

Humanitarian
Outcomes

Supporting Security for Humanitarian Action

A review of critical issues for
the humanitarian community

An independent team
of professionals providing
evidence-based analysis
and policy consultations
to governments and
international organisations
on their humanitarian
response efforts.

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Acronyms

ANSO	Afghanistan NGO Security Office
AWSD	Aid Worker Security Database
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
EISF	European Interagency Security Forum
FTS	UN OCHA Financial Tracking System
GANSO	Gaza NGO Safety Office
IASC	Inter-Agency Steering Committee on humanitarian affairs
IASMN	Inter-Agency Security Management Network
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IED	Improvised explosive device
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
MOSS	Minimum Operating Security Standards
NCCI	NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SAG	Security Advisory Group of InterAction
SLT	Saving Lives Together
SMI	Security Management Initiative
SPAS	Somalia NGO Security Preparedness and Support program
SRA	Security Risk Assessment

Introduction and summary

The impact of insecurity on humanitarian operations, marked by rising casualty rates of aid workers in the highest risk environments, has increasingly drawn the attention of international policy makers. As a result, some donor governments have started to examine practical questions of how they and their partners can work collectively to support good practice and enhance operational security for humanitarian action. The Montreux Humanitarian Retreat section on the theme of ‘Safety and Security in Humanitarian Action’ represents a first step and potentially significant opportunity in this regard. This review was designed to support and inform that discussion, based on terms of reference elaborated by the Montreux conveners’ group.

The review’s terms of reference called for an examination of the availability, adequacy, and distribution of funding for security in humanitarian settings, and of support for collective security management platforms and individual agency security management. To do so, the authors synthesized findings from the most recent literature and thinking in the sector; drawing on their over five years of focused research and consultations in the field of humanitarian operational security. That research has comprised over 600 interviews and repeated consultations with humanitarian professionals and security experts in the UN, Red Cross movement, and NGO community, as well as donor governments and the private sector. The synthesis was augmented by 17 additional key informant interviews conducted specifically for this review, and a funding flow analysis using current financial data from OCHA’s Financial Tracking Service and selected donor and agency budgets/spending statements.

The review begins with brief background information on statistical trends in aid worker insecurity, highlighting that the majority of attacks on aid operations are occurring in a small number of active conflict settings, and that this violence has become increasingly politically oriented. This is followed by a summary of findings on how aid agencies are responding to the challenges of working in these extreme environments, and the resulting constraints on humanitarian access. The review then presents an analysis of funding for security and its operational implications for aid programming in insecure areas. Finally, the review examines the current state of interagency security coordination at the field and headquarters levels. Principal conclusions of this review are that:

- The operational responses of aid agencies to insecurity entail difficult tradeoffs, and all of them - short of pulling out completely - require significantly greater security expenditure to effectively manage and mitigate the risks. This includes ‘soft’ security approaches such as pursuing active acceptance strategies.
- Context drives security costs, and there is little consistency in security budgeting policies and practices from one field office to another.

- The majority of security funding is embedded in field office and programme-specific budgets (making it near impossible to get to an accurate global estimate of what is actually spent). The CAP mechanism has been an ineffective channel for mobilising security resources. The difficulties with the CAP, and the preference of agencies to ‘hide’ security costs within programme budgets, are due in part to host government sensitivities on the issue.
- Dependence on project-based security funding has implications for settings where there is no international NGO ground presence (e.g. Somalia), since the UN-supported humanitarian platforms have security requirements that are both costly (compared to NGOs) and more reliant on common services and infrastructural requirements requested through the CAP. The low coverage of the CAP security requests will therefore severely hamper aid operations in such a case.
- Many factors could help fill current gaps in interagency security coordination and individual agency security management, chief among them better dialogue with donor governments that are actively engaged with the issue, and more coordination among the donors themselves.

Aid worker insecurity: What the data tell us

In the past few years since global figures on attacks against humanitarian actors and operations first began to be comprehensively compiled and tracked, the rising numbers of aid worker casualties have become a grimly familiar trend. It is now understood that civilian aid workers suffer greater losses from violence on average than do uniformed peacekeeping troops, and that for each of the last three years more than 200 were killed, kidnapped, or seriously wounded in the field (Stoddard, Harmer, & DiDomenico, 2009 - this and other humanitarian security reports by the authors can be accessed at <http://www.humanitarianoutcomes.org/publications.php>).

Behind these headline grabbers, however, the data reveal some important distinctions and patterns that may have eluded widespread attention. For one, security for aid workers is not declining worldwide, but only in a small handful of highly-charged conflict environments. Indeed, were it not for Afghanistan, Somalia and Darfur (and increasingly Pakistan and Chad), global casualty figures for aid workers in the entire rest of the world would have been seen to decline slightly over the past few years instead of surging. In addition, in these high insecurity environments the tactics of violence have become more sophisticated and lethal, while at the same time more broadly targeted across the aid community as a whole. These settings have also seen the rise of politically motivated attacks, as opposed to simple criminal acts, and a pronounced spike in incidents affecting international staff - especially kidnappings which serve both the economic and the political and visibility goals of the perpetrators. (Stoddard, Harmer, & DiDomenico, 2009)

Taking all of this evidence together - a rising rate of attacks, concentrated in a small number of highly contested political environments, and especially targeting internationals - a pattern begins to emerge of increasingly politicised and indiscriminate violence against aid workers and the

international aid enterprise in general. Humanitarian actors, unable to effectively shake the ‘Western-ness’ that characterises so much of the aid enterprise, have become proxy targets of choice for those seeking to strike at the Western powers or to sow fear and instability in order to advance their agenda. Humanitarian providers in these situations are left with few and unappealing options. They must grapple with ethical dilemmas about whether to leave or stay, and how to continue providing much needed aid to populations. The data show distinct contractions in humanitarian access and service delivery following major attacks (Stoddard, Harmer, & DiDomenico, 2009), and the aid organisations do choose to stay do so at considerable risk to their personnel. Many are also lately coming to realise that the choice to remove internationals and continue programming remotely through national staff or local partners does not obviate the risk, but frequently merely transfers it to individuals with even fewer options, and scant resources to protect themselves.

Trends in operational responses to insecurity and security management

Although each operational setting is unique, these extreme environments share the common features of active conflict, and wide territories outside the effective control of a governmental authority or law enforcement, where attackers can act with impunity. In addition, these are conflicts that have been internationalised, to varying degrees, in the sense that they involve military or political forces whose goals revolve around a perceived Western agenda and an Islamist opposition to it. As the operating environment in highly insecure contexts has deteriorated over the last few years, agencies have taken greater measures to increase their security management capacities and have attempted to adopt security strategies appropriate for the conditions.

The ‘security triangle’ paradigm of acceptance, protection and deterrence remains the conceptual basis for aid agencies’ operational security. As many agencies have devoted greater attention and resources to professionalising their operational security, they have increasingly moved beyond the ‘hardware’ approach to security management (physical facilities protection, armored vehicles, etc.) to focus more attention on the ‘software,’ including more sophisticated risk assessment methodologies, humanitarian negotiation, and active acceptance strategies. While the concept of acceptance – cultivating good relations with local actors and communities – has long been the cornerstone of the humanitarian security approach, many agencies in the past have made the mistake of assuming acceptance without being proactive about it. In recent years a few of the larger and more financially independent organisations, such as the ICRC and some of the larger NGOs, have made a significant effort to pursue an *active* acceptance approach. This has involved spending considerable amounts of time and resources investing in the promotion of their mandates and adherence to humanitarian principles, deepening their analysis of the conflict dynamics, as well as identifying, reaching out to, and forging agreements with potential aggressors. Others, however, face challenges. The UN agencies are identified as political actors despite their humanitarian role, and thus it is inherently more difficult for UN agencies to cultivate acceptance as independent humanitarian actors. For the majority of NGOs it is difficult to justify the costs of an active

acceptance approach both internally and to donors, as it requires a long term investment (much of the resources are placed against staff salaries for analysis and outreach, and communication tools. In comparison, protective and deterrent security mechanisms are easier to budget and report on). Most NGOs at a minimum strive to cultivate relations with local actors and communities and obtain the consent and security guarantees of parties to the conflict. In highly insecure contexts, such as Afghanistan and Somalia, however, most acknowledge that this is not enough.

Lacking alternatives, agencies working in such contexts have emphasised stricter security management and in some cases have adopted extreme low profile approaches or the use of a highly visible deterrent strategy in the form of armed guards and armed escorts. (Stoddard, Harmer & DiDomenico, 2008). Both low profile and highly visible deterrent strategies are considered last resorts and temporary fixes, and agencies recognise that in the long run these approaches can detract from security. The issue of contracting armed protection from private security company is a controversial and highly sensitive one among agencies. It also raises questions of whether the donors are supportive of funding this practice, and if so, under which guidelines and principles.

For many agencies, the option to withdraw or suspend programmes is preferable to hiring armed protection. Some agencies note, however, that there are pressures to stay in an operational context, both a perceived political pressure from donors, and an internal pressure to work in environments where international support to the beneficiaries is vital - and donor financing is readily available. The difficulty created by these external and internal pressures is aggravated by the fact that most agencies lack well-defined risk thresholds and exit strategies to guide them in their decision making. It is much easier to succumb to these various pressures when you don't have a fixed line that you decided you will not cross.

A common agency adaptation in high risk environments is the shift to remote management. This involves managing aid activities from a distance, after withdrawing or limiting the movement of international staff and transferring responsibilities to national staff and/or local partners. Most agencies consider remote management as a strictly temporary measure, but in some contexts it has become the only means of maintaining operations and thus a long-term reality. Yet despite the fact that the approach is hardly new (similar responses were developed in Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia, for example, in the 1980s and early 90s), and is currently undertaken in at least five operating contexts, very few humanitarian actors have yet developed policies, guidelines, or good practices for remote management. Research in 2006 found only one instance where an agency (an INGO) had written guidelines for the planning, preparation, and implementation of remote management contingencies. (Stoddard, Harmer, & Haver, 2006) More recent evidence suggests that this is beginning to change, as some agency field offices are driving the development of operational guidance and protocols out of necessity, and some headquarters are beginning to take up the issue for organisation-wide policy development (albeit still in the very early stages).

Quality control and monitoring of remotely managed programmes pose considerable challenges, as does inter-agency coordination, particularly for agencies that have cluster lead responsibilities but have lost access to the field. In addition, the process involves a shift in the burden of risk to local

staff and partners who often themselves have economic incentives which can displace objectivity about the risks they are undertaking. Despite increasing awareness of this risk transfer, agencies acknowledge that overall the importance placed on security risks and resultant security needs of national staff is still under prioritised.

At the global level, attention to enhancing security management and coordinating across agencies has improved in recent years. Many agencies have established policies and procedures, and have invested in security risk assessment tools, including at the inter-agency level (Interaction, 2009). Some have also taken steps to conduct security audits to review whether practice in the field reflects wider organisational policies. Reporting, tracking and analysis of security incidents has also improved overall, however underreporting continues and the vast majority of medium and small organisations have no or inconsistent means to track and analyse incidents (Stoddard, Harmer & DiDomenico, 2009). More also remains to be done in strengthening organisational commitment to security as a core aspect of risk management, and to comprehensively invest in staff training (EISF, 2009). The phenomenon of sending poorly trained and inexperienced staff to the most challenging field settings, and not sufficiently training national staff, continues. This can increase risk, not only to the particular agency but also to the other agencies operating in the context. The interdependence of agencies in security means that when one agency experiences an incident, all agencies are forced to stop and revise the assumptions on which they're working.

The responsibilities of the host state government in the protection of aid workers is a highly sensitive issue, and one which has become more political since the bombing of UN premises in Algiers in 2007. The most recent system-wide analysis in the UN, the Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of United Nations Personnel and Premises Worldwide, found that member states were not equally well-equipped to provide security – and that those countries where capacity was modest or lacking were precisely those where the most serious risks existed (Brahimi, 2008). In response to the panel's recommendations, the Secretary-General called upon member states to address a set of related issues, including the unlawful arrest, detention and harassment of UN staff and restrictions on the freedom of movement of UN and other humanitarian workers. The Secretary-General also called on member states to end impunity for crimes against aid workers, and to refrain from public statements that could jeopardise the safety and security of aid staff. It is difficult for international actors to play a strong advocacy role in holding host states to their responsibilities, however, when the suggestion that the government is failing to provide security is politically damning. Additionally, in cases where the government in question is a party to the conflict, humanitarian actors are loath to accept its direct protection for reasons of principle. In these scenarios agencies prefer to see investments in the provision of ambient security (the general security environment in which humanitarian work takes place). (Stoddard, Harmer and Haver, 2006).

UN security represents a separate layer of security functions and services, in addition to what agencies provide for their own staff and programming. To varying degrees it also extends benefits to

non-UN humanitarian actors in the given location (this support is based on the ‘Saving Lives Together’ initiative, discussed below). After the catastrophic bombing of UN offices in Baghdad in 2003, UN security was restructured into a USG-level headed Department and infused with new resources to help provide a common security framework, provide field and global level analysis and advice, and develop tools for risk assessment and mitigation. After initial growth and policy development it has suffered setbacks in staffing-up to proposed levels in the field, tensions with the humanitarian agencies over cost-sharing for common services, and continues to face challenges in meeting the security needs of an organisation which has been specifically targeted as a Western, political entity.

Resources for security: How humanitarian operations are affected by levels and modes of security funding

It has been a paradox of security funding that despite donors’ repeated assurances of their flexibility and willingness - even eagerness - to provide their partners with additional resources for security, operational agencies still cite costs as a major impediment to improved security management. Undoubtedly a large part of the dissonance stems from the fact that it is virtually impossible to quantify precisely how much ‘security’ costs, and how much is now being spent on it. Without clear and consistent data on funding needs and expenditures for security, it is impossible to know the comparative costs of security across different types of contexts, where and why there are significant funding gaps, and how to prioritise spending.

The following is an attempt to shed some light on the issue by delineating the channels through which security funding flows, providing a rough picture of trends over the past several years, and identifying patterns regarding security and operational expenditure generally in high insecurity environments.

Hard numbers in this area are difficult to come by, and the only funding flows for security that can be consistently tracked are those contributed through the common appeal mechanism and reported to the UN’s humanitarian Financial Tracking Service (FTS). However, what data are available do point to a few key observations: First, that cost levels are driven primarily by context, with agencies operating in the most insecure environments requiring and receiving the most funding through all channels. Second, that the majority of funding spent on security is project/programme based, received by individual agencies in bilateral grants and core funding and individually budgeted, according to their perceived needs in a given location. Third, and relatedly, the multilateral and sector-based security funding, particularly security funding through the CAP/FA process, has been a troubled mechanism. The numbers illustrate its failure to mobilise resources correspondent to stated needs, and as a result has had less impact and relevance for maintaining field operations.

Channels for security funding

The table below shows the ways in which funding can flow for security-related spending by humanitarian actors and the various ways it can be spent. Of all channels/activities, only what is listed in the in the middle column – interagency field level - is possible to track comprehensively, via FTS reporting.

Table 1: Matrix of current examples of security funding

		FUNDING LEVEL		
		Individual agencies	Interagency field level	Interagency global level
FUNDING TYPE	Bilateral contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core support to agencies for central/headquarters security management and coordination capacity and training Project/programme-funding containing security line items or built-in costs (including supplementary additions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field provision of joint security training (e.g. RedR courses) interagency consultations Contributions to the Safety and Security sector (UNDSS and other) through CAPs and FAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global level security collaboration mechanisms (e.g. EISF, SAG) Core funding for UNDSS to support UN and partner security needs
	Coordinated multi-donor contributions		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operational funding for country- or local- level security cooperation mechanisms (e.g. ANSO, GANSO, SPAS, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humanitarian community-wide research and monitoring/tracking initiatives (e.g. SMI, AWSD)
	Multilateral allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocations for projects including security costs drawn from the CERF and country level pooled funding mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocations for security drawn from the CERF and country level pooled funding mechanisms. 	

Agency-level budgeting and expenditure

In the humanitarian community, there are no uniform budgeting formulae or common expenditure definitions for inputs and activities aimed to enhance operational security. The humanitarian

agencies of the UN, although adhering to certain security costing formulas and the dictates of the UN Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS), employ a range of different budgeting methods to meet their security needs, in addition to contributing to common security services provided by UNDSS. Even different field offices within the same NGO can vary widely in practices; some include security funding in overhead costs or core support services, others as staff fringe, still others as a separate line item or as a fixed percentage of programme costs. Additionally, there are many organisations that would be unable to come up with any security expenditure figure at all, because their security costs are fully integrated, and therefore embedded, within their programme costs. For instance, extra vehicles purchased or rented in order for staff to travel in convoys would go into the vehicles/transport line-item; installing gates, bars, or alarms would be folded into facilities repairs/maintenance; and the recruitment of new security professionals or additional programme staff with the appropriate skill sets to work in insecure conditions would simply be added to the salaries line. Some UN agency field offices also claim to take this approach, meeting their MOSS requirements through different budget lines, rather than costing out security separately.

A global survey conducted in 2008 for a study on the use of private security providers in humanitarian operations (Stoddard, Harmer, & DiDomenico, 2008) queried staff of 62 humanitarian organisations (including all UN humanitarian agencies and 47 different NGOs, NGO federations and IOs) on their security budgeting practices. Findings revealed a wide variance in methods and levels of security allocations, across country and field offices, often even from within the same organisation, and with their estimated levels of annual expenditure on security ranging from under \$5,000 in a setting like Ghana, upwards of \$100,000 in Afghanistan. Below, in descending order of frequency cited, are the examples of security budgeting practices among humanitarian organisations:

- A separate line-item for security costs in project budgets, based on individual risk and security needs assessment for each location
- No budgeting or specific expenditure for security at all
- Security added to fringe benefit percentage of staffers' salaries
- Security costs calculated as a fixed percentage of programme costs
- Central security services budgeted within overhead costs

The above findings suggest that the majority of agencies include security within discrete programme or project budgets (either as a security line item or embedded into other lines) as opposed to a separate funding category for each mission or in core operational costs. This means that security funding will rise or fall depending on conditions of the particular locality, but it does not necessarily imply that the current level of security funding is adequate for security needs. Rather, it suggests that security funding is only meeting needs to the extent that agencies are capable of identifying and costing their individual needs in advance of undertaking the project or programme, and budgeting for them appropriately.

How an agency budgets for security depends upon its security management approach, and whether and how well it has assessed its risk and determined its operational requirements. An organisation

that takes an integrated security management approach, where security responsibilities are mainstreamed within programmatic staff positions will have its security costs built into its programme operational lines and not show any spending specially designated as security. Ironically this could mean that an organisation with the most thoughtful and best resourced security management capacity may show as little security expenditure as an organisation that has not considered security at all. The only way to tell would be a higher level of overall costs from the former in insecure settings.

Specific funding challenges for aid organisations

The overhead issue - Several US NGOs have pointed out that their public rating on charity watchdog websites declines as their overhead rate rises, creating disincentives at headquarters to increase their security capacity, at least at the central level. Reportedly Charity Navigator, one of the larger of such sites, has acknowledged the problem and intends to address it in future, but the problem continues to present and seems particularly salient among NGO executive ranks.

Defining security spending more broadly - There are costs involved in working in insecure areas beyond what many consider to be security spending. For instance, one NGO had found that to attract and retain their most experienced and seasoned field professionals to work in the most insecure contexts requires providing premium salaries as well as frequent home leave and R&R respites. In addition, the cultivation and maintenance of acceptance, still the foundation of most NGO security approaches, require significant investments and activities that not only do not fit the typical mold of security spending, which are often hard to justify on a programmatic basis as well. One NGO interviewee noted that to properly build acceptance you often have to work for long periods before you reap results. Such long-term and somewhat intangible investments do not square with the typical short-term project funding of humanitarian assistance. Finally, in high risk environments national staff and their families may need additional support, and your programme may have to be mobile - to follow beneficiary populations on the move, for example - all of which adds up to a higher programme cost overall while seemingly not related to security per se.

Gaps in capacity and expertise in security budgeting - NGO representatives admit that on the whole they could be a good deal better at identifying, and budgeting for security cost coverage. Even if an organisation has security advisers on staff, these individuals often don't see proposals or have their input sought by the programme staff writing them. Better procedures for proposal development and systematic budgeting for security within proposals will need to be developed to make appropriate funding requests.

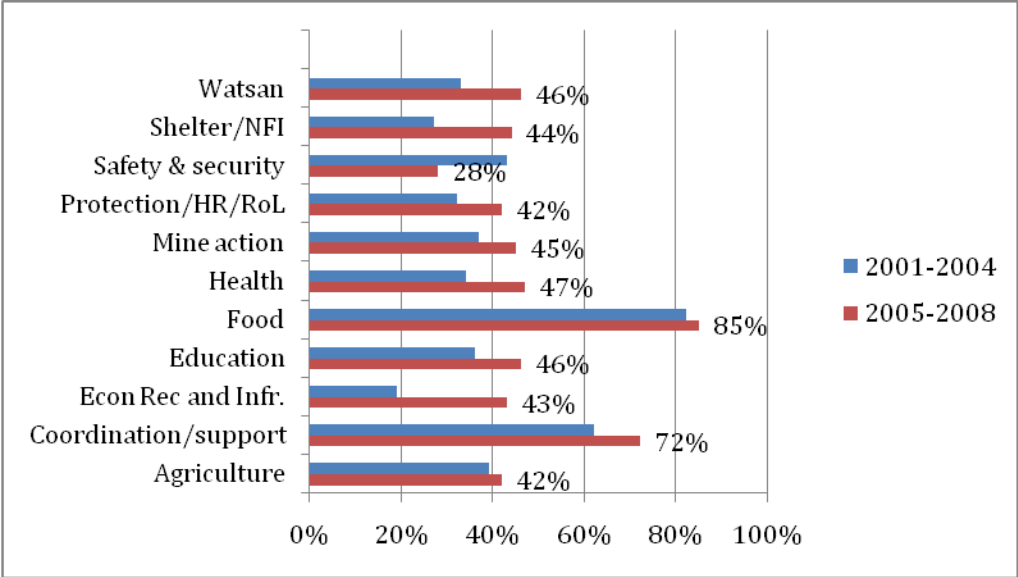
Global flows to interagency security 'sector' in emergency response efforts

Security funding has for the past several years been included in the CAP as a separate sector of activity. CAP guidelines call for a separate funding section specifically for 'Safety and Security of Aid Operations,' to be budgeted for discrete funding, on the logic that the appeal represents a new common humanitarian operational plan or strategy which will necessarily incur additional security

needs requiring extra budgetary funds. FTS reports that since 2000, a total of \$43 million has been disbursed through this channel. Although many of the activities funded through this mechanism are supposed to benefit a broader set humanitarian actors beyond the UN agencies, the recipient profile shows a more heavily UN centered distribution than most CAP sectors. UN entities, mainly UNDSS and agencies partnering with it for the security role in certain settings, were the recipients of 92% of the funding, with NGOs, Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and other international organisations making up the remainder.

Among all funding sectors, Safety and Security not only receives a comparatively low dollar amount of contributions, but also has among the lowest percentage coverage of stated requirements. Contribution levels have not followed increases in requirements, and have remained on average fairly stagnant. In 2009 Safety and Security globally received \$5.5 million in funding, which only covered 40% of funding requirements worldwide. In contrast, Coordination and Support Services received \$385 million and was 84% covered. Additional CERF allocations have boosted the security line (in fact the CERF ranks as the third largest donor to the sector), but not enough to make a meaningful difference in coverage of requirements.

Figure 1: Average coverage of funding requirements in CAPs

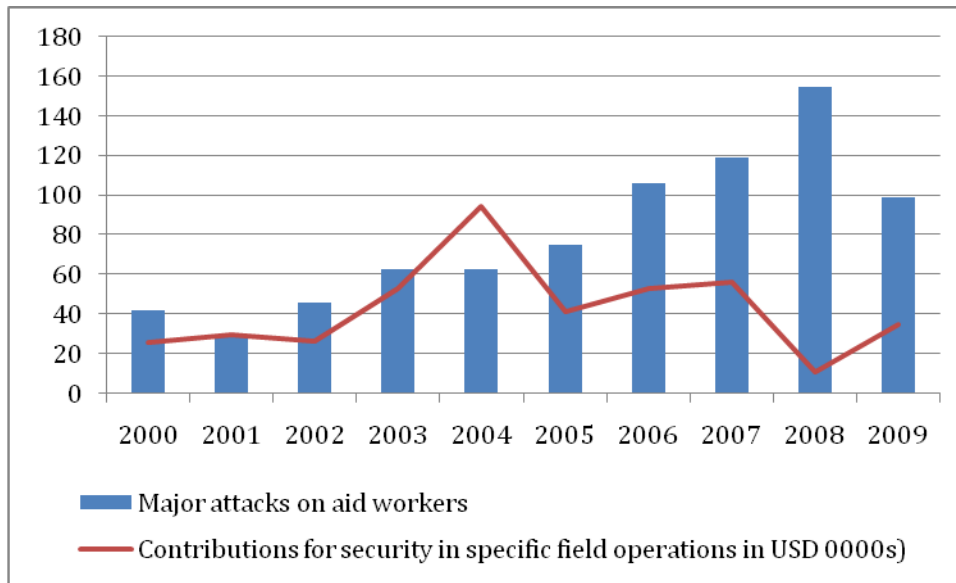


Source: Data compiled from OCHA Financial Tracking Service (FTS)

If one were to look to this funding channel to answer the question of whether common security sector funding has risen to keep pace with the trend in incidents, the answer would be decidedly no. As illustrated in the figure above, after the inception of humanitarian financing reforms in 2005 all sectors saw their coverage of stated requirements go up *except* for Safety and Security of aid operations, which saw its coverage decrease by 35% as its requirements rose, driven by a handful of

increasingly insecure environments. The figure below shows sector funding in relation to the rise of attacks on aid workers, to which it bears no logical relationship.

Figure 2: CAP funding for security in relation to attacks on aid operations



Sources: Attack figures from the Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB); funding figures from OCHA FTS

This cannot be taken to indicate that security funding and spending in humanitarian operations has been declining as insecurity increases - donors and agencies alike will attest that more resources than ever are being directed toward security. What it shows, rather, is that the most heavily relied upon source of security funding for field operations has been bilateral contributions included within programming budgets and not designated - that which is impossible to track by FTS reports.

There are a few reasons for the weakness of CAP funding for security. One important one has to do with the political sensitivity of the host governments around the issue of security. Despite the CAP guidelines' strong call for security costs to be included and clearly delineated in appeals, governments are reluctant to accept an appeal that suggests they are not able to provide stability and safety for aid operations, and their UN counterparts are in some contexts reluctant to broach the issue with them. In addition, there is not always a shared understanding of the current threat situation or a coherent strategy to mitigate the risks among the aid actors on the ground, making it impossible to plan and budget for a coordinated interagency request.

This incoherence is reflected in (and exacerbated by) the tension between UN humanitarian agencies and UNDSS over security funding. The UN humanitarian agencies, many of which have devoted resources to bolstering their own internal security capacities, are being asked at the same time to

contribute increasing amounts to a centralised UN security function - and openly question the value added. UNDSS receives a portion of its biennial budget from the UN Regular Budget (and since 2005 has requested supplementary allocations from the GA's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions). The other portion (45% of total expenditure) comes from agency cost-sharing contributions that are calculated on a per capita staffing basis at both the global level and for field level operations (UN General Assembly, 2009). This means that the largest humanitarian agencies of the UN, who already possess significant in-house security capacity on which they primarily rely for the security of their staff and operations, are also being asked to contribute the greatest portions of the common budget. Some agencies note frustration with this arrangement, which they see as mainly benefitting others. By way of example, the projected field-based security costs of the UNDSS 2008-2009 budget approved by the General Assembly totaled \$178.4 million. Of this, WFP's projected share was 14%, at \$25 million (WFP, 2009), and UNICEF's, at \$26.2 million, was 15% (UNICEF, 2009). Some in the UN humanitarian agencies have also raised concern that the location of UNDSS in the UN's New York Headquarters (as opposed to Geneva or another location more proximate to the time zones and locations of humanitarian operations) have hampered its operational role and naturally resulted in more politically oriented decision making.

One counter argument to agency concerns could be that UNDSS that is being asked to effectively shoulder the emergent, extra-budgetary security requirements (and by the inherently volatile nature of the area, a good deal of security requirements will be unpredictable) because in practice these have to be funded immediately. In addition, and perhaps more importantly, an overall humanitarian operating environment will not be secured by individual agencies protecting their own staff and projects separately, while less-resourced agencies and NGOs remain less protected (and potentially at greater risk by virtue of becoming softer targets in comparison.) On the contrary, operational security for humanitarian actions requires some degree of commonality and a great deal of coordination. However, the fact that the common security services and activities in the appeals are often not well articulated has added to donors' confusion and low confidence. In general, the lack of transparency on these issues, and a the absence of open dialogue between aid agencies and donors on security has left the donors (particularly those without field presence) with a less than clear understanding of the security situation on the ground and the operational requirements of their partners.

Somalia and Chad: Case comparison in security funding

The divergent examples of Somalia and Chad have raised some interesting questions regarding security spending and operational needs. Both countries rank among the five most violent contexts for aid workers currently (numbers 1 and 5 respectively), yet the humanitarian operations there report very different security funding positions. Although Somalia has received CAP security funding in greater amounts than any other setting (an amount approaching half of all such funding in 2009) operations are -extremely tenuous given the increased violence against aid workers and lack of adequate resources to mitigate the security threats. By contrast Chad, which does not even have a Safety and Security funding line in its appeal, is continuing humanitarian operations with no reports

of major security funding deficits. The below table illustrates the crucial differences between the two cases, and how ultimately the contextual details and the composition of the humanitarian footprint drive security funding needs.

Table 2: Comparison of security environment and funding for Chad and Somalia

	Chad	Somalia
Peacekeeping presence	MINURCAT has wide presence and mandate to support humanitarian operations, including providing area security of IDP and refugee camps and providing armed escorts	ANISOM has limited presence, primarily inside Mogadishu. Perceived as a partisan force and aid agencies (UN and non UN) don't want to be associated with it.
Operational presence	Over 15 large INGOs with significant field presence, as well as UN humanitarian agencies and the Red Cross Movement organisations	Most organisations operating by remote management, including the ICRC and most INGOs. UN humanitarian agencies require significant security measures to be present in the Phase 4 environment.
Security funding	Requested/budgeted by humanitarian providers primarily within project budgets. Plans for funding an interagency security cooperation platform	Due to the very limited presence of NGOs and the significant security infrastructure required for a Phase 4 context UN agencies sought support through the CAP Safety and Security budget line, however it was less than 37% covered in 2009. CERF support was requested to fund critical security infrastructure.

The Somalia CAP for 2010 requests \$4.5 million for Safety and Security funding, against which at the time of this writing no contributions had yet come in. The previous year a similar level of request yielded only \$1.6 million (37% covered). To be MOSS compliant in Somalia which is Phase 4 in most of the country and Phase 5 in Mogadishu is very expensive. A CERF allocation in 2009 went part of the way to address the most vital of needs, including establishing the humanitarian air services and setting up a rudimentary enabling security environment, but reportedly a good deal more was needed. In addition, the ANISOM force is perceived as a partisan force and aid agencies (UN and non UN) have concerns about being perceived to it even within its limited operating environment of Mogadishu. There is now virtually no international presence in South-Central Somalia, leaving poorly-equipped national NGO partners and mostly remotely managed programmes of UN agencies and

the INGOs. In contrast, the degree of ambient security afforded in Chad by the peacekeeping presence, and its overall security conditions which are bad but not as extremely dangerous as Somalia, and the fact that INGOs are continuing to programme bringing their own bilaterally funded security resources, makes for a very different prognosis for aid operations in the two countries.

Donor policies and security funding behavior

The approach of the major humanitarian donors to operational security has overall been permissive to supportive, while at the same time not particularly engaged. They have shown repeatedly that they are willing to be flexible on providing additional funding and loosening monitoring requirements when security conditions change. The donors that provide significant bilateral support to partner NGOs, including the US and ECHO, have appointed officers with dedicated security coordination and advisory functions, and have become increasingly explicit in their granting guidelines about the need for their operational partners to demonstrate minimum standards in security management and to plan and request funding according to their assessment of the security needs. Beyond that, however, the donors have in the past demonstrated a fairly hands-off attitude. This is due partly to deference and a reluctance to micromanage their partners. Indeed, most donor agencies do not have operational field capacity and correctly assume that their operational partners will have a better grasp of the sometimes rapidly changing security needs. They have expressed frustration when the security funding requests do not materialise, owing to what they perceive as a lack of attention to security among some organisations. However it is also fair to say that donors have to some degree deliberately kept their distance from the security issue in an effort to ‘to avoid taking on any kind of legal responsibility or becoming liable for the security of staff in partner organisations.’ (ECHO, Report on Security of Humanitarian Personnel, 2004, p. 64)

If the dialogue between the donors and humanitarian providers has been weak, it has been virtually nonexistent among the donors themselves. The March 2010 Montreux Conference will represent the first formal discussion of humanitarian operational security issues at an inter-donor forum.

Developments (and gaps) in interagency security cooperation

Inter-agency security cooperation has improved in recent years, but it has never been an easy operational pursuit. In the past, organisations have been wary about sharing information with others partly for fear that it compromises their own security contacts, but also because of the general tendency to protect information for their own. That said, there have been some important shifts in recent years along with a more nuanced understanding that given the significant inter-dependence with regard to security in any operational environment, collaboration on security issues is in everybody’s best interest.

At headquarters level, coordination between NGOs, and between NGOs and the UN, has moved forward in recent years. There are now two regional NGO inter-agency security fora: Interaction’s Security Advisory Group (SAG), based in Washington DC serving the US NGO community and the

European Interagency Security Forum (EISF) based in London, serving the European NGO community. These platforms serve as information-sharing, awareness-raising, advocacy and training forums. They are seen as valuable for encouraging and promoting good practice as well as sharing lessons learned and providing country-specific information in near to real-time. And since 2007, UNHCR and OCHA have co-chaired a new IASC working group on current challenges to humanitarian space and how to preserve it (Tennant, Doyle, & Mazou, 2010).

Saving Lives Together

The UN and NGO community have recently revived the Saving Lives Together initiative. This initiative is designed to provide a policy-level framework to improve security collaboration between the UN and IASC-engaged NGOs at the field level, but has been hampered over many years by mistrust and NGOs' misgivings about engaging with the UN on security issues, and a lack of resources from the donor community to make it effective. A high level meeting in October 2009 sought to address some of these issues and agree a way forward which will start being implemented in 2010. Most agencies see this as a positive step and hope NGOs will benefit from a clearer understanding of UNDSS resources and advice that they might find valuable in the field. In some contexts however, such as Pakistan, there remain serious obstacles to UN-NGO collaboration, and NGO collaboration on security issues more broadly. The SLT also faces a number of other challenges, including the need to reach out to non-IASC engaged INGOs and national NGOs. The funding of joint initiatives such as SLT has been cause for some concern on the part of NGOs who fear the CAP channel will flow primarily to UN bodies and only trickle-down to NGOs in inadequate amounts. There is a growing recognition of the need to ensure national NGOs security, but the extent to which this can be addressed through the SLT initiative is complicated given the host government should nominally take responsibility for locally-based organisational security.

Field-level security coordination platforms

Overall, the more successful field-level security coordination platforms have been generated by the NGOs themselves. Often driven by extreme need, the field platforms offer NGOs a range of additional support to their existing security management arrangements, including:

- Convening inter-agency security meetings;
- Providing security alerts, cross checking information and undertaking security incident reporting and analysis;
- Carrying out risk assessments, undertaking trend analysis, and communicating these in periodic security threat reports;
- Providing introductory security briefings, as well as technical assistance and advice to individual agencies, and training;
- Crisis management: providing support with contingency planning; and facilitating in-extremis support, for example, if an agency suffers a critical incident such as the kidnapping of staff, the platform might be able to provide additional analysis and support through local networks

- Liaison with governmental authorities, international and national military forces, including a UN peacekeeping or political mission, and private security companies, (therefore allowing the NGOs to keep themselves at arms distance from military and political actors, where necessary).

There is no standard model of an inter-agency security platform. Some are informal, for example, a periodic Heads of Mission meeting, or a network of interested security focal points. Keeping the collaboration informal may be the result of inter-agency dynamics but in some settings can be due to strong apprehension of the host authorities over a formal safety or security related body, as was the case in Darfur, Sudan. Others can take the form of a separate or hosted NGO security and safety office, which can serve the whole NGO community, such as those highlighted in the box below. Often this requires a lead agency to step up and assume, at least initially, the additional costs and visibility that come with the role - something many are reluctant to do. In general these mechanisms require significant financial and human resources as well as operational assets, such as vehicles, communications and IT equipment. Much of this in the past has been supported by a number of key donors, including USAID, ECHO, DFID, Irish Aid and the Swiss government.

Inter-agency security cooperation can provide organisations with extra-capacity at relatively low cost. Despite general praise and appreciation for the security cooperation platforms such as those in Somalia and Afghanistan, however, there are few platforms in existence.¹ This is partly because of the cultural change that agencies have to go through to work in an interdependent way on security issues and because it requires establishing it as a dedicated task. In resource-scarce contexts this is sometimes a difficult decision to justify.

Some agencies are inclined to stand outside formal security coordination mechanism, such as MSF and ICRC, although they may share information to varying degrees. In addition most field-level security platforms operate between INGOs, and it is unclear the extent to which national NGOs participate and benefit. An additional risk for small and medium size organisations, is that there can be a reliance on these mechanism so much so that it displaces any internal efforts to actively maintain their own security management.

¹ See for example, ECHO 2006: NGO Security Collaboration Guide. Brussels (by Sean Bickley) and the Good Practice Review on Operational Security Management in Violent Environments: Revised 2010, *forthcoming*.

Table 3: Examples of field level inter-agency security coordination platforms

- The Afghanistan NGO Safety Office (ANSO) was set up in late 2002, had regional security offices, and a mix of international and national security personnel. It was initially hosted by IRC then by German Agro-Action
- The NGO Coordinating Committee in Iraq security office (NCCI) grew out of a general coordination forum, started by NCCI in 2003 and initially hosted by Première Urgence and later by Un Ponte Per. NCCI had regional security offices and national and international security staff, but it relocated in late 2004 to Amman along with many other aid agencies. Today it is redeploying in the field and has built up an extensive information network of focal points among local NGOs across the country and a security incident tracking system.
- The Balochistan INGO Consortium-Security Management Support Project (BINGO) was created in early 2004 by agencies based in Quetta, Pakistan. IRC was the host agency with further support from Mercy Corps, and the consortium used both national and international security officers. In late 2005, BINGO to closed down, partly due to pressure from the Pakistani authorities and partly because INGO resources were reprioritized in the earthquake response.
- In Somalia, the NGO Safety Program (NSP), Somalia was established by a larger Somalia NGO Consortium in late 2004, based in Nairobi and with antenna in Somali regions. The project used both international and national security officers and the host agency in 2009 was the Danish Refugee Council (DRC).
- The Initiative ONGs Sécurité (IOS)-Haiti was created in late 2005, staffed by a national security officer and hosted by Christian Aid, with support from LWF. The IOS closed down in 2009. It was revived in response to the Haiti earthquake, under Christian Aid's steerage.
- The Gaza NGO Safety Office (GANSO) was established in 2008. It is a project of CARE International, with the aim of providing information, tools and analysis to the NGO community to implement projects and missions safely.
- Chad OASIS – run by IMMAP is the most recent arrangement which provides software, helps manage incident data, develops lessons learned, and manages information flows.

Conclusions: Challenges and opportunities for enhancing security for humanitarian operations

Notwithstanding the gravity of the current situation of insecurity for aid work, humanitarian actors can be encouraged by the evidence of past years that serious investments in building security management skills and organisational capacity have apparently paid off in declining numbers of major casualties in all but the most intractable insecure settings (Stoddard, Harmer, & DiDomenico, 2009). Like any other area of international humanitarian response, security is one where critical analysis and sustained joint efforts of donors and providers alike can lead to measurable improvement. The opportunity for donors to collectively consider the issue of the security of humanitarian aid operations is therefore a welcome one. The policy importance donors place on an agenda sends a message to agencies, especially their executive leadership, as to how much of an organisational priority it should be. There is a general tendency in the international community to react quickly after an incident, but focused attention on the importance of security management has been hard to maintain. Moreover, as the evidence in this paper demonstrates, the lack of active engagement and coordination between donors on security financing can have a negative impact on the overall humanitarian response.



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

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