitarians in Complex Security Environments*, in 2011.[1] Led by former UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland, *To Stay and Deliver* called on humanitarian actors to identify approaches and systems that would allow them to maintain physical proximity to affected communities where this could be

done effectively and responsibly. The report suggested alternatives to "bunkerization," such as focusing on "smart protection" (e.g., low-profile approaches) and securing local communities' and belligerents' "acceptance." Gaining acceptance, the 2011 report concluded, would require a greater emphasis on "humanitarian dialogue" (including access negotiations), as well as renewed attention to the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence (which many felt were inconsistently applied across the humanitarian community and compromised by the linking of humanitarian action and political or security agendas). *To Stay and Deliver* emphasized that humanitarian actors did not only have an obligation to stay and deliver where feasible, but that they also must do more to protect their national staff and local partner organizations, which often assume high levels of risk but whose safety receives less attention than that of their expatriate colleagues.

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[1]   Egeland et al., *To Stay and Deliver: Good Practice for Humanitarians in Complex Security Environments*, available at https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Stay_and_Deliver.pdf.

Five years after *To Stay and Deliver*, this report examines changes that have occurred in the humanitarian context and the approaches adopted by humanitarian actors. Specifically, this study examines the following questions,

→ How have the threats and risks facing humanitarian action in highly insecure environments shifted or developed since the publication of *To Stay and Deliver* in 2011, and what other contextual changes have emerged?

→ What institutional, operational, and cultural changes – with a focus on those recommended in *To Stay and Deliver* – have occurred since 2011, and what factors (e.g., institutional, cultural, financial, contextual, etc.) have enabled or impeded the adoption of these recommendations? Similarly, what persistent challenges appear to have remained over the past half-decade?

→ How have humanitarian organizations changed the ways they manage security risks, and what effects – to the extent discernible – have these strategies had on operational security, presence/proximity, and programming? What factors have enabled or discouraged such changes?

→ Regarding the above, have humanitarian organizations adopted new ways to maintain presence and proximity and conduct operations the ground, and what results have these achieved? To what extent does it appear that "staying" has translated in better "delivery"? What factors have enabled or discouraged such changes?

→ What should happen to further the objectives of *To Stay and Deliver*, building on successes and addressing complications that have emerged since 2011?

This study was launched by OCHA, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and the Jindal School of International Affairs (JSIA). The research was overseen by a Steering Group from OCHA, NRC, and JSIA and informed by a high-level Advisory Group. The study was conducted by researchers affiliated with Humanitarian Outcomes, an independent policy research organization that was also closely involved in the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* study.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted between October 2015 and March 2016, beginning with an extensive literature review and the analysis of relevant datasets related to aid worker security and humanitarian response more broadly. The research team undertook consultations with humanitarian personnel from the United Nations (UN), international NGOs (INGOs), national and local NGOs, civil society organizations (CSOs), the Red Cross/ Red Crescent movement, donor bodies, and others. Headquarters, regional, and country-level stakeholders were consulted in New York, Nairobi, Amman, and Geneva and a series of four case studies (two field based and two desk based) was conducted. Given the unique nature of each insecure context, no selection of case studies could be fully representative of the broad range of challenges facing humanitarians. That said, the research team and Steering Group sought to identify contexts that reflected a range of security and access challenges, long-running and more recent security risks, differing levels of outside attention (e.g., high-profile versus "forgotten" crises), varying levels of resources, and other variables (e.g., the presence of a peacekeeping mission).

The field-based case studies were conducted in Afghanistan and the CAR, while desk-based case studies examined Syria and Yemen. The field-based studies involved extensive fieldwork outside the capitals, including in areas that had recently been affected by active fighting, and consultations with members of the affected communities. The desk-based studies, in contrast, focused more on institutional processes and decision-making surrounding key issues (e.g., the evacuation of international humanitarian personnel from Yemen, and remote programming and duty of care in Syria). In total, the researchers consulted more than 350 people, both individually and via small group discussions and roundtable events. All interviews, discussions, and events were conducted on the basis of non-attribution. A majority of interviewees agreed to be listed in the report (Annex C).

The research team also designed an online survey (Annex D) targeting international and national humanitarian workers. This survey, which was available in English, Arabic, French, and Spanish, replicated several of the questions included in the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* survey to assess changes in respondents' experiences and perceptions. However, unlike the 2011 survey, which included only national staff responses, this iteration requested inputs from international and national personnel. The survey was designed to elicit the perspectives of humanitarian actors on operational conditions, security management strategies, remote management, humanitarian principles, and other issues. It ultimately captured more than 1,700 responses, of which 50 percent were from national staff, with the majority of respondents (53.4 percent) coming from area offices or suboffices.[2] Half of the respondents were female. The survey respondents came from more than two dozen countries, with the greatest portion coming from (in declining order) Syria, the DRC, Ethiopia, Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Chad, Somalia, Jordan, and Liberia.[3]

While no approach can capture the myriad variations within and between individual contexts, these methods ultimately provided the researchers with access to a large cross-section of humanitarian actors – more than 2,000 – operating in highly insecure environments. Nonetheless, there were a number of limitations. First, for the desk-based case studies of Syria and Yemen the interviews focused on country-office-based and international personnel, while the field case studies of Afghanistan and the CAR focused on field-level perspectives alongside inputs from affected communities. Second, the survey included a large number of responses from national humanitarian workers but fewer from individuals working with local organizations. Third, the research was designed to garner views and perceptions of what has or has not changed since the publication of *To Stay and Deliver* but is not an empirical study and should be read with this in mind; it relies on inputs from numerous well-placed and experienced humanitarian personnel. Last, the research team feel it is important to note that certain forms of

data are not consistently collected globally (e.g., on access barriers, security incidents, coverage of humanitarian needs, timeliness of responses, organizational security spending), and while the study offers anecdotal evidence, those limitations do create complications for addressing certain issues globally, including the extent to which "staying" has or has not led to more or more effective "delivering".

1.3 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

Following this introduction, Section 2 presents a range of developments in crisis contexts and the international system that have affected humanitarians' ability to stay and deliver. Section 3 then outlines overarching findings from the study and includes issues related to presence and proximity, perceptions and acceptability of risk, the use of remote programming and subcontracting, duty of care to staff and partners, and self-generated risks that result from some humanitarian actors' practices. While Section 3 attempts to provide a concise picture of the most significant organizational and cultural changes that have occurred since the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* report, Section 4 delves much more into operational changes in a range of areas, including security data and decision-making, negotiating humanitarian access and acceptance, remote programming and subcontracting, and duty of care. The final section of the report (Section 5) outlines a series of recommendations that will enable humanitarian actors to maintain better presence and proximity and operate in insecure environments.

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[2]   Other respondents came from headquarters (11.2 percent), regional offices (17.6 percent), and country offices (17.8 percent).

[3]   In some cases respondents in one country may have focused on regional operations or humanitarian action in neighboring countries. This was likely the case with Jordan, which is the base for humanitarians also working in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and broader regional or subregional programming.

2 CONTEXTUAL CHANGES

KEY POINTS

- There has been a sharp increase in humanitarian needs, appeals, funding, and action – including a 40 percent increase in humanitarian funding since the publication of *To Stay and Deliver*. However, funding gaps have also increased, and funding levels vary significantly across contexts.

- Humanitarian workers describe feeling under greater threat than at any other time. However, the major security incidents affecting humanitarians remain concentrated in a small number of contexts.

- There has been much greater attention paid to humanitarian security, but these efforts have largely benefited international rather than national actors, and local and national actors experience a greater proportion of aid-worker security incidents.

Since the publication of the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* study, conflicts have broken out, recurred, or intensified in the CAR, Iraq, Libya, Mali, the occupied Palestinian territory (Gaza), South Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, and elsewhere. **In many conflicts, international humanitarian law (IHL) is not respected, and civilian populations pay a price beyond measure.** Groups such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have emerged, and certain factions within long-standing armed groups such as the Taliban and Al-Shabaab have become more hostile toward humanitarians. Groups such as Boko Haram continue to pose dilemmas for humanitarian actors in areas under their sway.

Yet while some of the players involved may be different and the geography may have changed (e.g., with some countries becoming more secure and others less so), many other contextual dimensions remain similar. **State and non-state armed actors continue to affect, hinder, or deliberately obstruct access in many places.**

Furthermore, a relatively small number of international and local actors continue to undertake a large portion of frontline humanitarian work in conflict settings. The Secure Access in Volatile Environments (SAVE) project found that "there is a relatively small group of humanitarian actors that operate in the highest risk locations"; the SAVE study found that emergencies involving little or no conflict tended to have four times as many organizations responding (per $100 million in funding).[4]

However, three developments were repeatedly highlighted by interviewees and particularly merit discussion here: a sharp increase in humanitarian needs, appeals, and funding; the growth of security institutions and frameworks among major international humanitarian organizations; and the perception of greater insecurity among humanitarians. As the following discussion outlines, even these broad-based trends apply very differently across a humanitarian "community" that includes actors with billion-dollar budgets as well as small community-based organizations (CBOs).

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[4] Stoddard and Jillani, *The Effects of Insecurity on Humanitarian Coverage.*

2.1 SHARP INCREASE IN HUMANITARIAN NEEDS, APPEALS, FUNDING, AND ACTION

Humanitarian appeals, funding, and field-level activity have increased markedly since the publication of *To Stay and Deliver* in 2011. These increases reflect the growth of humanitarian needs across a range of, most notably, conflict zones, such as the CAR, Iraq, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. **By the end of 2015, more than 80 percent of UN humanitarian funding was directed at conflict response.** In 2015 65.3 million people were displaced by conflict, compared to 51.2 million in 2013 and 37.5 million in 2005.[5] At the end of 2015 the overall number of people internally displaced as a result of conflict or violence reached 40.8 million.[6]

According to figures from Global Humanitarian Assistance, governments contributed roughly 40 percent more humanitarian assistance in 2014 than they did in 2010, and appeals rose by 39 percent over that same period.[7] In certain countries the increase has been even more dramatic. For instance, humanitarian assistance to Syria rose from $110.4 million in 2011 to around $2.39 billion in 2015. Humanitarian funding for the CAR grew from $96 million in 2012, at the beginning of the current phase of conflict, to $325 million in 2015.[8] In Yemen, humanitarian funding was nearly six times greater in 2015 than it was in 2011, rising from $300 million to $1.77 billion.[9] Such figures speak to a concurrent rise in humanitarian delivery in these contexts. **Yet despite the increases in funding, the overall humanitarian financing gap – the difference between resources requested and those received by humanitarian agencies – has also grown consistently.** Today the UN-coordinated appeals processes globally receive approximately 55–60 percent of the amounts requested on average, as opposed to approximately 70 percent a decade earlier.[10]

These figures tend to mask the degree to which funding varies dramatically between countries. For instance, humanitarian appeals in 2015 were funded at widely different levels, from 5 percent for Gambia to 74 percent for Iraq. Nearly half of all humanitarian appeals were funded at less than 50 percent in 2015. Yet appeals tell only part of the story. In Syria, several humanitarian actors we spoke to described having a difficult time programming the funding they had received and being at the limits of their implementation capacity, even with the UN's annual humanitarian appeal for the country less than half funded. Humanitarian workers noted that the pressure to spend donor funding had resulted in very basic forms of humanitarian action – with limited levels of community engagement – that numerous interviewees characterized as "trucking and dumping." In contrast, humanitarians in Afghanistan described the sharp decrease in humanitarian funding – currently less than half of what it was in 2011 – as a major obstacle to their staying and delivering. Needs remained high, and some affected communities and local leaders reportedly grew disappointed at the declines in humanitarian support – thereby creating challenges for acceptance efforts.

Ultimately these examples suggest that having too few resources can create major challenges for staying and delivering, though more-than-anticipated funding can also create financial pressures that detract from incremental, time-intensive approaches such as carefully cultivating acceptance with armed groups, local communities, and others.

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5   UNHCR, "2015 Likely to Break Records for Forced Displacement."

6   IDMC, *Global Report on Internal Displacement.*

7   Global Humanitarian Assistance, *Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2015.* Note that European Union contributions are included in this calculation as part of governmental humanitarian funding. See also Krebs and Zyck, "As the UN Launches Its Biggest Ever Humanitarian Appeal, Here Are Five Things the Numbers Tell Us."

8   The 2011 figure comes from Global Humanitarian Assistance; the 2015 figure is the total provided for the Humanitarian Response Plan for Syria.

9   Figures for Yemen come from the OCHA-operated Financial Tracking Service, https://ftsbeta.unocha.org/content/yemen (accessed 17 October 2016).

10   Krebs and Zyck, *As the UN Launches Its Biggest Ever Humanitarian Appeal.*

2.2 FURTHER INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND PROFESSIONALIZATION OF HUMANITARIAN SECURITY

Greater attention to humanitarian security, in particular, has resulted in the creation of a series of policy frameworks, organizations, working groups, and databases among UN agencies, NGOs, and multistakeholder platforms. These include, to cite one notable example, the establishment of the International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO) in 2011. **Today a growing number of NGO safety platforms exist in conflict-affected countries around the world**, 11 of which are operated by INSO. In addition to increased participation in such platforms, most humanitarian organizations consulted in the course of this study noted that they had increased the size of their security teams in high-risk environments. For instance, two UN agencies in Yemen describe having more than tripled the size of their security staff amid the ongoing crisis there. This institutionalization is also evident in policy and practice guidelines. A February 2016 study on NGOs and risk found a sharp increase in NGO-produced analytical and policy documents on security issues since 2010: the report found that in 2010 three such documents were produced or revised, but that number had risen to 17 by 2015.[11] This trend is hard to quantify accurately in financial terms, since security spending is inadequately tracked in available aid spending databases, and security costs are rarely segregated from program expenses.

While the increased attention and specific resources devoted to security have had important positive impacts in terms of strengthened analysis and planning, the implications merit critical examination. **Most notably, these investments remain focused upon and embedded within international humanitarian entities rather than with the national humanitarian actors who are assuming day-to-day security risks in contexts where international organizations are unwilling to send in their own staff.** Hence it is worth asking whether the humanitarian community is moving toward greater inequality in access to security resources – with international actors growing better protected while little changes for their local counterparts. Second, it is worth exploring, as some interviewees and academics have posited,[12] whether the growing number of humanitarian security institutions – and the media attention to attacks against humanitarians – has led to an overperception of risk even outside those locations (e.g., Afghanistan, the CAR, South Sudan, and Syria) where aid-worker security incidents have been particularly concentrated. This argument holds that events in a small number of countries could be influencing approaches to humanitarian security even in contexts where conditions remain relatively stable. This possibility merits discussion, given that alarm over security threats facing humanitarians may lead to outsized perceptions of risk among organizations that may limit or impede humanitarian action.

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[11]   Stoddard et al., *NGOs and Risk: How International Humanitarian Actors Manage Uncertainty.*

[12]   See, for instance, some of the chapters in Neuman and Weissman, *Saving Lives and Staying Alive: The Professionalization of Humanitarian Security.*

2.3 THREATS AND RISKS FACING HUMANITARIANS

A significant portion of the humanitarians workers interviewed for this study generally described feeling more at risk than at any time in the course of their careers.[13] Major airstrikes on medical facilities and high-profile abductions, which increasingly receive media attention, have exacerbated this sense of vulnerability and insecurity. Furthermore, a number of organizations have drawn attention to what they perceive to be a growing disrespect for IHL in, most notably, contexts like Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen. In a report for the World Humanitarian Summit, the UN Secretary-General wrote: "The brutality of today's armed conflicts and the utter lack of respect for the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law – on care for the wounded and sick, humane treatment, and the distinction between civilians and combatants – threaten to unravel 150 years of achievements, and to regress to an era of war without limits."[14] Likewise, InterAction, an alliance of US-based NGOs, noted: "Parties to conflict deliberately target civilians as well as their homes, hospitals, schools, and other infrastructure; use indiscriminate force in populated areas; and fail to take precautions in the conduct of hostilities."[15] Such reports also highlight attacks on humanitarian workers and program sites which further demonstrate disregard for IHL in a number of contexts.

Despite perceptions of increased vulnerability, available data suggests that major attacks on aid workers remain primarily concentrated in a small number of countries. For instance, Afghanistan, South Sudan, and Syria presently remain responsible for the majority of aid-worker security incidents captured in the Aid Worker Security Database (AWSD), and recorded aid-worker security incidents have long taken place in a small number of countries. Over the past decade, five countries where humanitarians have been consistently operating were responsible each year[16] for an average of 73 percent of incidents captured in the AWSD, and 83 percent of all countries included in the AWSD had one or fewer reported incidents per year on average. Most countries where humanitarian actors are deployed remain relatively safe for them, and AWSD data suggests that several countries are becoming less risky. Incidents in Somalia, according to the AWSD, declined from a height of 51 in 2008 to nine in 2014; in Haiti the AWSD captured eight incidents in 2010 as opposed to one in 2013 and none in 2014. This is not to say that humanitarians do not face major threats, though it is important to note that these threats are generally localized and represent the attitudes and actions of a small number of conflict parties, including governments and non-state armed groups.

Beyond the geographical concentration of security incidents, the AWSD[17] points to a range of trends which appear to be particularly significant (see Table 1). **First, incidents affecting international aid workers have decreased while incidents affecting national aid workers have increased.** The AWSD shows that the proportion of incidents affecting international staff members declined from 22 percent to 13 percent between 2000 and 2014, while a greater proportion (87 percent) now affect national staff members (i.e., those from the country of operations). While the data indicates that INGOs are still the most affected, incidents affecting local organizations are increasing: incidents affecting INGOs have declined by 12.9 gross percentage points

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13   It is important to acknowledge that extensive literature exists on factors that contribute to risk perception in general (and not just in relation to the humanitarian community). This research explains that greater exposure to security incidents is likely to compound perceptions of risk – and that such perceptions are hard to reverse even once objective security conditions improve. See a discussion of these factors in Stoddard et al., *NGOs and Risk*.

14   UN Secretary-General, *One Humanity: Shared Responsibility. Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit*, p. 13.

15   InterAction, *Civilians Under Fire Restore Respect for International Humanitarian Law*, p. 1.

16   This refers to the five countries each year with the highest number of incidents captured in the AWSD.

17   At global level, the authors have chosen to highlight the AWSD here given that it is publicly accessible and is one of the few systems with global coverage and a consistent methodology going back more than a decade. The AWSD includes only "major incidents," namely killings, kidnappings/abductions, and attacks that result in serious injury. Security incidents in the AWSD are collected both from public sources, through systematic media filtering, and from information provided directly to the project by aid organizations and operational security entities. The AWSD verifies incidents in the database with the relevant actors on a quarterly basis.

Table 1: Trends in aid-worker security incidents, 2000–2014

Respondent Categories	2000–2004 (%)	2005–2009 (%)	2010–2014 (%)
Staff Origin			
National staff members	78.1	83.3	87.0
International staff members	21.9	16.7	13.0
Type of Staff Affected			
United Nations	22.3	23.4	22.7
INGOs	53.4	54.9	40.5
Local NGOs/National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies	16.9	17.4	32.9
International Committee of the Red Cross	6.7	2.5	3.0
Type of Effects			
Killed	49	38	30
Kidnapped/abducted	22	23	34
Wounded	29	39	36

Source: AWSD, accessed 10 January 2016.

Notes: Verified statistics for 2015 were not available at the time of writing. Gender-disaggregated data for security incidents is not available, as gender is not reported in a majority of instances.

while those affecting local NGOs or national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies have risen by 16.0 gross points during the same period.[18] This represents a noteworthy "transfer" of risk from international to national aid workers, and this was particularly substantiated by the case study research. Further, focused research is needed to analyze how and why this "transfer" has occurred and the degree to which it represents desirable changes (e.g., the improvement of risk mitigation/management among international actors, increased reporting on/by national organizations) or less desirable ones (e.g., limited safety and security support for local actors or the deployment of fewer international staff).

Second, the types of humanitarian security incidents have also changed – with abductions on the rise and growing concerns about criminality. As noted in the 2013 *Aid Worker Security Report*, "The number of reported kidnapping incidents has quadrupled since 2002, with an average increase of 44 percent each year. Kidnapping has become the most common type of major attack against aid workers, with kidnapping victims surpassing the number of victims of shootings, serious bodily assault, and all types of explosives."[19] However, patterns vary widely within and across contexts, with most countries being extremely low risk and a small number being extremely high risk. In 2014 abductions only occurred in ten countries, with the vast majority in just two countries: Afghanistan and Syria. Criminality, by contrast, was noted by interviewees and survey respondents across a wide variety of contexts, including in Afghanistan, the CAR, Colombia, eastern DRC, Mali, southern Yemen, and beyond. Furthermore, interviewees noted that they found it difficult to respond

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[18] The reporting of national organizations into the AWSD has improved in recent years, though this reporting is not believed to account for the significant rise in the proportion of incidents now affecting local NGOs and national Red Cross/Red Crescent societies in subsequent years.

[19] Harmer et al., *Aid Worker Security Report 2013 – The New Normal: Coping with the Kidnapping Threat*, p. 3.

Figure 1: Threats characterized as "major" or "moderate" by survey respondents, overall versus selected countries (Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen)

Legend:
- Selected Countries (Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, Yemen)
- Overall

Source: Online survey of humanitarian workers as part of the *To Stay and Deliver Follow-Up Study*.
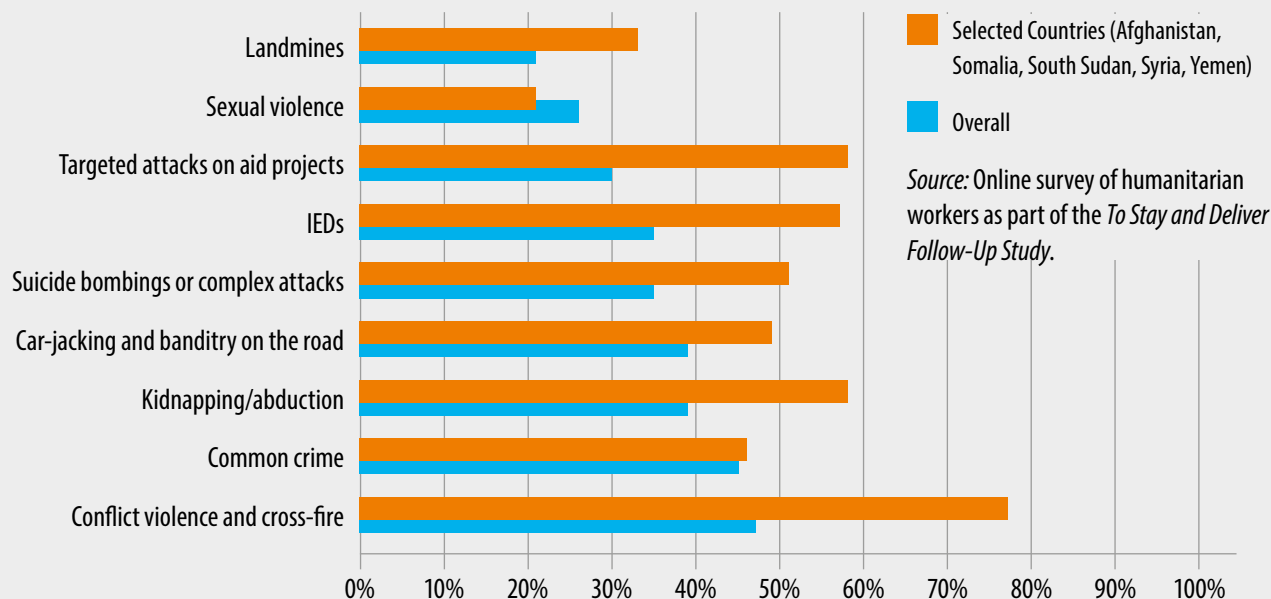
to criminality given that the armed actors involved were often diffuse and hard to reach or influence.

Perceptions of threats not only differed between contexts but also between types of respondent (see Annex E). For instance, female respondents tended to see sexual violence and banditry on the road as somewhat greater threats than male respondents did. Likewise, respondents from different types of organizations tended to perceive threats somewhat differently. For instance, local NGO personnel with a greater field presence tended to view car-jacking and banditry on the road as a significant problem, with 47 percent labeling it either a major or a moderate threat; but only 38 percent of INGO and 22 percent of UN respondents labeled it as such. Among INGOs, conflict violence and common crime were seen as the greatest threats, while UN survey respondents viewed common crime and suicide bombings (or other complex attacks) as the most significant threats.

The differences in perception of security threats – further captured in Annex E – are particularly important given that they affect how different organizations or types of staff member may approach mitigation measures. For instance, personnel or organizations primarily concerned about targeted attacks may focus on static security approaches such as blast walls, while those more concerned with violence on the road may prioritize, to cite one example, the development of program designs or monitoring processes that minimize staff travel or, alternatively, the establishment of field offices as close as possible to affected communities (also to minimize travel). Increasingly nuanced analysis is required, across the humanitarian community and within individual organizations, to enable fine-tuned understandings of the risks faced by different types of organization and different categories of staff members at different levels and in varied contexts.

2.4 BARRIERS AND CONSTRAINTS

Beyond the major changes noted above, **many of the key administrative/bureaucratic barriers and constraints remain relatively unchanged in nature since the publication of *To Stay and Deliver* in 2011.** These include the withholding or delay of visas for humanitarian staff, hard-to-navigate registration processes for humanitarian organizations (particularly those outside the UN system), customs barriers on relief materials and other items (e.g., vehicles and security or communications equipment), and taxation issues, as well as the strict control of permission for humanitarians to travel to or operate in parts of certain countries like Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan Syria, and Yemen. In Syria, for instance, humanitarian actors with a presence in Damascus and operating in government-held areas are required to obtain facilitation letters and approvals that may take weeks or even months for cross-line movements. This applies in some cases not only to humanitarian deliveries but also to assessment or monitoring missions and routine actions such as transferring materials between warehouses.

While such barriers reflect the bureaucratic complexities and anxieties of some host governments – or are undertaken out of concern for the safety of humanitarian workers or the quality of humanitarian programming – others are intentionally imposed as governments attempt to hinder humanitarian operations and/or pressure humanitarians into compliance with government priorities (e.g., targeting assistance to certain parts of the country). **Within this realm, counterterror and sanctions-related measures remain problematic in a growing number of contexts, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Yemen, and elsewhere, for their direct and inadvertent potential effects.** This challenge involves a range of actors, including government officials and agencies that may slow down humanitarian work in countries home to proscribed groups, banks that may close or suspend bank accounts used in financing humanitarian work, and humanitarian actors that limit their own activities (e.g., for fear of falling afoul of counterterror policies).[20] A 2015 review of counterterrorism policies and laws from Harvard Law School highlights their impacts on humanitarian action, including "heightened administrative and programmatic burdens; decreased freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel; increased governmental scrutiny of national and regional staff; decreased access to financial services and funding channels; elevated concerns regarding reputational harm; and decreased autonomy of action with respect to engagement with all parties to armed conflict."[21] Furthermore, counterterrorism legislation and policies often undermine humanitarian actors' attempts to cultivate acceptance and emphasize humanitarian principles. Despite multiorganizational efforts to clarify the border between humanitarian action and counterterror legislation, progress has been limited. UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014)[22] calls for renewed international coordination on counterterrorism but makes no reference to the need to ensure that national and multilateral policies do not stand in the way of principled humanitarian action.

Interviewees consistently described concern over counterterrorism legislation, and noted it was one factor that led their organizations to limit engagement in certain locations or with certain "proscribed groups" that were critical to attaining access. The challenge is then magnified, as proscribed groups frequently interpret humanitarian actors' limited engagement in areas under their control as a sign of lack of neutrality or complicity in political and counterterrorism agendas. That said, interviewees were quick to note that the challenge was not only counterterrorism legislation and policies but also their own limited understanding of the exact implications that these laws had for their work (or the work being done by partners or subcontractors). For instance, respondents from one NGO engaged in Syria noted that they were uncertain whether or not they were permitted to allow certain proscribed groups or their interlocutors to select a portion of beneficiaries, on the condition that they met the selection criteria established by the humanitarian organization in question.

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20   Burniske et al., *Counter-Terrorism Laws and Regulations: What Aid Agencies Need to Know.*

21   Burniske and Lewis with Modirzadeh, *Suppressing Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Supporting Principled Humanitarian Action: A Provisional Framework for Analyzing State Practice.*

22   UN Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014), adopted by the Security Council at its 7272nd meeting on 24 September 2014, www.un.org/en/sc/ctc/docs/2015/SCR%202178_2014_EN.pdf.

3 OVERARCHING DEVELOPMENTS SINCE *TO STAY AND DELIVER*

KEY POINTS

- Humanitarian actors are more strongly committed to continuing operations wherever feasible and returning as quickly as possible when they are forced to leave, such as following an evacuation. However, their ability to do so varies across contexts.

- While humanitarian actors have made progress on the design and monitoring of remote approaches, there is a strong sense that these are increasingly used by some actors as a default option and the growing reliance on remote approaches (whether through an organization's own staff, partners, or subcontractors) has reduced opportunities for delivery and also creates significant challenges for protection programming and principled approaches.

- More can and should be done to consider carefully and address issues of risk transfer inherent within the increasingly common partnership and subcontracting arrangements. While international actors have made strides in improving duty of care among their own staff, local actors commonly have much less support with regard to security and post-incident care.

- In some instances the behavior and practices of humanitarian actors themselves can exacerbate or drive security challenges. These "self-generated" risks were seen as particularly common and in need of monitoring and mitigation.

In 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* examined how the humanitarian community could enhance security for humanitarian workers, on the one hand, and fulfill its mandate to provide assistance to and enhance protection of affected people, on the other. Emphasizing the foundational importance of proximity (and hence "staying") in enabling the delivery of humanitarian action, the report stated:

Presence and proximity to affected populations is the prerequisite of effective humanitarian action. The objective for humanitarian actors in complex security environments, as it is now widely recognised, is not to avoid risk, but to manage risk in a way that allows them to remain present and effective in their work.

This section re-examines this same issue, and asks whether a small number of the strategic, high-level

points from that 2011 report have led to change or not. The authors broadly conclude that progress has certainly occurred in some areas, but that in other instances change has been limited or negative. In many cases, limited degrees of presence and proximity have reduced opportunities for delivery or hindered hands-on, accountable, and principled forms of engagement.

Any critiques included here are not intended to discount the specific operational improvements more closely examined in Section 4 or the fact that five years – the time which has passed since the publication of *To Stay and Deliver* – is a relatively short period for any large system to change in fundamental ways (particularly while it is grappling with several major crises). Likewise, broad-based findings here do not mean that individual organizations and stakeholders have not in certain instances defied negative trends and tendencies.

3.1 STAYING: PRESENCE, PROXIMITY, RISK PERCEPTION, AND ACCEPTABILITY

3.1.1 PRESENCE AND PROXIMITY

Across several hundred interviews and consultations, humanitarians articulated a strong desire to stay and deliver, and clearly the commitment to staying and delivering has, based on interviews and consultations, permeated the discourses of the UN and INGOs. **Numerous UN and NGO representatives felt that their emphasis has shifted from "when to leave" toward "how to stay," and that they are more strongly committed to continuing operations wherever feasible and returning quickly following an evacuation.** Yemen is one context where UN agencies and certain INGOs strongly reflected this commitment. As the conflict escalated in March 2015, a number of humanitarian stakeholders evacuated but demonstrated a desire to return at least some staff to certain areas as quickly as possible. Humanitarian organizations housed one another in their offices and compounds until suitable accommodation could be identified, and some agencies pushed ahead with the establishment of suboffices in key areas to reduce the vulnerability associated with staff travel and improve programming and monitoring.[23]

Likewise, in Syria humanitarian organizations maintained operations despite intense insecurity in parts of the country. UN agencies, INGOs, diaspora NGOs, and Syrian NGOs and CSOs have maintained an extensive presence in the country and engaged in high levels of cross-border and cross-line delivery at great risk. This has included extensive efforts to enable operations in areas controlled by Jabhat al-Nusra, although there has been less success in recent years in providing assistance in ISIL-controlled areas. Certain UN agencies, in particular, have sought to expand their physical footprint in the country by establishing hubs not only in Damascus but also in Aleppo, Homs, Lattakia, Qamishli, and Tartous.

That said, interviewees noted that in the last one to two years little discussion has occurred about how to increase presence – particularly by international humanitarian personnel – inside Syria. This is despite the fact that a wide range of INGO and UN stakeholders based in Gaziantep and Amman felt that their lack of staff presence, or international staff presence, has resulted in major challenges for protection, program quality, and accountability.

However, in a number of significant cases humanitarian actors have been unable to sustain presence and operations when situations worsened. When violence erupted in Bangui and elsewhere in the CAR in late September 2015, UN humanitarians resumed operations quickly after the violence receded, but some INGOs suspended work for four months or longer. The duration of this evacuation and interruption in programming was described *post facto* by the majority of security advisors and evacuees interviewed as "exaggerated" and "unnecessary." But after most UN agencies and INGOs evacuated when Kunduz came under Taliban attack in northern Afghanistan in September 2015, the UN, following the destruction of its offices, struggled for weeks to return and respond to humanitarian needs; by contrast, most NGOs returned relatively quickly and were able to respond to the humanitarian crisis, particularly with regard to displacement in neighboring provinces. In Iraq, interviewees implied that low security incident rates arise not so much from a reduction in threats or improved risk management but from heavy bunkerization, lack of presence, and security management strategies that prioritize risk avoidance rather than the sorts of problem-solving approaches identified in *To Stay and Deliver*.

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23   Further information about the Yemen evacuation, which also reflected some less positive practices, is provided in Section 4.

3.1.2 PERCEIVING, ACCEPTING, AND MANAGING RISK

Despite many humanitarian leaders' emphasis on staying and delivering, this research demonstrated increasing concern regarding how international humanitarian actors perceive and manage risk.[24] That is, **certain international actors, particularly though not exclusively at the headquarters level, tend to perceive risks much more severely than stakeholders on the ground, leading to what many interviewees consider to be unnecessarily cautious security approaches (e.g., slow return following evacuations, limited presence outside capital cities, etc.). Furthermore, according to interviewees, humanitarian actors continued practices noted in that 2011 report, such as transferring risk to local partners when security deteriorated or focusing assistance on relatively safe areas within volatile countries.** In Afghanistan the areas with the greatest needs tend to see the most limited humanitarian presence.[25] In Syria, as well, humanitarians emphasized that needs in the relatively safe northwest of the country were being comparatively well met – and some actors were competing for access to beneficiaries in easier-to-access places – while other potentially accessible areas with humanitarian needs were being relatively neglected. In Yemen and Mali the same tendency was highlighted – easier-to-reach areas were prioritized over more challenging areas with some of the greatest humanitarian needs. As MSF highlighted in the report *Where Is Everyone?*, this ultimately means that technical expertise on the frontlines is often lacking and the most urgent needs simply go unmet.[26]

Subjective perceptions of risk persist partly because few organizations were found to approach risk in a systematic way – for example, objectively assessing field-level security conditions, determining the humanitarian criticality of certain programs, and taking carefully measured risks if and when doing so is judged to be critical to saving and/or sustaining lives. Without this degree of systematic analysis, the majority of humanitarian organizations tended to base their decisions on vague perceptions or the security postures of other humanitarian actors, leading to what several interviewees referred to as a "herd mentality." Where evidence-based analysis was being conducted to inform decision-making, as in the UN's Programme Criticality framework, analyses were sometimes found to be conducted as a *pro forma* exercise and not actually used to inform operational decision-making. This is an issue taken up in greater detail later in this report (see Section 4.1.2, Box 4).

With regard to presence and proximity, the study found a very mixed set of circumstances: some typified the good practices identified in *To Stay and Deliver*, while others showed that the challenges noted in that report (e.g., limited presence and proximity, risk aversion) ultimately remain intact. What has enabled or impeded progress? First, interviewees noted that where good practices and a commitment to staying and delivering were exemplified, individual leaders often led the charge with the backing or non-objection of their headquarters. **Having senior personnel in place with experience in insecure contexts – with an instinct to question the prevailing wisdom about what was and was not feasible – was crucial.** The opposite holds true: less experienced individuals often had less organizational latitude, were more hesitant to stay and deliver, or, quite the contrary, took poorly considered risks that yielded negative outcomes for staff safety and programming. Second, change was most feasible when organizations tended to trust and empower their personnel on the ground, whether this meant headquarters empowering their country directors or country directors trusting their heads of suboffice. In cases where organizations declined to stay, or proved hesitant to return after an evacuation, interviewees consistently pointed to headquarters objections rooted in limited contextual awareness or outsized perceptions of risk based on media reports or individual security incidents.

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[24] This point has increasingly been acknowledged in a wide range of academic and policy research documents. See Healy and Tiller, *Where Is Everyone? Responding to Emergencies in the Most Difficult Contexts*; Armstrong, *The Future of Humanitarian Security in Fragile Contexts. An Analysis of Transformational Factors Affecting Humanitarian Action in the Coming Decade*; Andersson and Weigand, "Intervention at Risk: The Vicious Cycle of Distance and Danger in Mali and Afghanistan."

[25] This was measured in the cases of Afghanistan and Syria by a forthcoming report. See Stoddard and Jillani, *The Effects of Insecurity*.

[26] Healy and Tiller, *Where Is Everyone?*

Lastly, funding played a crucial role in a number of ways. **Organizations with flexible resources were among the best able to stay and deliver given that they could invest in the requisite infrastructure, hardware, logistical assets, and other support to manage security risks and maintain operations.** International actors more reliant on project-based funding from large institutional donors generally described having less ability to remain present and proximate. Furthermore, humanitarian actors more reliant on traditional donors described being more risk averse given that a single major security incident could cause donors to withdraw support for their operations; in such circumstances, it often made less financial sense for their organizations to put their own staff at risk, and instead they operated via partners.

3.2 DELIVERING: REMOTE APPROACHES, SUBCONTRACTING, AND PROGRAM DESIGN

3.2.1 REMOTE APPROACHES

As the *To Stay and Deliver* report indicated, remote programming continues to grow within the humanitarian community as a response to insecurity. In line with the report's recommendations, several humanitarian organizations were found to have made progress in terms of institutionalizing remote programming models, which vary widely (discussed in detail in Section 4). **Organizations increasingly have contingency and continuity plans at the global and national levels to ensure that decision-making processes are clear when remote approaches are adopted.**[27] Furthermore, extensive work has gone into developing new technologies and systems, including the use of third-party monitors, triangulated

arrangements, and various types of call centers, to ensure that program monitoring can continue even when organizations' own monitors are not physically present. These new systems mean that staff on the ground are better able to communicate with remote colleagues and managers, and the new monitoring systems have strengthened donor reporting and enhanced accountability.

While this study found that **remote approaches have improved markedly in terms of administration, management, and monitoring, it also found that they still entail major tradeoffs despite the institutional and operational improvements noted above. Protection programming is often undermined or neglected when remote methods are adopted, and the protective benefits of direct staff – including international staff – presence are lost in a number of contexts.** Furthermore, remote methods often contribute to basic models of aid delivery, such as one-off deliveries to particular areas, aid distributions organized by logistics companies (rather than humanitarian workers), and even air drops of assistance that, while useful, complicate acceptance strategies (which require careful, sustained engagement with local communities and leaders). Program quality also suffers, and weaknesses in process monitoring remain (e.g., how access is being achieved or how the humanitarian principles are being applied). Among survey respondents who had direct experience with "remote management,"[28] approximately half said it was "somewhat effective" but had "considerable downsides to quality and accountability"; another 8 percent said it was not at all effective. Only a quarter of respondents found remote management to be "very effective – it allows us to maintain programming while mitigating risks to staff."[29] Interviewees periodically noted that they felt less effective remote programming was preferable to a complete cessation of programming. However, most humanitarian interviewees felt that this was a false dichotomy and too many UN agencies and INGOs had written off the third option: continuing to deliver directly, without adopting remote approaches, in

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[27] See for instance ACF, *Remote Approach Programming: Guidelines for Implementing a Remote Approach*; Mercy Corps, *Reduced Access Programming: Delivering Impact in Constrained Environments.*

[28] The term "remote management" was used in the survey, given that this term tends to be more recognizable than alternatives (e.g., remote programming, remote approaches).

[29] The remaining percentage indicated they were unsure or did not know.

a manner designed to mitigate risks (e.g., building on the sorts of principled, acceptance-based approaches adopted by those humanitarian actors that consistently manage to maintain a strong degree of presence and proximity).

Beyond the mechanics of contingency planning and monitoring, this study asked whether remote programming was being used as a last resort and being drawn upon in a manner that mitigates transferring risks to national staff and local partners. Many humanitarian organizations in the highest-risk environments are reliant on remote programming and subcontracting, and those consulted in the course of this study noted that these practices had significantly grown. **Remote approaches are increasingly the default option for many organizations**[30] **– instead of a last resort or temporary measure.** Six out of ten respondents to this study's survey reported that their organization had adopted remote methods of one type or another, and that figure was, on average, 77 percent across Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. This is happening even where it was not necessarily the last resort and other international actors have shown a field presence is possible if organizations are willing to invest in acceptance and other approaches to security risk management.

3.2.2 SUBCONTRACTING

In a wide range of the contexts examined in this study, onion-like layers of subcontracting have emerged, with funding trickling from donors to UN agencies, INGOs, and onward to local NGOs and the local contractors or CBOs they sometimes hire. At each layer it becomes more difficult to determine what principles and practices are applied, particularly when the primary funding recipient (e.g., a UN agency or INGO) does not have a clear picture of what happens on the ground despite perceived improvements in monitoring. The majority of international staff remotely managing programs inside Syria from cross-border hubs acknowledged having little understanding of program contexts, subcontractor approaches, access strategies adopted by local partners, and outcomes or impact. In addition to creating challenges for programming, these partnerships or subcontracting arrangements generally result in the transfer of risk to national staff and partner organizations. They are only rarely adopted as part of a conscious localization strategy aimed at strengthening local humanitarian actors, but mainly are drawn upon when an international organization determines conditions are too dangerous for its own international and/or national staff. In Afghanistan, the CAR, Somalia, and Syria primary funding recipients rarely ensured that their subcontractors received adequate financial and technical resources to assess, monitor, and mitigate security risks and operate according to agreed principles and standards (e.g., to "do no harm").

BOX 1. CASH PROGRAMMING

Aside from small-scale and pilot initiatives in a handful of highly insecure countries like Syria and Yemen, use of cash has not grown in the most violent contexts to the extent feasible, according to several UN and donor interviewees. The High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers in 2015 estimated that only 6 percent of humanitarian spending was going to cash and voucher programming. Much of this spending is focused on relatively stable refugee-hosting countries and disaster settings rather than the most insecure environments. A program evaluation in Somalia concluded that 85 percent of cash transfer budgets went to beneficiaries, compared to 35 percent of its food aid budgets. The applicability of cash to insecure settings was demonstrated during the 2011 famine in Somalia and more recently during ISIL's relatively brief capture of Arsal in Lebanon, during which time WFP beneficiaries were still able to use previously distributed electronic vouchers (e.g., debit cards that could be used to purchase food at approved shops).

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30   This finding was also reported in a study by UK Aid, Integrity Research and Consulting, and Axiom Monitoring and Evaluation: Rivas and Martins, *No Longer a Last Resort: A Review of the Remote Programming Landscape*.

3.2.3 PROGRAM DESIGN

Remote approaches and subcontracting have been on the rise, though there is little indication that new programmatic designs and modalities are being increasingly drawn upon or developed on a large scale. Telemedicine and e-learning, two approaches potentially applicable to some hard-to-reach and insecure areas, were relatively rarely being utilized in the case study countries and were not highlighted by key stakeholders in consultations and other forms of data collection. Likewise, cash and voucher programming – a modality highlighted in the *To Stay and Deliver* study – was only being adopted on a relatively limited scale in highly insecure contexts.

To Stay and Deliver noted in 2011 that "WFP [the World Food Programme] and NGOs have invested in programs to provide cash transfers, cash for work, or vouchers to people rather than trucking, transporting, storing, and distributing goods." The potential of cash programming has recently been highlighted in multiple forums – the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Cash Transfers, the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, the *Strategic Note on Cash Transfers in Humanitarian Contexts* prepared by the World Bank for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals, and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Humanity, which states that "where markets and operational contexts permit, cash-based programming should be the preferred and default method of support."[31] As per the World Humanitarian Summit's "Grand Bargain", cash should routinely be considered in evaluating response options, and its use increased. All of these emphasize, however, that the environment must be enabling and all responses should be context-specific; cash programming is not merely a modality to be used where other options are not possible. Nonetheless, **this study found limited evidence of sufficient efforts to expand the use of cash – or the infrastructure and systems necessary to enable large-scale cash programming – in highly insecure environments even where markets continued to function.**

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31 UN Secretary-General, *Agenda for Humanity: Annex to the Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit*, p. 9.

3.3 ENGAGING RESPONSIBLY: PRINCIPLED APPROACHES AND ADDRESSING SELF-GENERATED RISKS

3.3.1 HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES

To Stay and Deliver called for humanitarian actors to commit themselves to the core humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence to build acceptance among affected communities, parties to the conflict, and others. **The study further reinforced the notion that a principled approach is not about any abstract invocation of principles but about their reflection in programming** – for instance, by ensuring conflict awareness and sensitivity throughout implementation, by transparently selecting beneficiaries, and by communicating clearly and openly with relevant stakeholders on an ongoing basis. **This follow-up study found a high level of concern for humanitarian principles among international actors, in particular.** Several had provided training on humanitarian principles for local partners across a range of contexts. Where tradeoffs between principles were deemed necessary – such as when working with national or local organizations with political affiliations – these decisions were taken after a process of careful deliberation and frequently accompanied by strategies to ensure, for instance, that beneficiary targeting was undertaken impartially to the greatest extent feasible.

3.3.2 ADDRESSING SELF-GENERATED RISKS

While issues overtly related to principles appeared to be consciously monitored by many humanitarian organizations consulted in the course of this study, the research identified numerous instances, in contexts such as Afghanistan, the CAR, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, in which field-level practices created complications and had serious implications for the principles and the acceptance, safety, and security of humanitarians. Interviews and consultations also yielded a strong sense that sometimes the behavior of some humanitarian actors themselves exacerbates or drives security challenges; these behaviors or practices, several of which relate closely to the humanitarian principles,

BOX 2. USE OF ARMED ESCORTS

In contexts such as Afghanistan, Lebanon, Mali, and Niger, armed escorts were seen by a majority of humanitarians interviewed as increasing the risk of attack given that military or police escorts were common targets for armed groups and because humanitarians' affiliation with armed escorts (whether provided by local security services, peacekeeping missions, or others) undermined the perception of their neutrality. In parts of Lebanon, for instance, humanitarians noted that a small number of activities had been cancelled in certain parts of the country, particularly Arsal, when the Lebanese Armed Forces had mandated the use of armed military escorts. In other countries where armed escorts were recommended, some humanitarians noted that they had in certain cases got around these requirements by not informing security personnel of some movements in areas they deemed relatively low risk.

Several examples point to the degree of discomfort surrounding the use of armed escorts despite the existence of frameworks such as the 2013 *IASC Non-Binding Guidelines on the Use of Armed Escorts for Humanitarian Convoys*. Several interviewees felt that these sorts of guidelines needed to be better understood by security actors, in particular, and that the "alternatives to armed escorts" noted in the *IASC Non-Binding Guidelines* – particularly "area security" – should be more systematically explored and adopted more regularly where relevant. Area security involves armed security actors patrolling general areas or clearing roads where humanitarian actors will be operating without necessarily overtly providing security for the humanitarian operations.

contribute to "self-generated" risks.[32] **This research found examples where humanitarian actors raised tensions with local communities, government actors, and armed groups through a range of relatively basic oversights and missteps**, which included weak needs assessments, poorly communicated beneficiary selection criteria, an absence of acceptance strategies, and limited staff and partner awareness of the humanitarian principles. In other instances, donors' tendency to support particular categories of individuals, such as displaced persons, was seen to frustrate others, particularly host communities, and generate security and protection risks for humanitarian workers and affected communities. While such challenges affect humanitarian operations in secure and insecure contexts alike, the consequences can be much more severe for humanitarians in volatile contexts. The factors underlying these self-generated risks are multifaceted, but include the deployment of personnel with limited experience in particular contexts or without adequate experience in highly insecure environments more broadly, rapid turnover among international staff operating in these locations, and financial pressures to raise and spend funds. A number of interviewees felt

that adherence to and operationalization of humanitarian principles and human resource–related factors were important, and that such risks could also be better tackled if organizations systematically documented their experiences and preparedness to operate in highly insecure contexts.

The most potentially hazardous self-generated risks go beyond simple issues of poor planning, recruitment practices, or programming. Severe instances described by some humanitarian actors included payments at checkpoints or higher transport fees to facilitate access in particular areas; derogating from fully independent selection of beneficiaries in exchange for access; hiring service providers with connections to conflict parties to ensure aid made it past obstacles; and inadvertently hiring or empowering members of one particular political, ethnic, or tribal group in divided contexts. In other circumstances, some practices established as risk mitigation measures can ultimately increase risks for humanitarians. These include, for instance, the use of armed escorts in certain contexts (see Box 2).

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[32] This report uses the term "self-generated risks" as opposed to terms such as "internal risks," which also reflect organizational identity features (e.g., whether an NGO is perceived as Western or not).

4 OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS SINCE *TO STAY AND DELIVER*

KEY POINTS

- Specialized institutions have emerged and expanded to improve data and analysis and support evidence-based decision-making with regard to issues like humanitarian security and access.

- There has been limited and/or uneven progress on the integration of program management and security, and the devolution of security decision-making to the field – both practices identified as having powerful positive impacts on security management and humanitarian operations.

- Acceptance remains key. There has been increasing attention and resources devoted to improving acceptance strategies, but these remain largely concentrated at the policy and headquarters level.

- Little has changed with regard to the harmful impacts of counterterror legislation, despite consistent humanitarian advocacy on the issue, and it continues to create obstacles to effective engagement.

- There have been improvements in some duty-of-care issues (particularly training), but this improvement is uneven across local NGO, INGO, and UN personnel. Across the board, more can be done to improve aftercare and psychosocial support.

- Protection concerns are often neglected or "mainstreamed" until nearly imperceptible except in the broadest sense. A direct link emerged between a lack of proximity and a lack of attention to protection concerns.

- Donors can play a major role in supporting humanitarian partners' ability to stay and deliver. However, some current donors' practices can have a mixed impact on humanitarian operations.

Amid the changes in humanitarian approaches noted in Section 3, a number of specific operational practices have emerged in recent years. Some of these are the outcome of conscious policy development processes and initiatives, while many others have developed more organically at the field level. A range of key operational changes directly relevant to the *To Stay and Deliver* study are addressed in this section, though it is important to acknowledge that no relatively short report can capture more than a handful of such practices.[33]

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[33] The authors do not mean to imply that practices not captured here are necessarily less valuable – only less documented or less evident in the data collection for this project.

4.1 IMPROVING CONTEXTUAL UNDERSTANDING: DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS, AND DECISION-MAKING

4.1.1 STRENGTHENING HUMANITARIAN SECURITY ANALYSIS

In recent years specialized institutions have emerged – or expanded – to analyze contexts where humanitarians are operating and enable evidence-based decision-making. There has been a striking growth in the creation of independent field-based NGO security coordination platforms, in particular INSO, since 2011; all of the field-based security platforms created since 2011 have been INSO bodies.[34] INSO, which evolved from the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office created in 2002, operates in 11 contexts at the time of this review and creates operational safety platforms at the request of NGOs in the country of operation. INSO's independent, cross-contextually standardized model exists alongside various other country-specific NGO safety coordination platforms which are either hosted by or embedded within NGOs, such as the INGO Safety Advisory Office in Yemen and the Pakistan and South Sudan NGO forums. **While NGO safety platforms were a relatively nascent development in 2011, they are now standard features of the humanitarian system in volatile contexts.** At their best, these new institutions represent an important advancement in safety and security, in that they build trust with humanitarian stakeholders, have generally strong data collection and analysis capacities, provide practical advice, and offer training and support.

NGO safety platforms that do collect security incident data, such as INSO, have improved contextual understanding and increased the evidence and analysis available to decision-makers at field level. Nonetheless, **gaps and inconsistencies occur that prevent humanitarians from obtaining a comprehensive picture of aid-worker security risks *across* contexts and globally.** This applies even to relatively basic forms of data, such as the numbers of security incidents affecting humanitarians worldwide. To date, many of the NGO platforms have been reluctant to share their data

and analysis beyond their membership for a number of reasons. While the AWSD, which was drawn upon in Section 2, provides an open-access global picture of aid-worker security incidents, its data is not comparable with and differs significantly from data collected by many ground-level platforms like INSO for several reasons.

First, existing databases and organizations apply different data standards, address different types of security incidents, and have differing levels of reach/completeness within countries. For example, while INSO's data is collected in a methodologically uniform way across the contexts in which it works, cross-comparability is limited to these contexts, which exclude insecure environments such as Pakistan and South Sudan. Second, some databases tend to be most effective at capturing security incidents that affect international humanitarian organizations while being less inclusive of local organizations. Some NGO security platforms do not include national organizations in their membership, and national organizations appear more reticent to participate. For example, representatives of local organizations in Syria indicated during interviews that they often prefer to avoid reporting security incidents to collective mechanisms given concerns that reporting them (even confidentially) could make them look – to their donors or NGO partners – less competent or less able to reach affected communities. The AWSD, which relies on UN, INGO, and media sources, may suffer from underreporting of national aid-worker incidents given that they are more likely to escape the attention of the wider humanitarian community or the media. There is thus strong reason to believe that incidents affecting national or local organizations are significantly underreported to varying extents across nearly all databases. Third, available systems make it difficult to determine the relative level of attacks against aid workers in large part because of the lack of global staffing data. For example, is the rising number of aid-worker security incidents a result of increased mistrust or hostility toward aid agencies, or have they been documented simply because there are more humanitarian workers present, aid convoys deployed, and programs being implemented in insecure settings?

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34   The one exception is the Safety and Security Committee for Lebanon, which was not operated by INSO and closed earlier in 2016.

Without better and more reliable humanitarian data on issues like staffing, it is impossible to tell.[35]

Finally, **certain countries face a significant number of security incidents, but it is not only the volume but also the types of incident and the underlying causes that matter. This underscores the importance of contextual analysis and understanding in interpreting the data.** INSO, for instance, suggests that threats facing humanitarians in the CAR may actually be greater than in Afghanistan or Syria: INSO figures show that the CAR had almost as many humanitarian security incidents as Afghanistan and Syria *combined* in 2015, but they tend to receive less attention given that far fewer of the incidents in the CAR resulted in fatalities. This raises important questions about variances in risk thresholds across countries, as well as the ways in which overall patterns of violence against aid workers differ across contexts. While the development of aid-worker security data collection has improved remarkably since 2011, thanks in large part to field-level platforms, next steps should focus on enhancing global and contextual understanding, as well as improving humanitarians' ability to analyze and utilize this data in decision-making processes more systematically across and within contexts.

4.1.2 SECURITY DECISION-MAKING: INTEGRATING SECURITY AND PROGRAMMING

A wide range of security decision-making approaches can be found across the humanitarian community. **Echoing the findings of the 2011 report, the field research found that the integration of program management and security and the devolution of security decision-making to the field with a clear chain of command had a positive impact on organizations' ability to maintain operations while managing risks across the case study countries examined.** The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) are strong, if somewhat unusual, examples of this. They do not distinguish between security management and the conduct of operations; programmatic and security decisions lie primarily with operational roles or missions and are generally based on their assessment of the operating

environment. This level of autonomy is enshrined in operating frameworks and supported by institutional cultures, with a high level of dedicated resources and capacity to achieve it. This kind of operational autonomy facilitates agility and nuanced responses to crises. For example, when tensions mounted in western CAR in late 2015, UN agencies hibernated and most INGOs evacuated international staff; while MSF also evacuated international staff, it quickly replaced its relatively junior head of office with a more experienced staff member in one particularly volatile location, and also deployed a few experienced international staff from a neighboring country to support security and operations management. MSF's ability to react and adapt was bolstered by the organization's relative funding independence, decentralized decision-making structure, and strong, self-managed logistical capacity. When insecurity does have an impact on operations, these organizations show more risk resilience, rebounding quickly from security shocks and restarting operations quickly.

Few other humanitarian actors pursue devolved decision-making and program security integration; if anything, decision-making may have become more hierarchical and headquarters-based in some instances. **The growth of internal security departments – beneficial in many other ways – was at times seen as infringing on the ability of country directors to make autonomous decisions, particularly where personnel in the field and at headquarters perceive threats differently** (Figure 2). Even where country directors retained primary decision-making authority, many described maneuvering around security advisors in the field and at headquarters in order to stay present and continue operations. In Afghanistan, for instance, the head of one organization described "battling with HQ" to convince them not to move expatriate staff into a heavily guarded, privately run compound and instead allow them to move into an office which was "already fairly bunkerized." The country director felt neither measure was justified and described the negative effect this had on the morale of staff, who worried that HQ would "pull the plug" on operations arbitrarily. A divide between the field and the headquarters can have perverse effects that ultimately undermine security, as the country director pointed out: "The moment [national staff] stop trusting that you will be

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[35]   Attempts to present aid-worker security data in relation to estimated numbers of humanitarian personnel are limited by the lack of reliable data on humanitarian staffing – particularly given the rise of local NGOs and CBOs engaged in humanitarian work – rendering current attempts to establish attack rates, for example, approximations at best.

Figure 2: Self-reported threats rated as "major" or "moderate," by staff location (headquarters versus suboffice)
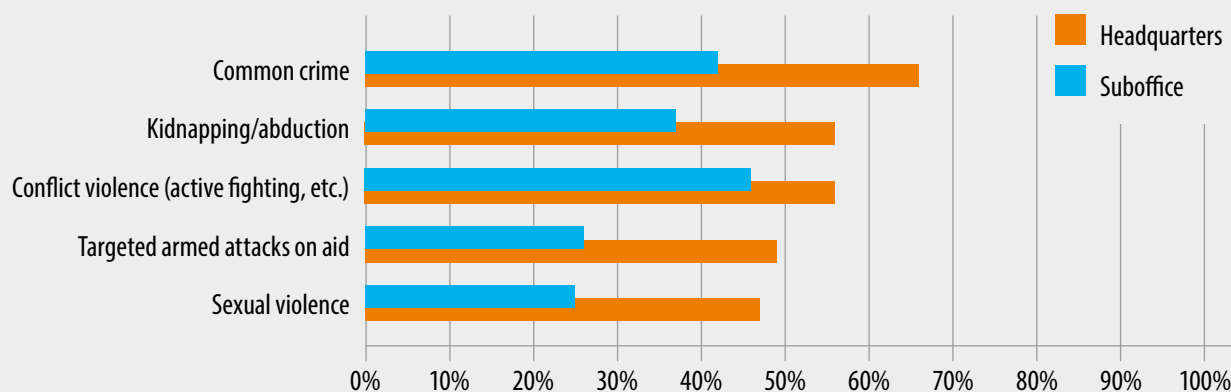
Source: Online humanitarian worker survey undertaken as part of the *To Stay and Deliver* follow-up study.

Note: "Targeted armed attacks on aid" includes attacks on "aid project facilities or offices," also referred to as "raids."

there, they will stop reporting security incidents to protect their jobs and the program."

A functional separation of programming from security was observed in some organizations. Separation often contributes to greater risk aversion and the likelihood of agencies "staying" without necessarily "delivering." This separation was more commonly found within the UN system than among NGOs, and many humanitarians within the UN felt that many of the internal challenges of "staying and delivering" derive from the structural set-up of security management as separate from humanitarian programming. At the field level, the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) advises the designated official (DO) and security management team (SMT), comprising UN agency heads and the UNDSS chief security adviser/security adviser, on security decisions. According to this structure, ultimate responsibility rests with the DO, and UNDSS advises the DO "to enable the conduct of United Nations activities while ensuring the safety, security and well-being" of UN personnel, premises, and assets. Heads of agency under the UN security management system (SMS) not only sit on the SMT but also have direct responsibility for their agencies' own security management.

A majority of interviewees with direct experience of the SMS in the field felt that the way things function in practice often differ from the theory. Most notably,

UNDSS and UN humanitarian personnel noted across numerous interviews and consultations that UNDSS's work in the majority of highly insecure environments is primarily focused on keeping staff and facilities safe – generally resulting in the constriction of humanitarian work. After the UN and most INGOs evacuated Kunduz in northern Afghanistan amid a Taliban offensive on the city in late September 2015, which led to the destruction and pillaging of UN offices, UNDSS took several weeks to conduct a security assessment and UN agencies took more than a month to re-establish even a limited presence – far longer than it took most national and international NGOs. UNDSS was also perceived as relatively unresponsive as UN humanitarian agencies attempted to re-establish a field presence across Yemen following the evacuation in 2015.

Such instances run counter to UNDSS's mission to enable "the safest and most efficient conduct of the programmes and activities of the United Nations System." In some cases it is also important to note that, in line with this mission, UNDSS effectively enabled operations and access in collaboration with its humanitarian partners. In the case of Syria, UN officials noted that UNDSS had been integral in facilitating a number of cross-line convoys. Likewise, in Somalia, interviewees on the ground noted that UNDSS had played a largely enabling role in supporting humanitarian action. In both Syria and Somalia,

interviewees felt that the positive working relationship between UNDSS and humanitarian agencies was driven by the individuals heading UNDSS in these countries and influenced particularly by personality and background rather than structure or policy.

As noted above, there are positive examples of intra-UN collaboration on security. However, far more examples of challenges or tensions were identified in the course of this study. These primarily stem from the complex ways in which the SMS functions in practice. For instance, UN heads of agency have responsibility – in consultation with the DO where warranted – for security of their personnel and programs, but they – and some DOs – are exceptionally reluctant to go against UNDSS's advice for fear of the consequences should security incidents occur. Hence UN officials tend to view UNDSS as a gatekeeper, providing firm approval or rejection of

certain activities, even where it is not intended to function in this manner. Furthermore, some UN agencies employ increasing numbers of their own security officers to advise on operational concerns and push back against UNDSS where it was perceived as being overly cautious. The result is not the clear, unambiguous system envisioned in the SMS but rather a collection of individuals and structures – DOs, SMTs, individual heads of agency, UNDSS officials, and agency-specific security personnel, all of whom are liaising with headquarters – which function in different ways in different countries and with differing degrees of collaboration and recrimination.

A related problem linked to separating security from programming decisions, and discussed in the 2011 report, is that security advisors – whether from UNDSS or within INGOs – tend to lack an adequate

BOX 3. SAVING LIVES TOGETHER

Saving Lives Together (SLT) is a framework for enhancing UN, INGO, and international-organization-partner security collaboration on critical security and safety issues. SLT arose out of an initiative under the auspices of the IASC begun in 2004 to examine the "Menu of Options for UN/NGO/IGO Security Collaboration" launched in 2001. Under SLT, the operational decisions remain the responsibility of the individual organizations involved. It aims to foster closer links between the UN and NGOs through ensuring that, where appropriate, NGO representatives can participate in SMT meetings or other broad-based security forums, share information about incidents, and collaborate on training and response planning. SLT was revised in 2015 to improve clarity on roles, ease mechanisms for participation, and add new headquarters support arrangements.

SLT is a voluntary arrangement that focuses on all countries, missions, and designated areas where enhanced UN–NGO collaboration is required. It has essentially two "levels": the regular level aims to "create dialogue and information sharing arrangements to ensure that all SLT partner organisations have adequate access to relevant security information," while the enhanced level is applied in more complex setting with the aimed of achieving "stronger and more effective information sharing, security coordination, and operational arrangements." Where field security platforms or NGO coordination bodies with a strong security management component exist, they often play a vital role as an interlocutor under SLT between the UN and INGOs.

SLT has been the subject of renewed efforts in the last two to three years, including a 2014 evaluation and 2015 revision. That said, its field-level impact appears to vary widely, with its exact meaning and purpose at times not well understood. For example, several interviewees with security responsibilities were uncertain whether the SLT office still existed and how or why to contact it for support. The degree of confusion was particularly pronounced in Yemen, where some NGOs felt that SLT required UN support to INGOs with evacuation, while other humanitarian officials expressed their belief that SLT specifically disallowed UN–INGO collaboration on evacuation. A similar finding was reached in the 2014 SLT review, which found that: "the terminology and objective of the [SLT] framework is not routinely understood or applied."

Sources: IASC, *Saving Lives Together*; SLT, *"Saving Lives Together"*; and interviews.

understanding of humanitarian approaches to security. The majority of UNDSS staff do not have "humanitarian program implementation" experience and may be more likely to favor protective and deterrent approaches over enabling approaches rooted in negotiation and acceptance. The 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* report noted the need for security personnel with a greater appreciation for humanitarian programming and acceptance-based risk management strategies. The present study found no discernible change in UNDSS recruitment staffing profiles,[36] but some awareness-raising and training activities are taking place. For instance, the UN Security Certification Programme for Field Security Coordination Officers includes information on humanitarian principles and operations.[37] Such efforts are important but must also be reinforced by the broader humanitarian community, which has not necessarily supported changes in awareness and understanding among security personnel by, for instance, involving them early in the design of programmes and activities.

While this study identified unhelpful examples of the separation of programming and security functions within the humanitarian community, program criticality – the systematic process of weighing risks against the importance of particular activities in saving or sustaining lives – could potentially alleviate some of these challenges. As a decision-making approach and mindset, it has the potential to force serious discussions of which activities are or are not worth taking particular risks for, as illustrated further in Box 4. Participants from a recent UN Programme Criticality exercise in Somalia, for example, consistently reported they valued the creation of a space in which they could step back from the day-to-day demands of implementation and reassess current risk thresholds. **However, the implementation of Programme Criticality within the UN varied across contexts. In most countries examined, it was commonly criticized for being a "check-box" exercise with insufficient buy-in or support from decision-makers at the agency level**; the results of these exercises did not necessarily have any impact on practice and were virtually unknown beyond the country-office level. The concept appears to be not

BOX 4. PROGRAM CRITICALITY

Program criticality is an integrated program and security approach that focuses on determining which programs are the most critical to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the organization. This determination allows decision-makers to identify which programs warrant accepting a greater level of risk, or a greater allocation of resources to mitigate risks.

Within the UN, the Programme Criticality framework is a mandatory component of the UN SMS, first approved in 2011 and subsequently revised in 2013, used to determine the criticality of all activities carried out by UN personnel in environments of heightened security risk. Programme Criticality arose out of a recognition that the UN needed to review and revise the ways in which it measured and mitigated risk, and that it should be willing to accept higher risk when implementing more critical programs. Programme Criticality assessments are undertaken at country level to facilitate cooperation between security, program, and senior mission staff to ensure that informed and legitimate decisions are taken about the safety and security of UN personnel in the delivery of mandated activities.

In 2014 an independent review of the Programme Criticality framework undertaken by Humanitarian Outcomes concluded that the framework was positively influencing the UN's ability to implement its activities in volatile environments, but recommended critical improvements in terms of better integration into existing systems and improved oversight and accountability.

Sources: UN Chief Executives' Board for Coordination, *United Nations System Programme Criticality Framework*; Haver et al., *Independent Review of Programme Criticality: Main Report.*

[36]   Drawing on statements made by UNDSS officials interviewed at headquarters and field levels.

[37]   The Security Certification Programme is mandatory for newly recruited UNDSS P-3 field officers.

always well understood, and the processes through which it is implemented are often found to be confusing and complex. In Syria, for instance, UN agencies approached the process in terms of resources and made the case for labeling their respective sectors and activities – including those related to livelihoods and reconstruction – as most critical; the results of that first Programme Criticality exercise were ultimately not fully exploited. For the potential positive impact of program criticality to be realized, the ways in which these exercises are undertaken must continue to be improved to ensure that objective and sound assessments prevail, and that these assessments are meaningfully drawn upon in operational decisions. Ultimately, it is also important to understand better how program criticality exercises can be effectively followed by implementable mitigation measures and delivery of assistance.

4.2 NEGOTIATING HUMANITARIAN ACCESS AND PURSUING ACCEPTANCE

All access is an outcome of sustained engagement, including negotiation with parties to the conflict, communities, and others. This engagement ideally leads to the acceptance that humanitarians need in order to operate. Acceptance as a security management strategy "attempts to negate a threat or threats through building relationships with relevant stakeholders in the operational area, and obtaining their acceptance and consent for the organization's presence and its work."[38] Acceptance alone is not always sufficient to address all risks, particularly with regard to collateral damage or criminal risks, and many agencies supplement acceptance strategies with protective measures (such as fortified compounds). As the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* report highlighted, concern has persisted about the rigorousness of acceptance approaches and the capacity and willingness of humanitarian actors to engage and negotiate with those who can guarantee or influence their security. Nonetheless, this research found strong examples of acceptance practices and an increasingly context-specific understanding of how acceptance works across the humanitarian community.

4.2.1 ACCEPTANCE IN PRACTICE

Many humanitarian actors, particularly NGOs, saw gaining acceptance as essential to their security. Reflecting this, acceptance-focused research, access and acceptance position papers, and dedicated access and negotiation personnel/units within various entities have grown enormously in recent years. For instance, a significant number (41 percent) of survey respondents indicated that their organization has field-based personnel focused on access and associated issues like acceptance; roughly a quarter said their organization has policies and toolkits on these issues. Some organizations, like OCHA and NRC, have headquarters focal points to manage or advise on issues linked to access across their portfolios.

Nonetheless, many of the issues identified in the 2011 report persist. **At present, acceptance has become more of a headquarters priority than a rigorous and comprehensive field-level practice**; only 48 percent of survey respondents from suboffices reported that their organization employed an acceptance strategy, as opposed to 71 percent of respondents in headquarters. Fully half of all national staff respondents to the survey either indicated that they did not know if their organizations were pursuing acceptance or did not answer the question, suggesting that this issue has not penetrated deeply within the humanitarian community. This was consistent with the field research, where relatively few agencies were able to articulate and demonstrate cogent, effective, and responsive strategies for building acceptance, whether from communities, armed groups, or government actors.

Despite the limited awareness of this concept, survey respondents felt that their engagement with local communities – whether formally part of an acceptance approach or not – yielded some security benefits (Figure 4). Local and international NGOs and UN agencies all noted that communities had brought security risks to their attention, while local NGOs particularly benefited when local communities intervened with conflict parties on their behalf. Interviews with affected populations in the CAR and Afghanistan underscored the importance of acceptance, with many interviewees talking about how

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[38]   See the glossary in Annex B. This definition is derived from the one in Egeland et al., *To Stay and Deliver*, p. xiv.

Figure 3: Existing access and acceptance resources within humanitarian organizations (percentage of respondents)

| 41,3 | 25,4 | 23,2 | 19,7 |
| Field-based personnel focused on acceptance or humanitarian negotiations | A policy on acceptance or humanitarian negotiations | Guidelines or toolkits on acceptance or humanitarian negotiations | Headquarters-based personnel focused on acceptance or humanitarian negotiations |
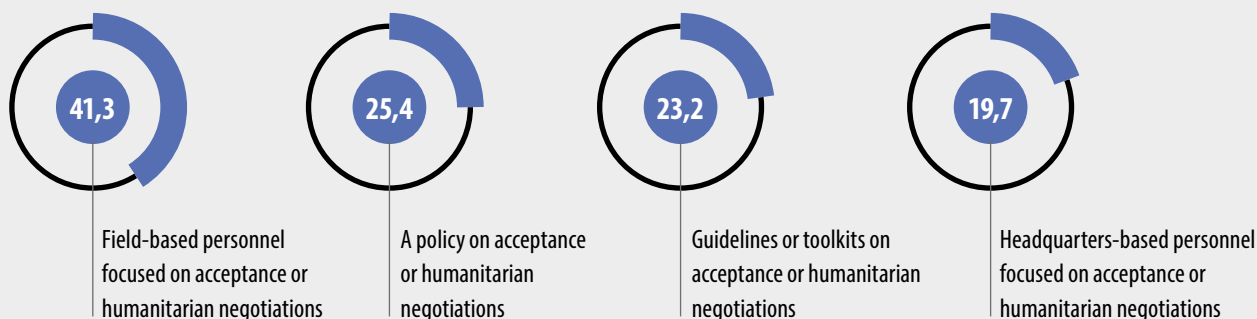
Source: Online survey undertaken as part of the *To Stay and Deliver* follow-up study.

they either negotiated on behalf of aid actors or took active measures to ensure that organizations engaged in humanitarian work were able to navigate local security risks effectively.

As Figure 4 outlines, achieving acceptance has major benefits – and these may accrue differently to different types of organizations. Further work on the micro-level elements of acceptance is necessary to understand better how different approaches – regarding negotiation, communication, program design, accountability, and so on – influence community acceptance and the degree to which community members support humanitarian security. However, a number of practices were seen as particularly important across contexts and/or relevant to specific contexts.

→ **Strategic hiring practices** were important, particularly employing individuals with broad social networks, geographically relevant connections, and strong negotiation abilities. Access dialogue is best undertaken by staff who have the appropriate training, profile, and support to build this kind of dialogue. One agency in Afghanistan hired "hybrid field officers" who moved discretely; had pre-existing connections to parties to the conflict; and were trained to help monitor acceptance, undertake dialogue, and conduct assessments. Others more commonly emphasized the importance of having connections to community leaders, and of hiring

field staff who could engage effectively with the community because of not only their skills but also their ethnicity, local ties, age, and/or gender.

→ **Training and mentoring** are essential to ensuring staff have the skills and support necessary to cultivate acceptance approaches. While some staff may have more "natural" diplomatic and negotiation skills, they may still require mentoring to understand and operationalize humanitarian principles as well as to deal with difficult situations. One NGO in Afghanistan ensured that its field staff across regions met in Kabul to share lessons learned, and developed case studies used for training purposes out of particularly difficult negotiations. Another NGO in the CAR sought to correct some of what it saw as shortcomings in its approach by regularly deploying staff who were more experienced to field locations to work hand in hand with ground-level staff on cultivating acceptance. This NGO, and many others, felt that these kinds of mentoring or on-the-job training approaches were more effective than workshops or more formal office-based training, and led to staff being more likely to ask questions or solicit help when faced with dilemmas.

→ **Principled common standards** can play a positive role where agencies are able to collaborate and agree. Multiagency agreements such as the Ground Rules in Somalia and the Joint Operating Principles

Figure 4: Security outcomes demonstrating acceptance of humanitarian organizations (percentage of respondents)

Horizontal bar chart with categories (top to bottom):
- We have a written or verbal understanding with local power-holders/non-state armed actors
- We are in regular contact with local power-holders/non-state armed actors
- Community members have brought potential threats to our attention
- Community members have intervened on our behalf with conflict parties

Legend: UN, INGO, Local NGO/CBO

X-axis: 0%, 5%, 10%, 15%, 20%, 25%, 30%
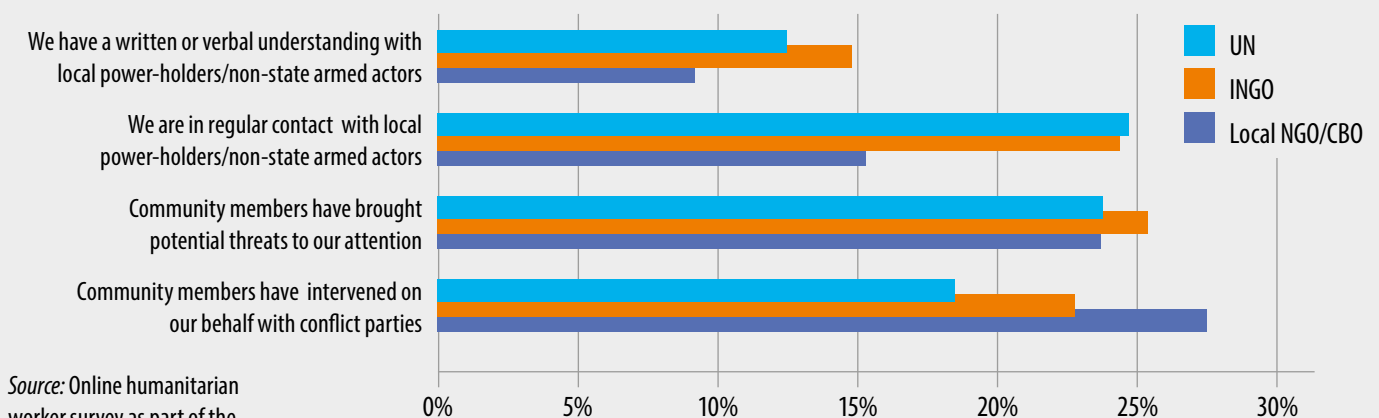
Source: Online humanitarian worker survey as part of the *To Stay and Deliver* follow-up study.

(JOPs) in Syria (discussed further in Section 4.2.2) provide a positive example. These common standards allow agencies to identify shared thresholds (sometimes "red lines"), and communicate simply, clearly, and consistently how the humanitarian community functions.

➡ **"Humanitarian access units"** currently exist within OCHA in Iraq, the occupied Palestinian territories, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen. These units, set up where relevant, develop or manage access monitoring and reporting frameworks, and often work with multistakeholder "access working groups" where humanitarian agencies discuss access challenges and responses. Nonetheless, some stakeholders in Somalia and Syria expressed concern about the UN's perceived neutrality, impartiality, and independence, and noted that access discussions also take place between like-minded agencies outside access working group meetings.

Several challenges identified in 2011 have persisted. **A wide range of actors appeared persistently reliant on acceptance without understanding what factors genuinely contribute to acceptance of humanitarian agencies among different types of stakeholders.** One donor funded small *ad hoc* programs in Afghanistan designed to increase acceptance in areas where NGOs had limited access, but these initiatives ultimately appeared to have little impact on acceptance given that

the projects were not seen as making a real difference in meeting the communities' needs. As became clear from interviews with affected populations in Afghanistan and the CAR, communities will offer support and contribute to security as much as they can as long as a humanitarian actor is seen to be addressing their needs in a way that yields concrete benefits for them; they are less likely to express the same level of support for activities that appear merely tokenistic.

Lastly, it is important to reiterate that acceptance has limitations. These are partly dictated by contextual factors. In ISIS-controlled parts of Iraq and Syria, the group's ideology and mistrust of all institutions perceived as Western means that the potential for access and acceptance work is limited at this stage. **Field research illuminated the importance of understanding and adapting to variations within operating contexts.** In Afghanistan, for example, community acceptance and indirect engagement with armed groups appear to be more viable in many areas of Khost than it would be in Kandahar, where direct engagement with non-state armed groups may play a more influential role in securing safe access. Some humanitarian actors working in both places made concerted efforts to align acceptance strategies to conditions at the micro level, but this requires strong contextual knowledge and organizational agility. Ultimately, community acceptance – because it relies on civilians who may not be able to control their own security – is not a panacea. It is unlikely

to provide protection from *ad hoc* criminal behavior or looting amid a breakdown in law and order, as recent events in Bangui, Kunduz, and Aden demonstrate. Humanitarian actors practicing rigorous community acceptance strategies may still be attacked and robbed when traveling through areas where they do not have strong community relationships (e.g., while going to program sites), with little or no forewarning and for reasons that have very little to do with their own actions. In such cases, a humanitarian actor can do very little to guard against the violence that will arise from new and unforeseen risk factors.

4.2.2 ENGAGING AND NEGOTIATING WITH NON-STATE ARMED GROUPS

Engaging and negotiating with non-state armed groups are important aspects of any acceptance-based approach (as is securing acceptance from all parties to the conflict), and their neglect has detrimental impacts on both assistance and protection. Notably, UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182 affirms that engagement with armed groups is essential in any context to negotiate access and enhance protection of civilians, and this was echoed through a range of member state commitments to enhance compliance with IHL by states and non-state armed groups made at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit. Recent research with a broad cross-section of armed groups highlights that many understand and to some degree recognize humanitarian principles, and underscores the powerful impact of direct humanitarian engagement with armed groups in increasing their acceptance of humanitarian actors and their understanding of IHL.[39]

Yet humanitarian dialogue with armed groups remains highly sensitive in many places, and is seen as separate from "community acceptance" strategies by many actors. One contributing factor regarding certain groups – particularly in contexts like Mali, Pakistan, Somalia, and Syria – is fear of running afoul of counterterrorism

restrictions imposed by some donor institutions or host governments. **Little has changed with regard to the harmful impacts of counterterror legislation, as noted above, despite consistent humanitarian advocacy on the issue, and it continues to create obstacles to effective engagement.** Some donor countries push humanitarian actors to operate in areas controlled by proscribed groups, yet, paradoxically, these same donor governments impose restrictions on or otherwise discourage the sorts of acceptance-oriented engagement with those groups that is necessary to gain access to these locations.

Counterterror restrictions may actually lead some humanitarian actors to self-censor, neglecting areas under the influence of proscribed groups. A 2013 NRC and OCHA study, for instance, identified "many examples where the lack of information results in misinformation, self-regulation and self-censorship on the part of humanitarian actors often going beyond the original donor requirements."[40] In other instances humanitarians have, as a result of anxiety over counterterror legislation, pursued unstructured, *ad hoc* engagement with proscribed groups that is less effective than carefully planned, strategic, and principled engagement.[41] During the 2011 famine in Somalia this became evident, as some humanitarian actors faced an impossible choice between engaging with Al-Shabaab for access to starving populations at the cost of violating counterterror restrictions or doing nothing in the face of catastrophic famine. Many engaged in *ad hoc* private negotiations, and Al-Shabaab was able to play actors against one another in part due to the lack of openness and coordination among humanitarians. Important lessons are yet to be learned: humanitarian actors that succeeded in providing aid in areas under Al-Shabaab's control, without paying taxes or ceding control of their programming, pursued rigorous, structured engagement with the group at all levels, from the senior leadership *shura* to ground-level fighters. This required significant resources and time devoted to understanding the group, developing relationships, and pursuing dialogue.[42]

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[39]   Jackson, *In Their Words: Perceptions of Non-State Armed Actors on Humanitarian Action.*

[40]   Mackintosh and Duplat, *Study of the Impact of Donor Counterterrorism Measures on Principled Humanitarian Action*, p. 116.

[41]   See Mackintosh and Duplat, S*tudy of the Impact of Donor Counterterrorism Measures.* Also Counterterrorism and Humanitarian Engagement Project, *Counterterrorism and Humanitarian Engagement in Somalia and Mali*; Maxwell and Majid, *Another Humanitarian Crisis in Somalia? Learning from the 2011 Famine*; Jackson and Aynte, *Talking to the Other Side: Humanitarian Negotiations with al-Shabaab in Somalia.*

[42]   Jackson and Aynte, *Al-Shabaab Engagement with Aid Agencies.*

Counterterror restrictions, restrictive domestic legislation, and other factors have led many humanitarian actors to leave access negotiations to their field staff or subcontracting entities to arrange *ad hoc* access on the ground. While this kind of delegation can work well, the risks are often not sufficiently addressed. Field staff are often burdened with the responsibility for negotiating with armed actors in the very same communities in which they work or live, and face extraordinary pressure to succumb to demands from armed groups. To reduce some of this risk, international staff members or non-local national staff can confer some degree of protection by their presence, even in the most volatile contexts. In Afghanistan, one head of a field office talked about how more pressure was exerted on national staff during negotiations with pro- and anti-government actors if no international staff were involved in the discussion; his national counterparts reiterated this, stating that they prefer to work as a mixed (national and international) team. Another local aid worker from Afghanistan felt that while expatriates did not need to be directly involved in negotiations, their presence was still strategically important: "You can play good cop/bad cop with an expat around, and blame someone else in order to do your job properly." Even where expatriate presence is significant and many humanitarians are engaging directly and openly with armed groups, as was the case in the CAR, some

international personnel still expressed reluctance to do so, often because they thought engagement was somehow "against the rules."

Remote approaches and subcontracting pose additional challenges for negotiation with armed groups and lead to greater opacity. Few using these approaches could credibly describe the access strategies their staff, partners, or subcontractors were utilizing with representatives of armed groups. Comments such as the following were common: "We send one of our senior national staff members in the area to talk with the local commander, and they make sure it all works out." It is ultimately dangerous and self-defeating for humanitarian organizations not to capture how access is being achieved, not to document good and bad practices (e.g., what is actually being said during these local negotiations), not to ensure risk thresholds or "red lines" are not being crossed as part of these negotiations, and not to ensure that national staff are comfortable with this role in negotiation (e.g., that they do not inadvertently put themselves or their relatives at risk then or in the future). Such issues were too often neglected by some senior humanitarian staff, who exhibited a "don't ask, don't tell" mentality. In addition, a growing body of research is documenting the perspectives of armed groups on these issues, and

BOX 5. THE JOINT OPERATING PRINCIPLES IN SYRIA

In Syria, negotiations were aided by the development of a simple two-page document known as the JOPs. This document, produced by OCHA and based on a tool first developed by Mercy Corps, lays out the purpose of humanitarian actors and their principles, and makes clear that they will not operate if non-state armed groups pressure them to violate these principles (e.g., attempting to influence beneficiary selection or impose "taxation"). This protocol was taken up by an OCHA official who had seen the benefits of a comparable "Ground Rules" instrument in Somalia. Unlike the Ground Rules in Somalia, which had been circulated but not operationalized, the JOPs were widely disseminated and uptake was promoted through training. UN agencies and INGOs used the JOPs to clarify their role with armed groups and discuss humanitarian principles, creating a common language with the groups. The JOPs also provided a convenient "scapegoat" where humanitarians faced demands to which they would not accede (e.g., "we would like to work with you, but under the JOPs we're forbidden from paying this tax"). In addition, access in the north of the country was supported by the dissemination of the Declaration of Commitment on Humanitarian Principles and Aid Delivery, signed by approximately 30 non-state armed groups, which helped to build awareness among various factions about their obligations to support humanitarian access.

strongly underscores the need for consistent and principled approaches to humanitarian access.[43]

While many challenges related to negotiation with armed groups remain, some positive contextual developments have occurred, including the development of JOPs in Syria (see Box 5). Despite these successes, multistakeholder collaboration on negotiation remains rare. Few negotiation processes are coordinated or jointly undertaken by multiple humanitarian organizations under UN leadership, as was more common in the past.[44]

Bilateral access negotiation with armed groups and states is increasingly daunting, given not only the number of humanitarian organizations but also the multiplicity of major and minor armed groups (e.g., more than 60 in eastern DRC, 18 in northern Mali, several dozen in Yemen, and several hundred in Syria). This lack of cooperation on access negotiation reflects a range of factors, particularly concerns about the UN's neutrality and independence. In Syria, the UN's role as a political actor in the conflict and other factors make the system seem partial to some actors and thus unsuitable for jointly pursuing access except in besieged areas. A 2011 study commissioned by the UN Integration Steering Group highlighted that "being perceived as part of the UN's political or peacekeeping agenda was of particular concern to UN and non-UN humanitarian actors in Afghanistan, DRC and Somalia because the UN missions in these contexts … [were] deemed to be supporting a particular actor in the conflict." Although UN integration arrangements were found to have both positive and negative impacts on humanitarian engagement with non-state armed actors and the primary constraints to such engagement lay outside of integration arrangements, the study concluded that "in contexts where the UN mission is contested and local actors distinguish between different UN actors, highly visible UN integration arrangements may compound perceptions that UN humanitarian actors are aligned with the UN political or peacekeeping mission." A 2015 IASC review of the impact of UN integration on humanitarian action stressed similar concerns.[45]

Given the confidential nature and sensitivity of negotiation with many armed groups, humanitarians are often reluctant to share experiences, tactics, or lessons learned. Some positive developments have occurred in this regard. The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign

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[43]   See, for example, Brabant and Vogel, *Dans les yeux: La perception de l'aide et des acteurs humanitaires par les combattants irréguliers de la République démocratique du Congo*; Jackson, *In Their Words*.

[44]   For example, see Jackson and Davey, F*rom the Spanish Civil War to Afghanistan: Historical and Contemporary Reflections on Humanitarian Engagement with Non-state Armed Groups.*

[45]   IASC, *Review of the Impact of UN Integration on Humanitarian Action.* See also Metcalfe et al., *UN Integration and Humanitarian Space: An Independent Study Commissioned by the UN Integration Steering Group.*

Affairs, Conflict Dynamics International (CDI), and OCHA have developed a practitioners' manual and handbook on the normative framework on humanitarian access in armed conflict; Conflict Dynamics International has also led negotiations training.[46] MSF has been increasingly open about its own successes and challenges, with the publication of a frank series of accounts of negotiating access contained in a 2011 edited volume entitled *Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed,* as well as a series of case studies that examine its decision-making processes, compiled on a dedicated website.[47] The *Humanitarian Negotiation Exchange* Platform, an ICRC-based research initiative on frontline diplomacy, seeks to compile and analyze the experiences of humanitarian negotiators with the aim of enhancing peer learning and exchange. Similarly, the Strategic Partnership on Humanitarian Negotiation and Mediation – set up to support, notably, the Centre of Competence on Humanitarian Negotiation – aims to share experiences and lessons learned across the humanitarian community. Yet much more could be done at field level, organizational level, and globally to encourage reflection, sharing, and more effective evidence-based practice and strategies on the ground.

4.2.3 UNDERSTANDING SELF-GENERATED RISKS

The research found that some humanitarian actors had acted in ways that contributed to the self-generated risks noted in Section 3. They generally did so ostensibly to enable humanitarian access **and facilitate delivery of life-saving assistance**. However the actions taken in some cases posed a security or "precedent" challenge for all humanitarian actors. One organization noted, for instance, that its field staff in a particular area often had to allow local councils influenced by one faction to select up to a third of beneficiaries as long as the people they selected ultimately also met that organization's vulnerability criteria. In one case study country, service providers, particularly trucking firms, were hired by aid agencies despite having connections with parties to the

conflict in order to increase the likelihood that aid would reach particular areas.

While many humanitarian staff described such decisions as unavoidable compromises necessary to reach people in need in line with the humanitarian imperative, other actors noted that organizations making these concessions had established a precedent that would inhibit access for others and could create or exacerbate security risks. The next aid agency to engage, for instance, with a party to the conflict might be expected to make the same concessions or face restrictions, bans, or even aggression if and when it refused. When concessions are made to one particular armed actor, that humanitarian organization may be targeted by another armed group based on a perception of partiality and affiliation with the first actor.

In several instances either donors or senior management were able to address these issues positively. In Afghanistan a country director described an instituted organizational process of "coming clean" in which staff spoke honestly about tradeoffs they had made, and what they felt would be the necessary steps and other means that could be used to enable access and delivery. This was a lengthy, sensitive, and difficult process, but ultimately the organization was able to change course. A country director in the CAR described a similar process: he or another senior manager travelled in all convoys, with local staff, and together they explained the organization's policies guiding transport and fees at checkpoints and how certain practices ultimately meant resources were being taken away from people who desperately needed them. They were turned back or held up for several hours in some instances, and forced to elevate the issue to senior faction members or leverage support from influential interlocutors. This slowed programming and temporarily closed some project sites, but ultimately they were able to gain acceptance of their policy.

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46   FDFA, *Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict: Practitioners' Manual, Version 2*; FDFA, *Humanitarian Access in Situations of Armed Conflict: Handbook on the International Normative Framework.*

47   Magone et al., *Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience*; "MSF Speaks Out," the organization's collection of contextual case studies, available at http://speakingout.msf.org/.

4.3 REMOTE PROGRAMMING AND SUBCONTRACTING

This study concurs with a recent review funded by the UK Department for International Development which found that, after years of being seen as a "last resort," **remote management approaches are increasingly used a default option**.[48] As briefly mentioned earlier, approximately six in ten survey respondents indicated that their organizations had adopted some form of remote management. Across five particularly insecure countries (Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen), 77 percent of respondents said their organizations had adopted remote management arrangements.

4.3.1 DEVELOPMENTS IN POLICY AND GUIDANCE

In 2011, *To Stay and Deliver* stressed the need for more coherent and accountable remote programming models to mitigate impacts on program quality and accountability. That report also highlighted the emergence of several innovations related to what we call "hyperlocalized" approaches, where staff or partners are recruited from an affected area and undertake operations primarily in their vicinity. Both these recommendations have largely been acted upon. Since then, **many organizations have developed global remote programming policies and guidelines**.[49] That said, only 38 percent of respondents to this study's online survey said that their organizations have remote programming guidelines or handbooks; more than a third of respondents were uncertain whether such guidelines existed, thus suggesting that more work is needed to raise awareness about these near-ubiquitous tools and the country-level continuity and contingency plans they contain.[50]

Remote programming guidelines increasingly focus on innovative and triangulated monitoring methods to enable in-country and out-of-country staff to assess quality and improve accountability. These include complaint mechanisms (e.g., hotlines to report problems); "reverse call centers" where INGOs call beneficiaries en masse to check on local staff/partner performance; the hiring of third-party monitoring firms or organizations; broad networks of community contacts to report on aid in their areas; and the use of technological systems like the KoBo Toolbox, which enables the collection of monitoring data, including photos, which are geo-tagged and time-stamped.[51] These sorts of approaches have greatly enhanced donors' and implementing agencies' confidence when using remote methods. **Interviewees highlighted that monitoring was more streamlined and systematic, but that it mostly focused on outputs (verification of disbursements or other activities) and only rarely provided insights into broader issues such as the relevance of assistance, whether implementing agencies were operating in a principled manner, and whether humanitarian efforts were yielding the intended outcomes.**

4.3.2 REMOTE APPROACHES IN PRACTICE

Despite their prevalence, remote approaches are seen as suboptimal. Half of all survey respondents (49 percent) felt that remote management was "somewhat effective" but considerably reduced quality and accountability. Another 26 percent found remote methods "very effective," and a surprisingly small 8 percent of respondents found remote programming "not effective." That said, female respondents and local NGO staff, along with headquarters-based personnel, were the most critical of remote programming; local NGO respondents, in particular, were more than twice as likely as the overall sample to say that remote *management* is "not effective." These figures would

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48   Rivas and Martins, *No Longer a Last Resort.*

49   See for instance Mercy Corps, *Reduced Access Programming: Delivering Impact in Constrained Environments.*

50   Respondents were asked, "Does your organization, to the best of your knowledge, have guidelines or handbooks that determine how you engage in remote management in areas where staff are not permitted to travel?" Three responses were possible: Yes, No, Don't Know/Unsure.

51   See also Howe et al., *Breaking the Hourglass: Partnerships in Remote Management Settings – The Cases of Syria and Iraqi Kurdistan*; Stoddard et al., *Once Removed: Lessons and Challenges in Remote Management of Humanitarian Operations for Insecure Areas.*

benefit from additional research – the case studies did not provide any clear explanations for these variations.

The spread of remote programming has led to a wide array of approaches, a fact captured in the existing literature and in the course of this study. This report divides this spectrum into three key approaches. The first is "remote control," in which agencies directly implement programs but international managers are temporarily relocated to the capital or abroad due to security concerns. However, they retain decision-making control, with limited delegation of responsibility for implementation to field staff. Similarly, "remote management" refers to a direct-implementation operating mode characterized by delegation of authority and responsibility to national staff at the field level over a longer period or on a permanent basis, with limited or no access to implementation sites by international managers due to security concerns.

These approaches should not be confused with the instances in which national staff are – or have long been – managing field locations given that they are the most capable of doing so (e.g., as part of local staff capacity-building or "nationalization" strategies). Many

organizations argued that their national staff run field offices and hold senior management positions because they are best placed to do so, and not simply due to the absence of international personnel. "Remote management" refers not to "nationalization" of staffing, but to cases in which the security situation and risk thresholds play a determining role in staffing decisions and inhibit oversight, by restricting or prohibiting visits to field sites, by senior managers.

Finally, remote management approaches differ from "partnership arrangements," e.g., subcontracting – a growing practice for the UN and many international humanitarian organizations – in which an agency transfers all or a portion of its programming responsibilities (aside perhaps from a degree of monitoring and financial accountability) to one or more subsidiary organizations. Particularly with subcontracting arrangements, the growth of monitoring tools and approaches yielded uneven results. While agencies often felt they had "gotten better" at working in this way, this sentiment was only expressed in relative terms – whereby the improvements did not necessarily lead to greater confidence in these approaches. The majority consulted still felt that they were unable to understand and effectively

monitor outputs, quality, and impact. One practice that appeared to work well was having a dedicated counterpart for each subcontracted implementing agency, supported by a financial officer who could work with the counterpart to cross-check expenditures. The counterparts were recruited specifically for their local knowledge and pre-existing connections, which enabled them to cultivate a network of informants to verify information independently. One inherent challenge is identifying individuals with both the connections relevant to the specific partnership and the personal qualities to do this job well; this often goes against standard NGO hiring processes that tend to emphasize open tendering as well as hiring for more "technical" skill sets.

The number of tiers in a partnership or subcontracting arrangement emerged as an important variable in remote programming in relation to oversight. In some circumstances, a donor provided funds to an INGO that in turn contracted implementation to a local organization or firm. However, particularly in Syria, the reality was often more complicated. Donors funded INGOs (or UN agencies) that in turn contracted NGOs established by members of the Syrian diaspora; these diaspora organizations then at times subcontracted the work to local NGOs and/or CBOs such as local relief committees. In extreme cases, funds were going from donors to the UN to INGOs to diaspora NGOs to local NGOs and then to local relief committees – a process that not only undermined efficiency but also blurred accountability, quality control, attention to principled approaches, and more. A recent report estimates that 20 percent of education-sector funds for Syrian refugees in Lebanon are "lost" through these kinds of layered subcontracting arrangements.[52] These sorts of practices also tend to marginalize further attention to protection as a result of less overall quality control. One humanitarian worker felt that "less presence means less protection, and less connection to communities means we understand less about people's own coping mechanisms."

For these and other reasons some donors have sought to limit remote management and subcontracting, with ECHO (Directorate-General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, European Commission), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and others, for instance, striving only to fund organizations with expatriate personnel on the ground in Yemen. Similarly, ECHO in Afghanistan does not fund any remotely managed or subcontracted projects. It has also tried to increase access for implementing agencies through funding dedicated to increasing acceptance in the south as well as through the creation of an "emergency response mechanism", which enabled fast, effective, and direct responses to local crises (as with the displacement following the September 2015 fighting in Kunduz). Where remote management is seen as essential, donors can play a critical convening role. One donor brought together international agencies (the primary grantees) and national organizations (the frontline implementers) for an open discussion about programming approaches and constraints. Several of the international agencies in this instance were relying upon many of the same national organizations, but they were not aware that they were doing so and had not shared their experiences or information about working with these national organizations, given the sensitive nature of the work and the fear of information sharing. Many donors, however, have been less active in trying to address the drawbacks of these approaches and less critical in evaluating the effectiveness, necessity, and sophistication of various implementing partners' remote approaches.

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[52]   See Bennett et al., *Time to Let Go: Remaking Humanitarian Action for the Modern Era.*

4.4 DUTY OF CARE

Duty of care to national staff and within local organizations was particularly highlighted in the *To Stay and Deliver* report, which recommended that "existing gaps between security provisions for international and national staff should be immediately addressed" and international humanitarian organizations should "be proactive in helping partners determine [and meet] their security support needs." This study found some areas of progress as well as problematic developments.

4.4.1 DUTY OF CARE IN RELATION TO SECURITY MANAGEMENT

In terms of progress, training increased markedly: in 2011 only 26 percent of local NGO staff reported receiving security training, while that figure was 47 percent in the latest (2015–2016) survey. Training of INGO staff also increased, from 65 percent in 2011 to 75 percent today. Likewise, in 2011 19 percent of local NGO respondents rated their organization's security resources as excellent or good; that figure nearly doubled, to 37 percent, in 2015–2016. Among INGO respondents, the excellent/ good rating went from 44 percent in 2011 to 52 percent in the latest survey. **While sampling issues should be considered, these figures seem to suggest that the humanitarian community has begun to prioritize duty of care more fully and close the gap between meeting duty measures for international and national staff.**

Furthermore, some organizations developed particularly robust approaches to staff safety and security. UNICEF Yemen, for instance, noted that it set aside funding to help staff members who needed to move house as a result of insecurity in their vicinity (in line with UN SMS policy). UN security staff also provided guidance to national staff members on building safe rooms in their houses, and the organization supplied materials to help build such rooms. Oxfam and other NGOs likewise noted providing relocation grants to staff members in Yemen, while Save the Children reportedly opened its expatriate guesthouses to national staff who needed to relocate temporarily as a result of insecurity. In Afghanistan the UN and some INGOs have exhibited remarkably good duty of care in responding to crises, as with the evacuation of national staff and their families from Kunduz when the city was briefly occupied by the

Taliban. Other actors in Afghanistan have experimented with cash grants to local staff in the event of an emergency, so they will have the resources to relocate where the agency may not be able to facilitate this directly.

Despite improvements, the online survey for this study found disparities between the duty-of-care-related responses from local NGO, INGO, and UN personnel. Local NGO staff had the lowest awareness of security procedures and policies, and were the least likely to have received security training from their organizations. They were also the least likely to participate in security briefings or rate their organization's security resources positively. Local NGO respondents saw a decline in awareness of written security policies and procedures between the first *To Stay and Deliver* study and this one. In 2011 55 percent of local NGO respondents were aware of written security policies/ procedures; that figure was just 42 percent in this most recent survey. Furthermore, in the 2011 survey 56 percent of national staff reported regularly participating in security briefings; by 2015–2016 this figure was down to 49 percent. However, such declines are partly due to the numbers of recently established local NGOs involved in the Syria response, among which security policies and strategies tend to be relatively nascent.

Additionally, field research identified little progress on improving support to staff members in high-risk environments, including limited opportunities for psychosocial care, aftercare following security incidents or traumatic experiences, and compensation for those negatively affected by major security incidents in the line of duty. These gaps existed at all levels, but were found to relate particularly to national staff members and local partner organizations. For instance, Syrian local and diaspora NGOs consulted in this study were especially adamant about the need for medical insurance for their Syrian staff members and compensation for the families of staff members killed or injured while implementing projects on behalf of UN agencies and INGOs.

Figure 5: Levels of security support to staff/engagement, by organization type
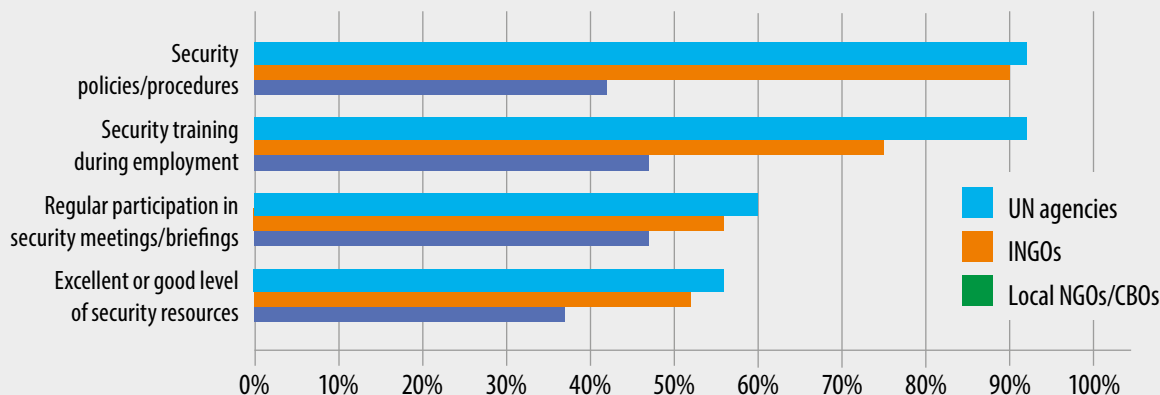
Source: Humanitarian aid worker survey, undertaken as part of the *To Stay and Deliver* follow-up study. Notes: This figure draws upon responses to questions 15, 17, 19, and 21 in the survey in Annex D. The last group of columns identifies the proportion of respondents who rated their organization's level of security resources as "excellent" or "good."

4.4.2 REMOTE APPROACHES AND DUTY OF CARE

The variants of remote approaches come with very different implications for duty of care. For instance, international humanitarian organizations with long-established partners in Syria – ones with which they spent extended time before border restrictions increased – were able to have open and frank discussions about risks and the fact that their local partners would not be financially penalized (or at least not excessively) if they ultimately decided not to seek access to a target area due to insecurity. In other cases, INGOs recounted conversations with newly established local partners/contractors that went along the following lines: "We expect you to cover this area, and if you don't get in there, we will have to cancel our contract and work with someone else." As an example, interviewees alleged that contracts between INGOs and Syrian NGOs commonly stress that the local partner is fully responsible for the safety and security of its staff and the international partner is indemnified from any legal liability. While some might argue that implementing agencies should not agree to these contracts if they are not comfortable assuming the risks involved, many local organizations felt they would not be able to secure the funding to operate without taking these risks. Such power imbalances were also evident in other elements of remote programming: local partners often proved reluctant to share information with their international

supervisors/donors about security, access, corruption, and diversion issues they encountered – leading to a "don't ask, don't tell" arrangement whereby international managers maintained willful ignorance of the actions their ground-level staff members were taking to maintain operations.

A certain number of actors do feel responsible for the security of their local partner staff and provide them with resources, analysis/information, and training on security risk management. However, many international humanitarian actors do not satisfactorily address these issues, and representatives of several such organizations expressed their belief that local organizations do not need these forms of support. Where support is provided, it often consists of relatively rudimentary forms of training, the sharing of security alerts with local partners, and, in more robust instances, mentorship on developing risk-management systems. In cases like Syria, competent local organizations are often so overwhelmed with partnership requests from international entities that they do not invest adequate time or resources in building sophisticated risk-management systems – even where the funding is available to do so.

It is, however, too simple to portray the challenge of remote approaches as simply a technical matter that can be solved by training, risk-management systems, and

improved aftercare following security incidents. The central problem is structural, in that international humanitarian organizations are employing local partners primarily because they are unwilling to put their own staff in harm's way. **That is, local partners are often employed as a means of transferring risk – and as a means of appearing engaged in a crisis without the commensurate risk.** The reality appears to be that the loss of international humanitarian workers' lives has a much greater impact on the ability to stay and deliver than the loss of national aid-workers' lives. As one UN agency employee in Afghanistan pointed out, "We've lost a dozen national partner staff in the south but it didn't impact the course of programming in the way it would've if we had lost even one international staff member."

Ultimately, getting assistance through to affected communities and ensuring that local organizations already engaged in these efforts receive support are important. **However, more must be done to mitigate the power imbalance between international and local actors and empower local actors to press for greater security support.** At present, local organizations in Afghanistan, the CAR, and Syria noted that international actors routinely discounted their security needs and that, reliant on international support, these local organizations were reluctant to press the issue and demand greater funding for security. Likewise, representatives of local organizations noted that, fearful of the financial repercussions, they took risks requested by their international donors (e.g., UN agencies or international or diaspora NGOs) even where they felt doing so was unwise and too risky.

4.4.3 TOWARDS EVIDENCE-BASED, SMART SECURITY STRATEGIES

More broadly, this study called into question the ways in which many currently favored risk-mitigation strategies are being implemented. The current focus on training and guidelines, while welcome and necessary, also often has the adverse effect of diminishing organizational liability: the outcomes or impacts are not always

critically examined to ensure they create the desired improvements in practice. Other factors are important in reducing risk to staff. **Many stakeholders noted that greater investment in human resources processes – particularly in selecting individuals with the temperament and experience to make sound judgments even in highly stressful circumstances – may be more important than any training.** Indeed, "personality" is one of the pillars of the ICRC's organizational security risk-management strategy.[53] Yet in an industry where humanitarian workers routinely switch from entity to entity and country to country on short-term contracts, the selection of personnel and cultivating the investment in them that will yield positive changes in this regard remains challenging.

4.5 PROTECTION APPROACHES

While protection should be at the center of humanitarian response in conflicts, as affirmed in the IASC statement on the centrality of protection in humanitarian action,[54] this is not to suggest that humanitarians are expected to protect civilians. This obligation lies with belligerents. However, they can respond to the needs of civilians arising from protection crises and reduce their vulnerability in a number of ways, and they have a responsibility to address the consequences of the conflict. Recent reports and policy documents, from the UN Secretary-General's report on Sri Lanka published in 2012 to the ICRC's *Professional Standards for Protection Work* updated in 2013, highlight the centrality of protection concerns in humanitarian response and seek to adapt guidance to evolving challenges.[55] Yet enhancing protection of affected populations in contexts where humanitarians themselves are at heightened risk is a difficult task, and the conflicts in Syria and the CAR have particularly highlighted the complexity of these challenges in recent years.

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[53]   Brugger, *ICRC Operational Security: Staff Safety in Armed Conflict and Internal Violence.*

[54]   IASC, "The Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action."

[55]   ICRC, *Professional Standards for Protection Work.*

BOX 6. HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT TO MEDIATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The outbreak of intercommunal violence in the CAR in 2013 turned neighbors, friends, and sometimes relatives against one another and divided communities. In many areas large populations left their villages and towns, fleeing the violence; in others, individuals (usually Muslims or mixed populations) remained in enclaves, with severely restricted freedom of movement. Emblematic of this, Dekoa, a small town north of the capital, has been affected by intermittent violence and widespread abuses against civilians since the outbreak of the conflict. Minorities have been confined to an enclave, with no access to healthcare or education, and deprived of the economic means of survival. Sympathetic neighbors who brought them food or supplies were threatened and beaten.

One of the ways in which OCHA sought to respond to the needs in Dekoa's enclave was to support community members to engage in mediation focused on humanitarian issues. This involved training local leaders to engage in community mediation and facilitation, rather than OCHA mediating or facilitating directly. The approach focused on allowing groups in conflict to re-establish communication within a safe environment and supporting them to identify solutions to collective problems. OCHA trained and mentored the mayor of Dekoa, identified as a "trusted insider," in basic mediation and dialogue facilitation. He first held separate meetings with the two groups, as well as armed actors, focusing on a jointly decided objective – how to achieve freedom of movement and security for all. Eventually, he was able to bring the two sides together to discuss the problem.

While this approach carries certain risks (for example, special attention needs to be paid to the ethos of "do no harm") and generates contrasting views among humanitarian actors, it has helped to reduce tensions, with a profound impact on humanitarian access in the Dekoa enclave. Members of minority Muslim groups were able to access the health clinic and market, although some fear and mistrust persisted, and some Muslims who had previously fled returned. Mediation and structured dialogue have also reduced protection threats, improved freedom of movement, and enhanced humanitarian access in several others towns and the CAR's largest enclave, PK5. Mediation helped improved acceptance of humanitarian action in those areas through the facilitation of dialogue with communities, armed groups, and humanitarians.

However, this approach requires a solid understanding of conflict dynamics at the local level and strong technical capacity in community mediation and facilitation. Special attention needs to be paid to ensuring the principle of "do no harm" is followed, and all parties need to continue to understand and accept that humanitarian action is neutral, impartial, and independent.

4.5.1 PROTECTION IN PRACTICE

Across the contexts examined, protection has received far less attention and has become "mainstreamed" until it is frequently nearly imperceptible except in the broadest sense. Protection concerns are not necessarily overlooked: they receive attention in most conflict-affected contexts, from peacekeeping mandates to policy documents and program proposals. However the proliferation of protection language does not match its implementation. The perception of many of those interviewed was that protection concerns were being neglected or sidelined in practice. This "protection gap" is not new and is hardly unique to conflict contexts,[56] but many of the trends discussed in this report have implications for the scope of what humanitarians can do to enhance the protection of those they aim to help.

Through the field research and interviews, a direct link emerged between a lack of proximity and a lack of attention to protection concerns. **When agencies are not directly present, understanding the protection risks faced by civilians on the ground becomes even more difficult.** This is also partly linked to the lack of

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[56]   See Jackson, *Protecting Civilians: The Gap between Norms and Practice.*

quality control that often accompanies remote approaches, particularly subcontracting arrangements. If an agency implements through one or more subcontractors and never directly monitors projects or speaks with the local population, the primary agency finds it very difficult to ensure that it is "doing no harm" or that it understands the protection threats faced by affected communities.

In more extreme cases, humanitarian security strategies can exacerbate protection issues for local communities. This falls beyond the realm of self-generated risks, in that they subject not only humanitarian workers but also affected populations to increased dangers. In one such instance in Somalia, clan elders accused several humanitarian actors of relying for security on armed elements associated with the district governor. They provided very detailed and likely credible information (according to NGO sources familiar with the incident) about the abuses these elements had perpetrated.

One way in which humanitarians can and do enhance protection is to advocate for the protection of civilians in adherence with IHL, at both leadership and local levels. **Private advocacy of this kind requires direct engagement with the belligerents and the cultivation of long-term relationships, which are generally best pursued through physical presence.** However, much of the humanitarian community is simply not developing these relationships, and where these relationships do exist they tend to focus largely on access issues. *Ad hoc* negotiations might work for some access issues, but strategic engagement at all levels is required to disseminate IHL and advocate for respect for the law and humanitarian principles. In both Afghanistan and Somalia humanitarian workers routinely commented that they felt the humanitarian community was neglecting issues like the recruitment of child soldiers, increasing respect for humanitarian principles, and addressing violations. High-level engagement with armed groups on these issues was notably absent or lacking across all contexts, aside from the work of a small number of actors (like the ICRC) which undertake this dialogue on a routine basis in all operating environments.

Being present in some contexts may have a protective effect; in other contexts the presence of aid workers, particularly foreigners, may actually increase the risk to

humanitarian operations. The protective benefits of proximity and presence are poorly understood; they are also often neglected, and generally precluded by the dominance of remote approaches. However, across contexts, a handful of innovative and effective protection approaches were identified, including physical accompaniment[57] and support to mediation in the CAR, the occupied Palestinian territories, South Sudan, and elsewhere, proving that effective protection interventions are possible – even under extremely difficult circumstances.

4.6 DONOR PRACTICES FOR STAYING AND DELIVERING

Donor practices emerged as a major element of staying and delivering in the case study countries, and their role generally applies across all the categories discussed thus far in Section 4. That is, donors influence negotiations with armed groups, finance (or do not) acceptance-related work, fund security costs among NGOs and other humanitarian actors, allow or disallow subcontracting and remote approaches, and so on. A number of noteworthy donor practices related to staying and delivering are captured below.

→ **Enabling spending on security and access.** The various elements of security analysis, risk mitigation, access negotiations, acceptance approaches, and duty of care noted in this study require resources. Yet donor support for spending, particularly among international and local NGOs, remains inadequate (though specific figures on humanitarian actors' security spending are not available). There are serious funding impediments to being able to stay and deliver effectively. It is expensive to operate safely and conscientiously in highly insecure environments (e.g., putting in place security safeguards, hiring access advisors, conducting detailed context analyses, purchasing items like armored vehicles and reinforcements). Donors must be willing to fund these expenses to the degree needed in each

context, and have to find a way to encourage partners to budget accurately for these costs. While donor representatives repeatedly emphasized that they are willing to cover reasonable security expenses for partners, their focus on cost-effectiveness (and tendency to classify security costs as non-programming expenses) often creates major disincentives for appropriate budgeting. Humanitarians often pre-emptively cut security, access, and acceptance spending out of concern that donors – based on their rhetoric – will not cover this. Local NGOs do the same to avoid appearing overly expensive to their INGO partners/donors.

→ **Increasing programmatic flexibility in dynamic contexts.** While donors like ECHO and the Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) were seen as being flexible – allowing agencies to switch modalities (e.g., cash aid to in-kind aid) and target locations based on local circumstances – some others were much less so. One bilateral European donor, for instance, required up to six months to make modest changes to program proposals, thus leading partners either to waste substantial amounts of time or to continue with unrealistic and contextually inappropriate projects (e.g., continuing water system rehabilitation in war zones, when water trucking is considered more appropriate). While donors most concerned with value for money and waste raise legitimate issues, the lack of resultant flexibility actually ends up directly affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of their assistance.

→ **Overcoming risk aversion.** Donors were found to be increasingly active in pushing humanitarian agencies to return to crisis-affected contexts following an evacuation. In the case of Yemen, several donors actively advocated for INGOs to return their expatriate staff to the country and expand operations into new areas where needs were identified. Such approaches were found to be particularly effective in helping to mitigate risk aversion (where agencies have the proper systems and capacity in place to assume this risk), though they also proved somewhat simplistic in equating the presence of

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[57] Physical accompaniment, sometimes referred to as protective accompaniment, is the practice of having humanitarian actors physically accompany populations through sensitive or dangerous areas to discourage attacks against them.

international personnel with implementation capacity and neglected to assist when things go wrong (such as with the looting of warehouses). One donor in Afghanistan has consistently funded long-term efforts to enhance access over a period of years. This recognition that improving access takes long-term vision, and consistent resources to support that vision, is critical but remains rare.

→ **Emphasizing quality and access, not beneficiary numbers.** As noted earlier, a number of donors tended to assess proposals and performance based on the number of beneficiaries targeted (in proposals) or reached (in reality) with a given amount of money. This emphasis has led to a series of negative effects, including a focus on relatively secure areas where their implementing partners can reliably reach beneficiaries. Harder-to-reach areas meanwhile go under-addressed and agencies/NGOs are fearful of proposing to work in them, given the risk that security may ultimately curtail their access or work.

A number of issues noted in *To Stay and Deliver* in 2011 remain highly problematic – including the politicization or instrumentalization of humanitarian action. Some donors continue to try to push INGOs to work in areas controlled by "moderate opposition groups" in Syria, and in Somalia some states and donors continue to favor and press for assistance to government-controlled areas, particularly those recently taken back from Al-Shabaab. As noted in the original *To Stay and Deliver* report, these donor policies and preferences still pose major challenges to the operationalization of humanitarian principles and thus to effective humanitarian response to the needs of all affected people. And, just as in 2011, international humanitarian actors continue to prioritize relations with donors and too rarely push back against donor policies, even when they can directly jeopardize the safety and security of staff in countries like Afghanistan and Somalia.

Meanwhile, humanitarian actors focus much more on legislation financing counterterrorism imposed by donor countries and multilateral institutions. While gaps remain in understanding the breadth of impact of this legislation, particularly the operational and legal implications for humanitarian agencies, concerted efforts are ongoing to understand and document the impact of counterterror legislation on humanitarian action.[58] Extensive advocacy efforts have been made to address the harmful impact of these restrictions, though they have had little impact to date.

The interviews conducted for this report and the existing literature clearly indicate that counterterror restrictions continue to make operating more difficult for humanitarians and impede humanitarian access. The challenges surrounding counterterror legislation – and the mixed messages that donor personnel convey at headquarters and field levels[59] – remain just as strong as they were when *To Stay and Deliver* was first published. Greater clarity from donor agencies and consistent messaging would help resolve the prevailing confusion to some degree. Even so, these restrictions are likely to continue to have a harmful impact on humanitarian access in areas under the influence of listed terrorist organizations.

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[58] Among others, NRC and OCHA financed an independent study of the impact of counter-terror restrictions on humanitarian action (Mackintosh and Duplat, *Study of the Impact of Donor Counterterrorism Measures*), and the Humanitarian Practice Network recently published a guide for agencies on these issues (Burniske et al., *Counter-Terrorism Laws and Regulations*).

[59] This refers to the tendency for donor representatives covering contexts like Syria and Yemen to assure their local partners informally that they will never face legal repercussions if they simply do their best to avoid aid leaking into the hands of designated terrorist groups. However, such assurances have no legal weight, and often lead to more confusion in this already sensitive legal realm.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 OVERARCHING CONCLUSIONS

The humanitarian community continues to grapple with the problem of its ability to stay and deliver effectively and responsibly in highly insecure environments. Progress has been made in a number of areas. Humanitarian leaders consistently talk of their commitment to staying and delivering where at all feasible, and we have seen notable instances where UN agencies, NGOs, and others have stayed and delivered at great risk. These include high-profile situations such as Syria and Yemen, as well as countless other instances where particular humanitarian actors have deliberatively and diplomatically earned the acceptance of local communities, community leaders, and conflict parties alike to enable them to stay and deliver. National and local NGOs have been particularly engaged in these sorts of

activities – often out of basic necessity – and have been among the most committed when it comes to staying and delivering. Furthermore, issues like acceptance and remote programming have been institutionalized in a variety of forms, and NGO security coordination platforms have proliferated, particularly due to INSO's engagement, across more than a dozen countries.

Yet despite these improvements, this study also broadly finds that not enough has changed, particularly at the field level, since the publication of *To Stay and Deliver* in 2011. A relatively small number of organizations are physically present in the most insecure areas, and too many international humanitarian actors continue to focus on relatively safe areas in volatile

contexts or delegate responsibility for assistance – operating via various forms of remote management and subcontracting – to local organizations and firms in dangerous locations. Where new handbooks, guidelines, and tools have been developed at the global level – such as on acceptance and program criticality – they have rarely had an impact at the field level. Staff members with focused training on and expertise in issues like access negotiations and acceptance remain rare across the humanitarian community as a whole despite being sorely needed. Donors' regulations and practices vary, and have enabling but also constraining effects. Meanwhile, local and national organizations continue to receive inadequate support in security and duty of care from their international partners while facing an unacceptably large share of security incidents perpetrated against humanitarians.

The humanitarian system must pursue and enhance its efforts to act on the recommendations embodied in the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* report (see Annex A). In addition to time, humanitarian actors must focus on the following factors which are crucial in enabling change.

→ **Enhanced funding.** It is expensive to operate safely and conscientiously in highly insecure environments (e.g., putting in place security safeguards, hiring access advisors, conducting detailed context analyses), and organizations with limited and/or restricted funding – or with less flexible funding from governmental donors – are least able to act on recommendations such as those captured in the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* study. The lack of resources tends to remain particularly problematic, as some donors explicitly or implicitly (e.g., with harsh warnings on value for money) push partners to cut costs; this has led many implementing agencies to cut funding for analyses, staff and partner security, access/acceptance training or posts, and so on at the proposal stage. By contrast, humanitarian organizations with more flexible funding are generally better able to stay and deliver, particularly in periods of acute crises and uncertainty.

→ **Experienced and empowered leadership.** Progress in terms of staying and delivering has at times been hindered by the lack of empowered senior figures at the field level with integrated responsibility for programming and security decision-making.

Responses led by experienced senior leaders with long track records in conflict environments are, generally, deemed more effective than those of their less experienced counterparts. Where inexperienced managers are involved – or development practition-ers are suddenly tasked with new humanitarian programs – the tendency is for decision-making to be out of step with sound risk analysis (e.g., either high risk or highly risk averse).

➡ **Field-level engagement.** Progress is commonly impeded by the limited field-level understanding of certain concepts and initiatives. For instance, acceptance often received limited attention among many organizations consulted in the case study countries because field staff, particularly national personnel, had not been engaged on these issues in an accessible and sustained manner (e.g., as op-posed to one-off briefings on related issues). Likewise, UN officials working on Programmme Criticality exercises noted in several instances that personnel involved in these processes often did not well understand the core objective of what they were doing. Conversely, change is most likely to happen not only when it is understood by staff in the field but also when they are actively engaged in developing or refining new, locally tailored approaches.

➡ **Multistakeholder collaboration.** Issues such as those addressed in this study are sensitive and often have associated financial, reputational, and even legal implications. Organizations are less likely to appraise issues like acceptance approaches, access negotiations, and self-generated risks honestly when they feel that doing so could negatively affect their future access to funding. Conversely, learning is most likely to occur where organizations are willing to work together; for example, through the sharing of anonymized data as well as lessons learned and good practices as part of multistakeholder dialogue or initiatives.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

With these enabling factors in mind, the report now turns to recommendations for capitalizing on existing good practices and addressing persistent gaps and challenges. While many obstacles and constraints are created by parties to conflicts, humanitarians can and should do much more to enable and increase their ability to manage acceptable risks and operate more effectively in insecure environments. Those organizations not able or willing to take basic, responsible measures to gain access, to cultivate acceptance, and to operate safely in highly insecure areas should rightly question whether they should attempt to engage in such areas – even if this means declining donor resources.

These recommendations suggest a course of action and options for filling some of the gaps identified in the course of the study. They often point to processes – the need for stakeholders to get together and jointly consider challenges they face, for example – rather than attempting to put forward one-size-fits-all solutions. Many of the recommendations ultimately and concretely articulate what so many humanitarian actors already know but often struggle to put into practice: the need to develop structured, field-level approaches to understanding the contexts where they work; to approach issues like access and acceptance carefully and deliberately; to take responsibility not only for the safety and security of their own staff but also that of their local partners; and to expand and refine modalities and approaches tailored to highly insecure environments.

ENHANCING SAFE, RESPONSIBLE, AND PROXIMATE RESPONSES

1 Humanitarian actors should invest in context and stakeholder analysis and medium - to long-term, clearly articulated access and acceptance strategies.

Those humanitarian actors most successful in attaining and maintaining access consistently dedicate time, qualified personnel, and resources – often from public sources rather than governmental donors – to understanding and building relationships with the stakeholders in areas where they operate. More humanitarian actors must invest in these sorts of initiatives, and donors must be ready to finance these costs if they expect their implementing partners to operating in highly insecure environments.

2 Humanitarian actors should develop internal systems that will allow them consistently to identify and deploy personnel with the required skills and experience.

Because having the right people on the ground is crucial, UN agencies and NGOs should develop/improve methods, including rosters and human resource management practices, that systematically identify which staff members have advanced training on or experience with issues such as humanitarian security management, access negotiation with state and non-state actors, civil–military relations, acceptance, and other elements of principled, responsible programming in highly insecure environments.

3 Humanitarian actors should assess and respond to self-generated risks through multistakeholder collaboration.

Humanitarian actors, individually and collectively – likely under the auspices of the IASC and with support from an organization like INSO – should conduct reviews and develop analytical tools to identify self-generated risks so that they can effectively address and mitigate them, improve security of humanitarian workers, and help operationalize humanitarian principles. At field level, analysis of such risks and mitigation measures should be

discussed among Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs) and other relevant multistakeholder platforms. Humanitarian actors and donors should engage in open dialogue on how to support humanitarian actors in those efforts. Focused research should support such reviews to identify, with inputs from affected communities and armed groups (where feasible), the most common and damaging self-generated risks across a range of contexts.

4 Humanitarian actors, in consultation with donors, should critically review remote programming and subcontracting practices and develop organization-specific guidelines and system-wide standards on such issues.

The IASC or another interagency body should – based on reviews – begin a process of developing standards on the use of remote programming and subcontracting, and how these practices can be responsibly drawn upon when absolutely necessary. Such policies could include criteria to help the organization determine when to adopt a remote approach, when to resume "normal" operations, and when and how to utilize subcontractors. Secondly, individual humanitarian actors should take these joint standards and develop internal guidelines on remote programming and subcontracting which will be clearly and simply communicated throughout their organizations.

5 Cash programming should be systematically considered alongside other modalities of delivery, and other programmatic approaches must be developed for use in highly insecure contexts.

Where physical presence of humanitarian workers is not beneficial or feasible on an ongoing basis, and where markets and operational contexts permit, further consideration should be paid to the expanded use of cash. While cash-based programming is increasingly being adopted, it is highly uneven across contexts and has not necessarily been implemented even in circumstances where local markets are operating. Such a recommendation will require engagement with donors and national governments that have raised concerns in certain instances about the use of cash in insecure settings. Furthermore, given that cash and vouchers will not be feasible in some

contexts, humanitarian actors must renew thinking on new and old programmatic approaches which leverage new technologies to sustain and protect people better in the most dangerous circumstances.

STRENGTHENING RESPECT FOR THE HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND IHL

6 Humanitarian actors should strengthen practical understanding of the humanitarian principles through tailored training materials that address field-level realities and dilemmas.

Both local and international humanitarian organizations should ensure that all staff, particularly those closest to the people in need, possess prior to deployment a sound understanding of humanitarian principles as they relate to operations. This should be achieved through the development or refinement of core training materials – building on the Joint Operating Principles (JOPs) and other such tools – that address the practical application of the principles in insecure environments. These materials, which could be tailored by independent experts through a collaborative process, should include a broad collection of exercises and case studies from multiple regions. In training staff, individual organizations should consider how the principles should be operationalized in their activities, e.g., recruitment criteria, staffing policy, security management system, project design and modalities, communication with stakeholders, etc.

7 Humanitarian actors should improve understanding of IHL and the principles guiding humanitarian action among states and non-state armed groups.

Greater efforts should be taken to strengthen states' and non-state armed actors' awareness of and compliance with IHL and respect for the humanitarian principles. A number of practical tools and approaches can be adopted or reinforced, for example through training and awareness-raising activities, and the development of agreed rules/codes of conduct by parties to the conflict *vis-à-vis* humanitarian action. Where feasible, humanitarian actors should encourage states and non-state armed groups to incorporate respect for IHL

and principled humanitarian action in their policies, as well as their military or other operations manuals, and ensure dissemination through their chains of command.

8 Humanitarian actors, with donor support, should increase programmatic emphasis on protection.

Humanitarian actors need to assess those factors inhibiting protection in highly insecure environments, how they can better understand the threats, risks, and vulnerabilities facing populations in need, and how they can better engage in protection programming. Where presence is weak or absent, humanitarian actors should explore what other tools are available to support these objectives (e.g., use of mobile technology, targeted missions, local networks, etc.).

INTEGRATING SECURITY AND PROGRAMMING, AND STRENGTHENING RISK MANAGEMENT

9 Humanitarian actors should strengthen security risk management and crisis response capacity through the development of tailored training packages and mentoring that reflect differences among humanitarian personnel and contexts.

Individual humanitarian actors and multistakeholder security platforms should develop training packages related to security and crisis management that are tailored to particular risks and contexts and to different types of staff members (e.g., in terms of origin, gender, role/position, etc.). They must ensure that all categories of staff receive appropriate support and skills development to handle crises and security risks. This does not necessarily mean simply requiring standardized security or hostile environment awareness training for field staff; rather, it suggests a more nuanced approach to security training that addresses the roles and responsibilities of different individuals (e.g., a Designated Official) and the different security risks they are likely to encounter in their respective contexts (e.g., kidnapping, banditry on the road, crime). Ensuring that all staff are familiar with organizational risk thresholds and closing the gap between headquarters' policies and field practice should be core goals for all organizations.

10 Humanitarian actors should increasingly integrate and delegate programmatic and security functions and decision-making to relevant personnel in country or suboffices.

Senior programmatic staff at the country and suboffice levels must be prepared, empowered, and supported to make decisions on crucial issues, including evacuations and returns.

11 Humanitarian actors and UNDSS should ensure an appropriate skills mix among key security staff.

UNDSS, UN agencies, and NGOs should review their security staff members' profiles in order to determine whether they have an appropriate skills mix among security focal points/officers/advisors. That is, do they balance security expertise with humanitarian program implementation experience and an understanding of humanitarian access, acceptance, negotiations, principles and related issues? This skills mix can be attained through greater capacity building of existing staff and through the application of revised criteria when recruiting, hiring and deploying security personnel.

12 All stakeholders should improve the use of evidence in risk analysis to inform decision-making better.

Risk analysis should more consistently be informed by the use of technical criteria, drawing on data and evidence from a wide range of sources. These include decisions regarding evacuations and returns, as well as the use of remote approaches. Decisions must not only be based on security conditions but also on the scale of humanitarian needs and the scope and nature of the existing response (e.g., whether an organization's engagement or return would expand the response or add vital capabilities) or staffing realities (e.g., hiring profiles, anticipated capacity gaps, and so on, based on prior experience and realistic assessments of organizational capacity). Such criteria should consider organizational risk thresholds as well as the capacity to respond to incidents, manage a crisis, and engage with relevant stakeholders.

13 The UN should address shortcomings in the Programme Criticality framework and processes to ensure that they are understood, updated, and applied in practice.

The UN should further strengthen its Programme Criticality processes to ensure that staff understand program criticality and are able to conduct associated assessments in an objective manner. This would involve raising awareness among staff on the content of the Programme Criticality framework and the translation of this framework into easy-to-understand documents that agencies can share with their staff. Furthermore, Programme Criticality exercises must be updated regularly, particularly when new contextual triggers emerge, and must be applied in practice.

STRENGTHENING DUTY OF CARE

14 All stakeholders should renew attention to the safety and security of local and national actors.

In addition to organizational-level measures, humanitarian actors could launch a joint initiative on strengthening the safety and security of national actors to ensure the issue is addressed across the sector. National and international actors should both be involved in designing this initiative, which should consider risk prevention, mitigation, and response, including issues related to insurance and protection for local and national humanitarian workers in highly insecure areas. Such an initiative may also focus on arrangements that are particularly effective in enabling humanitarian operations to continue even in the most trying circumstances, including the "hyperlocalization" of staffing (e.g., hiring staff to engage in the communities where they live) and providing national humanitarian workers with the resources necessary to work from home (e.g., laptops, internet connectivity, etc.) where doing so would be beneficial.

| 15 | Humanitarian actors should review and improve "aftercare" following security incidents. |

UN agencies and NGOs should develop or reinforce "after-incident review" mechanisms, and review and enhance support and services available for staff care and critical incident aftercare. They should consider expanding staff care arrangements and new benefits (e.g., insurance or compensation) to national partner organizations. At a bare minimum, this should involve a review to ensure that resources for medical and psychological support and stress management are considered adequate by the organization's own staff.

STRENGTHENING DONOR PRACTICES

| 16 | Donors and humanitarian actors should ensure partners' security needs are factored into proposals and budgets, and should pay particular attention to the security needs/costs of local and national partners. |

Donors should adopt clear and widely communicated guidelines on implementing security management budgeting for national and international partners. These guidelines should outline safety and security costs (e.g., gaining acceptance is a major factor in improving security). They should also include a requirement that budgets account for security expenses of national partners where they are being utilized. This would require capturing more clearly security costs which are currently often spread across budgets.

| 17 | Donors should enable implementing partners to operate flexibly, not bureaucratically. |

Donors should ensure funding flexibility, reducing the time and effort involved in adjusting implementing partners' program activities, modalities, beneficiary targets, and focus areas in highly insecure environments. The emphasis must be on outcomes and objectives, and flexible revision of project proposals as circumstances require. This would involve, for instance, simplifying procedures for contract amendments and reporting (as detailed in the World Humanitarian Summit's "Grand Bargain").

| 18 | Donors should take concrete measures to protect humanitarian action from political interference, including through the use of pooled funding mechanisms. |

The UN Security Council, relevant donors, and host countries should put in place humanitarian exemptions to counterterror laws and related restrictions, and clarify existing legislation to enable humanitarian work. Donor and host governments should ensure that they have dedicated focal points to liaise with humanitarian organizations on these issues to ensure that clear and official messages (as opposed to informal guidance and assurances) are conveyed. Pooled funding mechanisms, when not in place yet, should be strongly considered in highly insecure environments where a heightened risk or real or perceived political influences on humanitarian action exist. Such mechanisms should have strong frameworks in place to ensure decisions are based on humanitarian needs alone. This would also be in line with the principles and good practices of the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative.

GETTING THE RIGHT DATA AND ANALYSIS IN PLACE FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

| 19 | Humanitarian actors should review data and analysis on humanitarian security and access, and develop a means of filling any gaps that exist. |

Over the medium term, a review should be undertaken of existing aid-worker security and humanitarian access data sources and analysis, and a strategy should be developed to ensure that comprehensive data and analyses are available to guide policy and practice. This review should ultimately lead to a consensual strategy for ensuring that sufficient data and analyses are available on these crucial challenges. The strategy may include the periodic consolidation of data among existing databases/organizations, the development of joint data standards (e.g., inclusion criteria and verification methods), or other options. Any such strategy must not only address the technical elements of information sharing but also tackle the periodic lack of trust between, for instance, UN agencies and NGOs which complicates two-way exchanges of data and analysis.

| 20 | All actors should, in a coordinated manner, improve transparent reporting and analysis on presence and delivery. |

Such a need is already recognized and has been sporadically addressed in recent months through needs, response, and gap analyses (sometimes referred to as humanitarian gap analyses), but could be approached more systematically and efficiently. The IASC and/or other multistakeholder bodies and in-country humanitarian coordination systems, including clusters, should improve transparent reporting and analysis on organizational capacities, presence, and programs (e.g., sector, number of beneficiaries, level of assistance provision) to determine where actors are and/or should be staying and delivering. Making these sorts of analyses routine and far less time-consuming will help to identify where needs are not being met. Information services and tools which eliminate duplication of reporting, with adequate information security safeguards, should be instituted to ensure this information is captured from as wide an array of humanitarian actors as possible on an ongoing basis.

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A ANNEX

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE 2011 *TO STAY AND DELIVER* REPORT AND SUBSEQUENT PROGRESS

2011 Recommendations		Progress to date
To humanitarian aid agencies (NGOs, INGOs, and UN aid agencies)		
Risk management		
1	Humanitarian operations should be continually informed by ongoing context and threat analysis. Map the highest risk settings for your organization and use this determination to prioritize resources accordingly. Invest in specialized skill-set development as well as rigorous selection and vetting of staff to deploy to complex security environments.	Partial progress in some organizations (see Section 4.1); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 1, 2, 3, and 17).
2	Security risk management must be recognized as an integral part of programming. Ensure security considerations and related cost implications are integrated at the outset in program design, planning, and budgeting; this should include the prioritization of critical programs in situations of high risk. Improve the articulation of common security requirements, projects, and budgeting in humanitarian appeals, other fundraising mechanisms, and bilateral negotiations with donors.	Partial progress in some organizations (see Section 4.1); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 9, 10, and 11). The articulation of security requirements in appeals appears to have not been undertaken to any discernible degree.
3	Building and maintaining acceptance by all relevant actors for humanitarian action should be a core component of an organization's overall program and its security management strategy. Invest in the capacities and skills required for humanitarian dialogue, outreach, and negotiation.	Partial progress in some organizations (see Section 4.2); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 1, 2, and 3).
4	Each organization should explicitly define and consciously determine its threshold of acceptable risk related to the criticality of its program. Ensure that all staff are aware of the organization's risk threshold in each setting and are operating on the basis of informed consent.	Partial progress in some organizations (see Section 4.1); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendation 11, most notably).
Duty of care and responsible partnership		
5	Existing gaps between security provisions for international and national staff should be immediately addressed. Review security management procedures to ensure comprehensive duty of care for national staff, including a determination of specific risks and needs for female and male staff. In addition, be proactive and innovative in finding ways to enhance national staff security and stress management or psychological support.	Partial progress (see Section 4.4); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 12, 13, and 14).
6	Responsible partnership entails strong security cooperation. Consult with local partner organizations on their requirements, including specific provisions for security plans. Be proactive in helping partners determine their security support needs (including through training and capacity-building exercises) and providing the resources – financial, material, and technical – to meet those needs.	Partial and uneven progress (see Section 4.4); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 4, 12, 13, and 14).

2011 Recommendations		Progress to date
Adherence to humanitarian principles		
7	Common adherence to humanitarian principles should be recognized as key to increasing the security of humanitarian operations. Ensure that staff deployed to high-risk environments possesses a sound understanding of humanitarian principles as they relate to practical operations. Ensure organizational policies and operational decision-making on issues such as funding, beneficiaries, modes of operation, liaison with other actors, and security measures are in line with humanitarian principles. Invest in communicating the organization's adherence to humanitarian principles. Review operations in complex security environments on a regular basis to ensure compliance with humanitarian principles.	Moderate progress (see Sections 3 and 4); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 6 and 7).
To global cluster leads		
8	Ensure greater engagement of clusters in managing risk, supporting coordinated and prioritized risk analysis, and making security management decisions at the sectoral level. Clusters should also support the sharing of good practices and lessons in operating in complex security environments, and address the coordination challenges in situations where the cluster lead has no field presence due to insecurity.	Moderate progress with specific regard to pooled funding mechanisms on supporting shared analysis, but limited progress overall.
To Humanitarian Coordinators, UNDSS, and OCHA		
Risk management		
9	Ensure that security management is mainstreamed as an integral part of humanitarian programming. Coordinate common security needs identification and fundraising. Ensure that security management is budgeted within Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) and Flash Appeal processes. This will require close and active coordination between OCHA and UNDSS in field settings.	Partial progress (see Section 4.6); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 9, 10, and 11).
10	In complex security contexts the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Humanitarian Country Teams should identify specific priority objectives for improving secure access that could be pursued through collective advocacy or negotiation with host governments, military forces, or non-state actors. Objectives should be focused and practical: seek concrete negotiations and offer practical, specific guidance for improving secure humanitarian access.	Moderate progress, variable according to context (see Section 4.2); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 1, 2, and 7).
11	Humanitarian Coordinators should assume more active leadership with regard to security management decisions, as envisaged in the revised UN SMS. In decision–making, ensure full engagement of the security management team and sufficient and appropriate consultation with all relevant actors, including non-UN actors.	Unclear degree of progress (see recommendations 2, 7 and 9).
12	Through recruitment and training measures, UNDSS should seek to ensure that the security personnel deployed in humanitarian operational settings possess a sound understanding of humanitarian programming and acceptance-based practices.	Some progress has been achieved, for instance in terms of training (see Section 4.1); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendation 10).

2011 Recommendations	Progress to date
Adherence to humanitarian principles	
13 Humanitarian Coordinators should lead the Humanitarian Country Team in the development of policies and strategies aimed at ensuring compliance with humanitarian principles. These could include, where appropriate, the development and implementation of codes of conduct, ground rules, or principles of engagement. Identify and address concerns on relationships and practices by humanitarian actors that may jeopardize perceived adherence to humanitarian principles and the related acceptance and security of humanitarian operations.	Moderate progress (see Sections 3 and 4); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 3, 6, 7, and 8).
14 Undertake consistent messaging to relevant state and non-state actors on humanitarian principles and the importance of safe and unimpeded access to affected populations. Identify and engage influential political, military, and religious leaders to further their understanding and acceptance of humanitarian action. Ensure that efforts at dialogue and negotiation with relevant actors are undertaken in a coordinated manner.	Moderate progress (see Sections 3 and 4); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendation 6 and related recommendations 7 and 16).
To the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC)	
15 The ERC has a critical role in promoting principled humanitarian action and safe, unimpeded, and timely access for humanitarian actors. Engage with all parties to the conflict and support in-country engagement by Humanitarian Coordinators in an effort to obtain acceptance and security assurances and promote humanitarian access. Address policies and practices that impede humanitarian actors' ability to deliver assistance in complex security environments. Identify and address concerns on relationships and practices by humanitarian actors that may jeopardize perceived adherence to humanitarian principles and the related acceptance and security of humanitarian operations.	Uneven to very good progress (see Sections 3 and 4); additional measures can be undertaken.
16 Maintain a strong advocacy role with governments in defense of humanitarian access against any and all political interference or impediments to the humanitarian imperative.	Partial progress (see Sections 3 and 4); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 7 and 16).
17 Request OCHA to establish a web-based platform to facilitate humanitarian actors' access to and updating of good operational practices in complex security environments.	Not implemented.
To the Secretary-General and UN Secretariat departments	
18 In overseeing the United Nation's engagement in country situations, actively encourage an environment conducive to humanitarian action. Acknowledge the need for humanitarian actors to engage with all relevant stakeholders, including non-state armed groups, to promote secure access.	Moderate to good progress, dependent on country contexts. Good progress at global level, as seen in reports on protection of civilians and World Humanitarian Summit work; this must be sustained, and additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 7 and 16).

2011 Recommendations		Progress to date
To states		
19	Refrain from enacting legislation and policies which undermine humanitarian engagement with all parties to the conflict, including non-state armed groups, essential to access all affected populations. Existing policies which seek to restrict such engagement should be reconsidered and brought into compliance with international humanitarian law.	Partial progress; additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendation 16).
20	Host states should engage in dialogue with humanitarian actors to devise and undertake steps to create conditions conducive to humanitarian action. Comply with obligations under IHL as well as provisions set out in host country and mission agreements, particularly as they pertain to assurances of safe and secure access for humanitarian personnel.	Depending on context, no to moderate progress. Regarding intergovernmental bodies, additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendation 7).
To donor governments		
21	Support sound risk management and initiatives by humanitarian actors aimed at enhancing access. Facilitate flexible budgeting by humanitarian organizations operating in the volatility of complex security environments and manage results-based expectations in recognition that establishing acceptance takes time and may not allow for quick returns.	Partial/uneven progress. Undertaken by some donors (see Section 4.6); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 1, 14, and 15)
22	Support investments aimed at skill-set development and duty of care to national staff, and support the strengthening of national partnerships.	Partial progress; additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 4, 12, 13, and 14).
23	Support NGO security coordination platforms and Saving Lives Together at the field level, and encourage the development of additional field-level systems using compatible data-gathering and reporting mechanisms.	Major progress, particularly with regard to expansion of security platforms (see Section 4.1); additional measures can be undertaken (see recommendations 1, 14, 17, and 18).
24	Create a permanent forum for donor dialogue and coordination on security through, for example, the established GHD forum. This will provide the opportunity for donors collectively to take a more active role in enhancing humanitarian security.	Not implemented.

B ANNEX

GLOSSARY

This glossary builds upon the one included in the 2011 *To Stay and Deliver* report but has been updated by the authors, based on the relevant literature and through consultation with stakeholders.

Acceptance approach – a security management approach that attempts to negate a threat or threats through building relationships with relevant stakeholders in the operational area and obtaining their acceptance of and consent to the organization's presence and its work.

Deterrence approach – a security management approach that attempts to deter a threat by posing a counterthreat, in its most extreme form through the use of armed protection.

Duty of care – an ethical and/or legal obligation imposed on an individual or organizations to avoid acts or omissions that can be reasonably foreseen to be likely to cause harm to others.

Program criticality – an integrated program and security approach that focuses on determining which programs are the most critical to saving lives or require immediate delivery, and therefore warrant accepting a greater level of risk or a greater allocation of resources to mitigate these risks.

Protection – all activities aimed at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law, e.g., human rights law, international humanitarian law, and refugee law. Human rights and humanitarian organizations must conduct these activities in an impartial manner (not on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, language, or gender).[60]

Protection approach – a security management approach that draws on the use of protective procedures, physical structures, materials, and devices to reduce vulnerability to existing threats.

Remote programming approaches – a broad swathe of program approaches used by donors and implementers in contexts where access to implementation sites is limited by insecurity.

Remote control – a direct implementation operating mode, usually undertaken in emergencies or only for short periods, in which the majority of decisions are made by international managers relocated to the capital or abroad with limited delegation of responsibility for implementation, but not critical decision-making, to field staff.[61]

Remote management – a direct implementation operating mode characterized by delegation of authority and responsibility to national staff at the field level, with limited or no access to implementation sites by international managers due to security concerns.[62]

Risk – the likelihood and potential impact of encountering a threat.

Risk management – a formalized system for forecasting, weighing, and preparing for possible risks to minimize their impact.

Security strategy – the overarching philosophy, application of approaches, and use of resources that frame organizational security management.

Subcontracting – an indirect implementation operating mode whereby the primary implementing agency subcontracts all or a portion of its programming to one or more subsidiary organizations.

Threat – a danger in the operating environment.

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

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60   Taken from ICRC, *Professional Standards for Protection Work.*

61   Adapted from Rivas and Martins, *No Longer a Last Resort.*

62   Adapted from Rivas and Martins, *No Longer a Last Resort.*

C ANNEX

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D ANNEX

ONLINE SURVEY

This online survey was used in the course of this study. It was translated into Arabic, French, and Spanish, and disseminated throughout a wide range of humanitarian organizations and networks.

1. The country where you live and work

- ○ Drop-down list

2. If you are comfortable doing so, please identify the city or province where you work (optional):

3. Your sex/gender

- ○ Male
- ○ Female
- ○ Other/choose not to identify

4. The type of organisation/institution you work for

- ○ Local/national NGO or community-based organisation
- ○ International NGO
- ○ UN agency (or fund, programme or office) involved in humanitarian work
- ○ National Red Cross/Red Crescent society
- ○ ICRC
- ○ IFRC
- ○ National government (host government)
- ○ Foreign government (embassy or donor agency)
- ○ Regional organisation (e.g., SADC, ASEAN)
- ○ Private firm (supplier/contractor)
- ○ Other (specify)

5. Which of the following best describes you?

- ○ International staff member
- ○ National staff member
- ○ Other (specify)

6. Where are you primarily based?

- ○ Global headquarters
- ○ Regional office
- ○ Country office
- ○ Area or suboffice

7. What type of programming are you mostly involved with? Select only one.

- ○ Many types of humanitarian assistance (multisector)
- ○ Camp management
- ○ Economic recovery and infrastructure
- ○ Education
- ○ Food security/nutrition
- ○ Health
- ○ Human rights/rule of law
- ○ Humanitarian coordination
- ○ Information management
- ○ Logistics and support services
- ○ Mine action
- ○ Protection
- ○ Security
- ○ Shelter and non-food items
- ○ Water and sanitation
- ○ Other (specify)

8. Please rate the following threats facing humanitarian workers and assets in your area of operations. (THIS WILL BE A LIKERT-SCALE QUESTION WITH 4 OPTIONS: 1 = no threat, 2 = minor threat, 3 = moderate threat, 4 = major threat)

- ○ Common crime – robbery/burglary
- ○ Car-jacking and banditry on the road
- ○ Kidnapping/abduction
- ○ Landmines
- ○ Improvised explosive devices (IEDs), stationary/roadside or vehicle-borne
- ○ Conflict violence (active fighting, gun battles, crossfire, shelling and aerial bombardment)
- ○ Targeted armed attacks on aid project facilities or offices (raids)
- ○ Sexual violence
- ○ Suicide bombings or complex attacks

OPTIONAL: Use the box below to identify any threats which humanitarian workers and operations face in your area but which were not listed in the question above.

9. In your environment, which jobs do you think carry the most risk? Please rate the different types of positions in terms of the risk involved. (THIS WILL BE A LIKERT-SCALE QUESTION, where 1 = no risk, 2 = little risk, 3 = moderate risk, 4 = major risk).

- ○ Senior management
- ○ Programme/project staff in the field (including monitoring and evaluation staff)
- ○ Administrative/finance/media staff in the office
- ○ Warehouse staff
- ○ Drivers
- ○ Guards

OPTIONAL: Use the box below to identify any other job types, not listed above, that face a particularly high level of risk. Also, you are encouraged to use this box to explain your answer to the question above. For instance, why do some job types face particular risks?

10. In your view, who faces a greater level of threat of deliberate violence being committed against them in your environment? If possible, please explain your answer in the text box below.

- ○ National/local humanitarian workers
- ○ International (foreign/expatriate) humanitarian workers

OPTIONAL: Use the box below to explain your answer to the question above. Why do you feel national/local or international/foreign humanitarian workers face different levels of risk?

11. Do different types of organisations face different levels of threat in your area? If NO, leave this question blank and move to the next question. If YES, indicate which types of organisations appear to face a particularly high level of risk. Select all that apply.

- ○ Local/national NGO or community-based organisations
- ○ International NGOs in general
- ○ Western NGOs
- ○ Faith-based organisations
- ○ UN agencies
- ○ National Red Cross/Red Crescent societies
- ○ ICRC
- ○ IFRC
- ○ Donor offices

OPTIONAL: Use the box below to provide an alternate/other response or to explain your answer to the question above. Why you feel certain types of organisations face particularly high levels of threat in your area of operations?

12. How does the gender of staff members affect security?

○ Female staff are generally at greater risk than male staff
○ Male staff are generally at greater risk than female staff
○ Male and female staff face different threats, but the risk levels for each are about the same
○ The presence of female staff can add to the threat against our operations in general, due to local attitudes
○ Gender has little or no effect on security
○ COMMENTS (optional)

13. Are there other factors beyond gender that affect staff security? Select all that apply.

○ Ethnicity, race, clan or tribe
○ Geographic area of origin
○ Religion
○ Age
○ Other (please specify)

14. Please rank the factors below by how much they contribute to insecurity for humanitarian operations in your setting. Rank from 1 (lowest/least impact on security of humanitarian operations) to 7 (highest/greatest impact on security of humanitarian operations).

○ Lack of independence, impartiality or neutrality; for example, perceived alignment with one side of the conflict
○ Poorly coordinated response efforts between humanitarian actors
○ Lack of security awareness and training
○ Shortage of security materials and equipment, for instance telecommunications
○ Poor communication and analysis on security issues
○ Lack of experience and cultural awareness
○ Incompetent organisations taking unnecessary risks which impact the humanitarian community as a whole

15. Does your organisation have formalised, written security policies and procedures?

○ Yes
○ No
○ I don't know

16. Does your organisation accept a higher level of risk when the humanitarian programme involved is considered particularly critical (e.g., in terms of saving or sustaining lives)? In some organisations this is referred to as a programme criticality framework or approach.

○ Yes
○ No
○ I don't know

17. Have you received security training during the time you have been employed by your organisation?

○ Yes
○ No

18. Which of the following have been included in security training or briefings you have attended? Select all that apply.

○ Not applicable; I have not attended security training or briefings
○ Security induction or orientation briefing
○ Risk analysis/discussion of threats facing aid agencies in the area of operation
○ Review of protective security measures (e.g., travel restrictions, communication requirements, etc.)
○ Security drill or simulation
○ First-aid training
○ Hostile environments training
○ Other (please describe)

19. Do you regularly participate in security meetings and informational briefings?

○ Yes
○ No

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

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know/unsure

21. How do you rate the level of resources (training, equipment, funding) that your organisation provides to improve staff security?

○ Excellent
○ Good
○ Fair
○ Poor

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

○ Improved
○ Stayed about the same
○ Worsened

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

○ Yes
○ No
○ Uncertain/I don't know

OPTIONAL: If you answered YES to the question above, please provide one or more examples of how your organisation actively promotes humanitarian principles such as impartiality, independence and neutrality in its operations.

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

○ Yes
○ No
○ Uncertain/I don't know

25. In your opinion, do you believe your organisation pays more or less attention to the security of national or international staff?

○ More attention to the security of national staff
○ More attention to the security of international staff
○ Same levels of attention to the security of national and international staff

26. In your opinion, how is communication on security issues between local organisations and international organisations operating in the same area?

○ Good
○ Adequate/okay
○ Poor

27. Have you ever been involved in a security incident (such as an extortion attempt, IED attack, criminal attack, kidnapping attempt or anything else)?

○ Yes
○ No

OPTIONAL: If you answered YES to the question above, please use the box below to describe the incident, the impact of this incident and your agency's response to it.

28. Does your organisation promote the security of its humanitarian staff and operations by actively engaging with local communities, conflict parties (e.g., armed groups) and other key stakeholders to gain acceptance?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know/unsure

29. To the best of your knowledge, which of the following does your organisation have in order to promote security by gaining the acceptance of local communities, conflict parties (e.g., armed groups) and other key stakeholders? Select all that apply.

○ Field-based personnel focused on acceptance or humanitarian negotiations
○ Headquarters-based personnel focused on acceptance or humanitarian negotiations
○ A policy on acceptance or humanitarian negotiations
○ Guidelines or toolkits on acceptance or humanitarian negotiations
○ Other (specify)

30. Can your organisation point to any evidence that it has gained acceptance? Select all that apply.

○ Community members have intervened on our behalf with conflict parties
○ Community members have brought potential threats to our attention
○ We have a written or verbal understanding with local power-holders/non-state armed actors
○ We are in regular contact with local power-holders/non-state armed actors
○ Don't know/unsure

31. Has your organisation adopted "remote management" methods in areas where the organisation feels that it is unable to send certain staff members?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know/unsure

32. If you answered YES to the question above, how would you rate your organisation's remote management methods?

○ Very effective – it allows us to maintain programming while mitigating risks to staff
○ Somewhat effective – programming continues, but with considerable downsides to quality and accountability
○ Not effective – the downsides outweigh the benefits
○ Don't know/unsure

33. Does your organisation, to the best of your knowledge, have guidelines or handbooks that determine how you engage in remote management in areas where staff are not permitted to travel?

○ Yes
○ No
○ Don't know/unsure

POST-SURVEY QUESTIONS (OPTIONAL)

Please describe any situations in which your organisation has withdrawn or evacuated its staff from a field or headquarters location in your country of operation, temporarily or permanently, during the time you have worked there.

Please use the space below to add any additional comments you would like to make any additional comments. These may include anecdotes regarding insecurity – and organisational responses – in countries where you work. You are also encouraged to use the box below to offer any recommendations that you feel would contribute to agencies' ability to "Stay and Deliver" in an effective and accountable manner.

E ANNEX

PERCEPTIONS OF SECURITY THREATS (PERCENTAGES), BY RESPONDENT TYPE

This table shows perceptions of security threats captured in the course of this study's online survey. Overall, being caught in conflict violence and crossfire was seen as the greatest risk, followed by common criminality, banditry on the road, and kidnapping. Headquarters-based personnel tended to have stronger perceptions of the threat posed by various security incidents than personnel in the field. Among staff in the field, international staff tended to perceive threats as being more likely to occur relative to national staff. For instance, 24 percent of national staff labeled targeted attacks against aid projects as major or moderate threats, while 38 percent of international staff indicated the same. There are no major gendered differences in perceptions, with the exception that women tended to perceive banditry on the road (46 percent versus 39 percent) and sexual violence (32 percent versus 26 percent) as greater threats than men did.

	TOTAL	Male	Female	National Staff	International Staff	Local NGO/CBO	INGO	UN	All Others	Headquarters	Regional Office	Country Office	Area or Suboffice
Common crime – robbery/burglary	45	47	48	43	50	53	44	49	17	66	48	48	42
Car-jacking and banditry on the road	39	39	46	37	48	47	38	22	17	64	43	42	41
Kidnapping/abduction	39	39	43	33	49	42	37	27	33	56	38	43	37
Landmines	21	21	21	16	27	23	18	17	0	28	23	24	16
IEDs, stationary/roadside or vehicle-borne	35	35	32	26	41	33	30	32	17	44	28	39	27
Conflict violence (active fighting, gun battles, crossfire, shelling and aerial bombardment)	47	47	49	41	56	55	46	35	50	56	46	49	46
Targeted armed attacks on aid project facilities or offices (raids)	30	30	31	24	38	31	26	22	17	49	30	31	26
Sexual violence	26	26	32	26	31	31	28	10	33	47	39	27	25
Suicide bombings or complex attacks	35	35	34	30	39	31	27	41	17	41	37	37	29

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