



Nurses' perception of safety and security in disaster settings

Häggman, H., & Kernohan, G. (2003). Nurses' perception of safety and security in disaster settings. In *Secure02: security is a state of mind* (pp. 146-167). Finnish Red Cross.

[Link to publication record in Ulster University Research Portal](#)

Published in:

Secure02: security is a state of mind

Publication Status:

Published (in print/issue): 01/01/2003

Document Version

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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Security is a state of mind.

Abbreviations

BRC	British Red Cross
BTC	Basic Training Course
COA	Country of Assignment
ECHO	European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office
EOM	End of Mission
ERU	Emergency Response Unit
EU	European Union
FRC	Finnish Red Cross
HoD	Head of Delegation
HoRDs	Head of Regional Delegation
HoSDs	Head of Sub-delegations
HR	Human Resource
ICT	International Policy Institute for Counter Terrorism

5Pictures: Teija Lehtonen, Esa Mäkinen, Simo Weckstén,
The Finnish Red Cross Archives, IFRC Archives
English copyeditor: Helen Wire
Translations from Finnish: Sarax-Converto & Scribo
Graphic design: Henna Eskelinen / Tuubi
Published in Finland in 2003
Printed by Libris
ISBN 951-658-107-2

ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IRRC	The International Review of the Red Cross
IPTD	International Personnel and Training Department
ITDT	International Training and Development Team
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NS	National Societies
PDR	Performance Development Review
PEP	Post-exposure prophylaxis kit
PNS	Participating National Societies
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
R&R	Rest and Relaxation
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
WHO	World Health Organisation

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**Nurses' perceptions of safety
and security in disaster settings**



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Security is being prepared

KRISTIINA KUMPULA, DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAMMES, FRC

Growing more and more concerned, people interested in the humanitarian aid work of the Red Cross ask whether aid workers today have any chance of working where disasters have struck and particularly in areas of war and conflict. Can the aid workers get to the people who need help? What ways does the Red Cross have of guaranteeing the safety of its aid workers and ensuring that their help reaches those who need it?

The safety of humanitarian aid workers is a growing concern. Over the past few decades the reality of aid work has changed considerably. Organisations have to work in a more politically and socially complex environment, and face many risks and un-

predictable elements. The majority of conflicts are internal. Bombs, explosives and the availability of guns during and after conflicts increase the risk of violence. Poverty, societies without hope or direction, omnipresent criminal activity, and large numbers of guns are just some of the things aid workers come across in their work.

Security issues are not new in humanitarian aid work, but the emphasis is clearly shifting more and more to these matters in all aid work. For this reason the Finnish Red Cross (FRC), with finance from the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), arranged an international workshop, pilot training of instructors and a



training course for delegates during 10–16 June 2002. The aim of the workshop and the training was to increase the common preparedness of the Red Cross, its partners and employees to work together in difficult circumstances. Specialists in different fields took part in the seminar to discuss safety and security in aid work and to update their own knowledge. This book summarises what was discussed. Each of the authors is an expert in their field and has had long experience of fieldwork. The aim is to present a variety of views, to provide a basis for dealing with the subject of security and for taking it further in your own work.

Security is not separate from the rest of the aid work performed by aid organisations. Rather, it should run through all the work done in planning, implementation, preparation and assessment of a project. The fact that security concerns are part of every stage and penetrate all areas of the work means they influence all decision-making and ensure the security situation is evaluated critically, and different options considered. The security plan for each delegation and aid programme is a response to local needs and can be changed as the situation develops. No security system can be made totally foolproof, but there are a number of rules and models that can be applied to prevent accidents. In her arti-

cle, Pirkko Tolvanen presents the Finnish Red Cross model of security training for delegates, which builds on practices developed by the Federation and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) together with the National Societies.

Among other recent events, September 11, 2001, is a turning point, particularly in matters concerning security. Since then, security concerns have been raised in more sombre tones, and cooperation to ensure the safety of both recipients of aid and employees has increased. In the field, it has meant a greater threat of violence and terrorism. But equally significant is the change in the psychological atmosphere in which heightened awareness of the many different kinds of threat has increased the sense of insecurity.

Another factor, which also effects everybody's behaviour at least as much as the shadows of 9/11, is the world-wide epidemic caused by HIV. HIV/AIDS forces all of us to think about, and take responsibility for, our own health and that of those close to us, and this has become essential to our own safety and that of our working environment. Recent cases of abuse where recipients of aid, whether children or women, have been victimised, have highlighted the need to approve new regulations. This has also emphasised the re-

sponsibility of each individual and the entire team to pay attention to their collective security and respect for human rights.

It is quite clear that the security of aid operations and aid work cannot depend solely on the actions and will of the individual. A security system needs to be systematically visible in decision making, training and assessment. It is essential to have a common view of the importance of security and of understanding the risks, as well as the principles and rules that unite people. Also, everybody needs to have the same view of the consequences of breaking those rules. That is one aspect of being

prepared and guarding against behaviour that can put an individual or the whole team at risk. Everybody has a clearly stated duty – and right – to work for the well-being and safety of the group.

From the point of view of the individual, increasing security requires a chain of decisions in which each part of the chain plays an important part. The experience of the FRC shows that experts in different fields still want to work as Red Cross delegates and aid workers, despite having to work in circumstances that are more difficult than they used to be. Recruitment procedures emphasise expertise, ability to work in a group, and the ability to respect

Emergency Response Unit (ERU) Field Hospital on the way to Bhuj, India, from Kalkku Logistic Centre in February 2001 after the earthquake in Gujarat.



the agreed rules. A humanitarian aid delegation is no place for a foolhardy risk-taker who may jeopardise his or her own security or that of his colleagues or the people in need of help. The important assessment and decision to filter out such people needs to be made at the recruitment stage.

Social and cultural skills are becoming more and more important in recruitment and training. The ability to work within a larger group, being able to lead and involve other people in decision-making, as well as the ability to listen and hear, are all key to being a professional humanitarian aid worker. Communication skills, in addition to language skills, are an essential part of security.

Cultural skills are vital when the local population questions foreign aid workers. With what right do these people come to their country? Who are they? Cultural and ethnic identities are more pronounced in situations of conflict, which means the behaviour of others is judged even more strictly according to cultural rules.

Red Cross employees work in multicultural work environments with local people as well as delegates from different nation states. This highlights the need for cultural skills, as does the neutral and impartial

nature of humanitarian aid work. Equally important for Red Cross work is tolerance. Cultural meanings are particularly important when communication is not built on a common language or meanings. The ability to accept and respect cultural differences and limit your own work also helps one to assimilate the culture shock – both when working in a new environment and on returning home to your own country.

In this sense, it is justified to say that security also builds on your ethical values. Accepting and respecting diversity is the basis of human dignity and human rights. Inversely, it can justifiably be said that intolerance and insensitivity to other cultures increases risks and the danger of being misunderstood.

There is a very practical goal behind the emphasis on social skills and cultural sensitivity. In his interview Tor Planting, the Federation's head of security, emphasises the importance of regular security analysis and reports in his work to ensure the safety of all concerned. At the same time,

secure02

it is the ability of all employees to react to changes in attitudes, atmosphere and work that make it possible to make necessary adjustments to the security work of a delegation in a changing security milieu. Good relations with local counterparts, the ability to interpret even small signals of change and to convey the relevant information to the leaders of the delegation helps the entire delegation to adapt to possible changes.

All the authors emphasise the importance of regular security briefings, face to face conversations, and of creating an atmosphere of trust. Reviewing the security situation and the rules that are in force, even in apparently peaceful situations, creates readiness to handle difficult situations and provides added security for the aid work. Security briefings are not a duty but a right that each delegate has as part of his or her job.

Preparation and training can never over-emphasise the respect for the rules and routines that are used. Existing regulations aren't necessarily perfect and need regular review and improvement. But the imperfection does not mean the rules are due any less respect. The experiences of Ola Skuterud in Somalia, for instance, show that conversation, preparedness for different situations and the revision of ba-

sic rules prevents panic and increases the chances for survival in a difficult situation. The same lesson is put forward by Louise Hamberg-Dardel and Tina Quick in their article. Delegates with good physical and mental preparation make the best adjustment to a new environment and can best identify the consequences of risk-taking behaviour.

There is no way to remove all risks from humanitarian aid work and so every aid worker has to live with the possibility of danger. However, there are precautionary measures that can decrease the risks inherent in the job. Danger is an integral part of the aid work environment, and exceptional circumstances highlight this fact. Accepting this, is the first step towards ensuring the best possible security and a correct understanding of the risks involved. The primary aim is to guarantee people in need their right to receive humanitarian aid and protection.

The Finnish Red Cross wishes to thank ECHO, whose financial help enabled the training that took place in the summer of 2002, and the publication of this book. We also wish to thank all the people who through their work make aid work safer. Special thanks go to Hannele Häggman, whose enthusiasm made this book possible.





secure02 background

KIMMO JUVAS, PROGRAMME OFFICER, FRC

Why we decided develop the secure02 project, how the plans were put into practice, and what we see as its main conclusions and future challenges

This chapter aims to give scale, context and general background to the secure02 project. It ends with a short review of its conclusions and challenges for the future.

Security and safety are about being proactive – individually and institutionally

The Finnish Red Cross (FRC) believes in training and learning things together. Since the late 1960s we have systematically

organised training courses for delegates and were among the first of the National Societies to introduce and pilot the Basic Training Course for Future Delegates (BTC) in 1969. The basic formula for Finnish Red Cross delegate training has remained simple: the objective of training is to maintain and improve our quality of performance. If we want to change the way we act and operate, we learn best from our own experience, and learn better by doing. Working together is more rewarding for adopting and disseminating new ideas and methods. Every participant is considered to be a resource during a workshop, which is facilitated by a team of experts who usually represent the know-how of different parts of the Red Cross Movement.

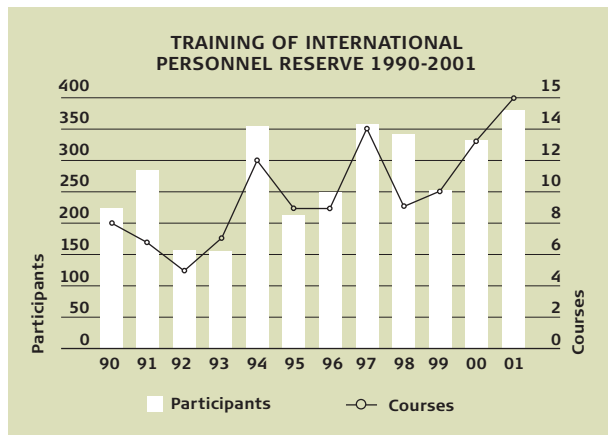
Security and safety has always been included as a course topic, and is so integrated into our work that it would be impossible to consider a training curriculum without it. Aspects of security have been and still are a standard module in the BTC. Working in the delegation, counterpart relations, financial security, health and stress management, all these issues are considered in normal Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) training and they all include links to security and safety.

Feedback from the delegates, however, indicates a need for more practical and in-depth training on the subject. Kalle Löövi, then Head of international aid of the FRC,

introduced a second-level training seminar on security and safety for the delegates in Finland 1996. This pilot seminar was to set the framework for security and safety training in the Finnish Red Cross for the years to come. **secure02** is an offspring of this. Since then, 130 Finnish delegates and several people from abroad have participated in this safety and security workshop. We have studied the feedback, material from debriefings and other accounts from the field. With all this in mind, we decided to put together an international seminar with training for instructors and delegates to summarise our and your state-of-the-art safety and security measures for humanitarian field workers. The pilot project was made possible by a grant from ECHO, from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and from the Finnish Red Cross disaster relief fund.

Joint effort for improving safety and security for humanitarian field workers – the overall goal of secure02

‘Death and injury among the field staff of humanitarian organisations is unfortunately not a new phenomenon. Inevitably, there are risks that anyone who wishes to help war or disaster victims must be ready to face. However, in recent years, the growing number of victims among aid workers has become a major cause for concern.’ This International Committee of the Red Cross



FINNISH RED CROSS DELEGATE TRAINING 1990–2001.
IN TOTAL, 3317 DELEGATES PARTICIPATED IN THE TRAINING.

FINNISH RED CROSS 1990-2001 TRAINING OF INTERNATIONAL PERSONNEL RESERVE

Course	Courses											Participants											Course 90-01	Part.. 90-01		
	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99			00	01
Basic Training Course	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	61	57	28	31	26	30	28	48	32	29	66	55	17	491
Refresher	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	70	53	69	23	62	60	55	40	49	45	60	87	15	673
Evaluation / Debriefing	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	1	3	31	34	34	20			42	21	24	55	20	89	12	370
Psycho-Social Support							1	1	1	1									32	29	15	16		4	92	
Development Delegate	1			1	1	1	1		1	1	1		17			21	27	17	30			18	13	21	8	164
Youth Delegate						1												22							1	22
Finance / Administration				1	1	1			1		1					21	17	19			24		18	13	5	112
Project management										1	1	1										21	15	17	3	53
Information Seminar					1					1							40					15	25		2	80
Logistics / Relief Delegate					1	1		1			1						23	27		20			21		4	91
Basic Relief Course								1												24					1	24
Security Training								1	1	1	1	1								30	22	20	19	22	5	113
Surgical Unit Training	1	1		1	1								43	147		37	31								4	258
ERU Training							4	2			1	2								145	164		35	66	9	410
First Aid Teaching						1												15							1	15
Nutrition Seminar			1												21										1	21
Health Care in Dev. Countries					3	1	2			1	2						100	27	49			35	30		9	241
Telecommunication delegate										1										10					1	10
Telecommunication										1										35					1	35
HR management													1												15	1
Water and Sanitation					1												27								1	27
	7	6	4	6	11	8	8	12	8	9	12	14	222	291	152	153	353	217	249	360	344	253	338	385	105	3317

(ICRC) statement from 1998 remains valid. It also set the keynote for the **secure02** project, for which the overall goal was to improve the security and safety of humanitarian workers in the field.

We outlined a situation analysis of the main elements of the security and safety of humanitarian fieldwork based on documentation available from the Federation, the ICRC and national sources. We also assessed the feedback from Fincross se-

curity and safety training conducted between 1996 and 2001. Aid stops if there is no security. A humanitarian relief operation cannot continue if there is no guarantee of its security and safety. But violent attacks on our field workers, ambushes and theft are not the only considerations, as, more often, road and traffic safety are a problem. During the years 1985– 1998, of the 382 field workers who were killed, 64 died in traffic accidents. Can or does any security or safety training have a pos-

THE TOPICS OF DELEGATE TRAINING RANGE FROM SECURITY AND SAFETY TO SPECIALISED EMERGENCY RESPONSE UNIT (ERU) WORKSHOPS.

SECURE02, ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIES, EXAMPLE



itive impact on the number of these incidents? We believe it does. This is what the secure02 strategy is based on, too.

Everyone plays a role but the responsibility is yours

Who is the subject, who is the object, and who is in charge? There is a shared responsibility in the security and safety of the field worker. The key element is the worker him/herself. Whatever precautions the employer takes, they cannot replace the know-how, right moves, attitude and proactive approach of the delegate. Nor is the employer

a solid block. The National Society who sends the delegate has clear responsibilities as an employer, usually based on law; the component of the movement (Federation, the ICRC and bilateral) in charge of the operation has a major role, along with the operating National Society. We have a tendency to overlook the question of the role of our counterparts in security and safety. It is, however, usually the local RC/RC staff and volunteers who best know and read any situation in the field. Should we therefore focus our training more for the local staff, rather than for delegates only? Maybe we should we have more extensive briefings organised by our counterparts?

AN EXAMPLE OF THE CHOICE OF STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING PREPAREDNESS FOR FIELD-WORK.

Striving for constructive dialogue and better practice: the achieved results help us go further

Our vision for **secureo2** is that a dialogue between the major stakeholders on security and safety would contribute to the improvement of the situation in the field and that practical training implemented in controlled surroundings with corresponding feedback would help fieldworkers to understand their own behaviour in a stressful situation and to learn new skills more effectively.

We felt a need for bringing together not just students and teachers but a larger and multi-faceted audience. For this we chose a strategy that would combine a symposium, training for instructors, and a practical training event for delegates, followed by this publication.

For the dialogue before the project events, the Finnish Red Cross opened corresponding web pages within the Federation Knowledge Sharing Quickplace site.

The International meeting point was established, facilitated and conducted in Finland, Nynäs, 10–13 June 2002 with 50 participants representing a wide range of stakeholders.

During the training the would-be instructors used the opportunity to monitor, try out, analyse and debrief on practical exercises which they would later adapt for use in training and briefing in their own professional context.

Tools, know-how, shared experience and a network of professionals are now available for human resources staff of the National Societies that participated. Sustainability can be further enhanced by an eventual follow-up process. See the end of this chapter.

Experienced resource people from the Federation, the ICRC, and the National Societies trained a multinational group of fieldworkers on selected and relevant security and safety issues.

The international forum was followed by a customised workshop with only eight Human Resource (HR) participants on overall goals, methods, ideas and follow-up of security and safety training. A group of instructors was briefed and trained through a customised workshop. This gave the participants an opportunity to monitor, analyse and participate in implementing security and safety training modules with a group of experienced trainers. As a consequence a network of human resources staff and other professionals is being built.

A basic security and safety training for delegates took place in Hälvälä, 13–18 June 2002 with 30 participants. It was organised with the aid of the Finnish Red Cross Logistics Centre and special demonstrations, lodgings and set-up provided by Hame Brigade, Finnish Armed Forces.

The publication of this book will help to ensure that the main findings of secure02 are disseminated, and professional experience is shared with a wider professional audience. Hopefully, the book will serve as a catalyst for National Societies to take a step further on preparing their staffs for fieldwork with their counterparts.

64 resource people, assistants and participants, and ECHO funding make secure02 possible

There were altogether 19 resource people either facilitating the workshop or building the camp and assisting in the tasks of the security and safety training. The main physical effort was to run the camps in Hälvälä and Nynäs at the same time with all the participants.

The Finnish Red Cross made available one programme officer (part-time) and one project assistant throughout most of the pilot project. The whole project was guided and advised by a special steering committee

established in early 2002. Kristiina Kumpula, director of programmes, FRC, chaired the committee.

The major precondition for the secure02 project was the internal commitment with the external funding from ECHO, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Office of Humanitarian Aid). A Grant Facility made the international forum, the two workshops, and publication possible from ECHO and financial support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Finnish OK-Study Centre.

Challenges for National Societies and the future

From the viewpoint of Red Cross National Society human resources development, training and coaching in improving the safety and security of field workers, we see it as a major challenge to:

-
- **understand the role of a humanitarian field worker in a Red Cross operation and in the context in which s/he is working;**
 - **facilitate public support and acceptance of humanitarian work;**
 - **select carefully the responsible and committed personnel who can read the culture and the socio-economic context where s/he is working;**
 - **invest in continuous training, updating, monitoring and self-development of our**

staff, with special attention given to the managerial staff;
- commit ourselves to best practices in the recruitment process;
- take an active interest in learning from experience in the field;
- acknowledge that dissemination (making RC/RC known and accepted) requires constant work.

What kind of steps need to be taken? Besides strengthening the security function of the Federation delegations and the secretariat if needed, the National Societies within the Federation network can do a lot, by:

-
- cooperating in training, knowledge sharing, learning from each other. Using the RC/RC network to build on common experience;**
 - following up the secure02 participants;**
 - initiating the inclusion of safety and security in your curriculum;**
 - exploring your local opportunities for deepening your know-how and skills on safety and security issues. Share this institutional experience with your delegates and roster members. Who else works with safety and security in your National Society? Personnel department? National disaster preparedness? Your fleet manager? Your psychologists? The fire department? The insurance company with which you have a contract?**
 - coming together to discuss and share our views and experiences on field safety and security.**
 - being proactive in our project planning.**

As Federation Security Coordinator Tor Planting phrased it in his interview, 'the most secure thing is the constant insecurity.' It prevails, and we must be prepared, which we do know how to be. However, we do have some major advantages in our Movement for achieving our goal of protecting ourselves along with the people we work for and with. We have our common ideas and shared values, we have partners in 178 countries and we have a 140-year record of putting the ideas and values into practice.

Noblesse oblige. Red Cross/Red Crescent aid is from people to people; thus, we are responsible for both the safety and security of the workers who make this possible as well as the beneficiaries who have the right to the relief. We had better not close our eyes to the risks we face when we do our work. Nor close our eyes to the abuse of power when it occurs in the name of relief.



Security in ICRC field operations

PHILIPPE DIND, DELEGATE IN CHARGE OF SECURITY, RETIRED, ICRC

Philippe Dind is the retired delegate in charge of security at the International Committee of the Red Cross's (ICRC) Directorate of Operations. His task was to ensure that field staff were able to carry out their humanitarian work in safe conditions. Before taking up his position the author held various other posts, both at headquarters and in the field.

In any discussion about security, the primary consideration must be the need to

preserve the neutrality, independence and impartiality of humanitarian action. This is the essential precondition for the ICRC's ability to protect and assist the victims of conflict. Sooner or later, any humanitarian activity which runs counter to these fundamental principles either incurs the mistrust of the people it intends to assist or becomes completely paralysed.

In the course of the last 20 years there have been many major changes both in the

nature of conflicts and in the ICRC itself. The number of ICRC expatriate staff working in the field and the number of operations conducted by the organisation have increased tenfold, and the number of locally hired staff has risen in about the same proportion. Statistically, therefore, the probability of a security incident occurring is greater now than in the past. Moreover, the ICRC's *modus operandi* has also evolved. As the activities of ICRC delegates take them closer to the fighting than before, their working conditions have become more hazardous.

The conflict environment too has changed considerably. For example, it has become a platitude to remark that the chain of command among combatants has weakened to the point where it is often difficult to distinguish between the armed forces and gangs of bandits. All these factors combined make it extremely difficult for the ICRC to adhere to its traditional working methods. The number of people who have to be contacted to ensure that an operation runs smoothly has risen sharply, without this having any favourable effect on security – quite the contrary.

These developments have prompted the ICRC to focus even greater attention on matters relating to the safety of its field activities. What follows is an outline of

the organisation's general approach to security.

The first tenet of the ICRC's security policy is that, for delegates, danger is not the exception. It is often part of their working environment and thus should always be taken into account in operational decisions.

The second tenet is that although security has its technical aspects, it is above all a political issue. No security rule and no protective measures can replace the establishment of a network of contacts among all the parties to a conflict so as to convince them of the ICRC's neutrality, impartiality and independence. For if those in charge of fighting troops see the organisation as biased, it will be a potential target. On the other hand, neutrality – and above all the combatants' perception of that neutrality, a perception which stems from the organisation's independence and impartiality – is the best guarantee for the warring parties that the ICRC does not constitute a threat.

Security rules must be understood and applied with both these tenets in mind. Compliance with the rules lowers the risk to an acceptable level, but does not eliminate it altogether. Danger is inherent in the working conditions of ICRC staff. Eliminating

it completely would mean withdrawing all personnel from their working environment. From this it follows that:

-
- even when ICRC staff are operating in situations fraught with danger, they must never act rashly or try to intervene in the fighting; daring or reckless behaviour very rarely has a lasting and positive humanitarian impact;
 - the danger inherent in the working environment of ICRC staff must in no way diminish their sense of responsibility for their decisions, regardless of the level at which such decisions are taken.

For these reasons every security incident must be analysed and, if necessary, an internal inquiry is carried out to determine whether the conduct of the delegates concerned played any role in the course of events. However, in view of the hazardous working conditions which have been accepted by the ICRC, in such inquiries care should be taken not to condemn or blame specific individuals too hastily.

The ICRC's response to danger

The risks involved in fulfilling the ICRC's mandate vary according to the theatre of operations. The notion of security in the field covers both conflict situations and banditry or crime. At times it can be dif-

ficult to distinguish clearly between the two. What can be said, however, is that criminal acts are increasing both in frequency and in gravity.

Defining risk

RISK CONSISTS OF TWO ELEMENTS:

- the danger or threat itself, which can take different forms (theft, kidnapping, shelling, etc.) and vary in terms of the gravity of its consequences (human, operational or material);
- the probability of the dangerous event actually taking place.

AS A RULE, SECURITY MEASURES ARE AIMED AT:

- preventing serious incidents by eliminating the possibility of their occurrence (the idea here is to remove potential targets, for example by avoiding cash transfers, making sure that expatriates stay out of no-go areas, or prohibiting travel by road where there may be landmines);
- reducing risk by means of deterrents such as perimeter protection, guards and bomb shelters, or by means of preventive measures that promote respect for the ICRC's activities, staff and property (negotiations with the warring parties, use of the emblem, notification systems, etc.);
- limiting the consequences of an incident if it nevertheless occurs (medical evacuations, insurance, etc.).

Regardless of the measures taken, in the

field a certain degree of risk remains inevitable, and expatriate staff have to learn to live with it. Recognising this fact should not be interpreted as a lack of resolve to ensure their security, quite the contrary: the fact that only a residual element remains means that everything possible has been done to minimise the risk.

Some levels of risk are considered acceptable only if they are justified by the humanitarian impact of the operation. A balance must always be struck between the risk an action entails and its anticipated effect. This rule applies as much as to an operation covering an entire country as to

an expatriate's day-to-day activities. It is important to assess the effects of operational activities in terms of quality rather than quantity, and regularly to ask the question whether the impact of a planned activity is worth the risk it involves. If the answer is 'no', postponement or suspension of the operation should be considered. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that impact should be measured not only in terms of immediate benefits (food distributions, for example) but also with a view to the long term (surveys, etc.). Furthermore, no risks should be taken for the sake of maintaining a presence or for reasons of competition.



Voluntary service

The ICRC's expatriate and locally hired staff are employed on the basis of their clearly expressed willingness to accept an inevitable degree of risk. The organisation therefore expects all staff to be willing to work in any theatre of operations.

There may be cases, however, in which expatriates have very definite reasons for refusing certain postings. The ICRC will accept such reservations relating to a particular place or time provided they are an exception; otherwise the whole principle of the staff member's continued employment may be called into question. If it is to remain effective, the ICRC must be able to count on the willingness of all its personnel to go anywhere and do any type of work. In principle, no especially dangerous postings or periods are reserved for 'volunteers'. Delegates are employed to work anywhere in the world.

The level of risk associated with a given operation must be the same for all concerned, both expatriate and locally hired staff. In particular, a national employee is never entrusted with a mission regarded as too dangerous for a delegate unless his or her nationality, ethnic origin or language constitutes a security factor. Conversely, an expatriate rather than a national em-

ployee will be assigned to carry out a mission if his or her status as a foreigner is a security factor. Moreover, account will always be taken of the fact that delegation employees may be subject to political pressures to which expatriates are immune, that any confidential information they carry with them may put them at greater risk, and that, unlike expatriates, they cannot usually be evacuated.

The responsibility of superiors

The cornerstone of security management at the ICRC is that everyone in the operational hierarchy assumes full responsibility for the matter, from the Director of Operations who, in the framework of the Executive Board, has the authority to launch ICRC operations in a new conflict zone, to the field delegate who decides whether to go ahead with travel plans or to abandon them if unforeseen dangers arise.

IN THIS CONTEXT THE HEADS OF DELEGATION PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE. SPECIFICALLY, THEY ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- **ensuring the coherence of the security measures taken, notably by making sure that the ICRC is accepted at the political and operational levels;**
- **anticipating hazards by gathering and circulating information;**

- drawing up security regulations and ensuring they are complied with;
- counteracting the tendency to become accustomed to danger, taking action when an incident does occur and being ready to listen to their staff;
- preparing emergency and/or evacuation procedures;
- giving training.

Although heads of delegation may delegate the day-to-day management of security-related tasks, they always bear ultimate responsibility for the matter.

Training for all

The best way of improving security is to give special priority to training, with a view to creating permanent awareness of risks, ensuring the consistency of security measures, and imparting the technical knowledge and the skills required for each individual to assume his or her responsibilities in this respect.

TRAINING SHOULD BE:

- given to expatriate and local staff alike;
- geared to the context and the specific risks facing each individual;
- adapted to each person's actual tasks and duties;
- given at headquarters and in the delegations.

General courses are held for newly recruited expatriate staff, on matters such as how to get through a checkpoint or obtain information about the security situation, and for senior operational staff, who learn how to draw up security regulations and what to do in the event of an incident.

Tailor-made courses are held for specialised staff. For example, administrators are taught how to arrange for the transfer of funds, builders how to construct shelters and protect buildings against intruders, dispatchers how to organise relief convoys, etc.

In short, the ultimate goal of training is to improve security arrangements, while drawing each individual's attention to the limits of the ICRC's mandate so as to prevent staff from taking risks that would overstep those limits (intervening in fighting or being present on front lines).

The seven pillars of security

The ICRC's security policy for field operations relies on the seven 'pillars' described below. The first few of these are virtually exclusive to the ICRC, while the last are adopted by all organisations or multinational corporations to protect expatriate staff. The order of importance assigned to

each of them will vary according to the type of threat encountered. In particular, the choice of active or passive protective measures (No. 7) will clearly depend entirely on the local situation.

1. ACCEPTANCE OF THE ICRC

The concept of acceptance is of paramount importance to the ICRC. To be able to operate, the organisation has to make sure it is accepted by the parties to the conflict. Such acceptance is thus entirely linked to the mandate conferred on the ICRC by the States party to the Geneva Conventions, its role as a neutral intermediary and its status as an impartial and independent humanitarian organisation. The ICRC has no means of exerting pressure to impose its activities. Persuasion and influence are its only weapons. Viewed from this angle, vulnerability paradoxically offers a form of protection.

Thus it is through understanding of the ICRC's activities and its role, in particular as a neutral intermediary, that the warring parties come to accept its presence and its working procedures. The means used to achieve this aim are negotiation, projection of a consistent image, and efforts to spread knowledge of international hu-

manitarian law and the Fundamental Red Cross/Red Crescent Principles. These activities have to be conducted at all levels; indeed, the disintegration of social structures and the emergence of warlords and organised crime make it indispensable for the ICRC to be accepted by all groups wielding any power (and not only the authorities of a constitutional State).

In many, but not all, situations, two other means are used to strengthen acceptance: promotion of ICRC activities by making them as visible as possible; and broadcasting information to a wide range of audiences via the local media. These means are used only if they actually contribute to improving security.

Another factor that enhances security is acceptance by expatriates of the culture in which they are working. If they learn to understand the local system of values and customs they can act in a manner consistent with their environment. This understanding is essential if they are to be able to adjust to different situations and to the way in which a particular society functions, without having to become part of it. All expatriates have a duty to spend the time needed to familiarise themselves with the political, social and cultural features of the



PALESTINE

The escalation in violence in Israel and the occupied and autonomous Palestinian territories has caused many casualties and much suffering among Israeli and Palestinian civilians. Since 1967, the ICRC has had a continuous presence there.



country to which they have been assigned, notably by reading. Inappropriate behaviour may insidiously put the ICRC in a difficult position. Lastly, understanding how the armed groups operating in the ICRC's environment function and the way they think is vital in order to adjust security measures to the prevailing dangers.

2. IDENTIFICATION

The second pillar is a logical consequence of the first: once its special role has been accepted, the ICRC must be identifiable. Identification relies mainly on the Red Cross emblem. To distinguish itself from other 'humanitarian' players who use or misuse the emblem, the ICRC uses a logo consisting of a red cross surrounded by two concentric black circles between which appear the words 'Comité international Genève'. Vehicles operating in sensitive situations fly the ICRC flag, which attracts special attention; however, care must be taken not to overuse this means of protection.

To supplement visual identification, buildings used by the ICRC and staff movements in the field are notified to all parties to the conflict. As modern methods of warfare make it possible to destroy a target long before visual contact has been established, notification is sometimes the only effective

method of protection. This is particularly important when aircraft are used; here notification is an essential precaution in addition to the compulsory filing of a flight plan.

Lastly, special technical means such as flashing blue lights and radar transponders may be used to identify hospital ships or medical aircraft.¹

3. INFORMATION

In any high-risk situation, information is a fundamental element of security. Reliable information makes it possible to anticipate events and to react in an appropriate manner as situations develop or when dangers arise during field trips. Information should therefore flow in all directions – from senior staff downwards and vice versa, and between ICRC colleagues and outside contacts.

All field personnel, whether expatriates or field officers, must acquire the conditioned reflex of collecting and passing on as much information as possible on security matters, whether relating to the past or the present situation or to developing trends. All security incidents must be reported orally or in writing, depending on their importance, so that the delegation can take steps

to avoid any similar events in the future or to anticipate more serious ones. Special attention must be paid to any signs that the situation is deteriorating, and care must be taken not to become accustomed to such signs, so as not to unconsciously raise one's threshold of tolerance of danger.

Information on any security incidents must reach the senior staff in charge of the delegation, who will report to headquarters with their comments, their analysis of

the situation, and a description of the consequences and of any measures taken by the delegation.

Headquarters for its part passes on to the field any information brought to its attention which could affect security, such as developments in the political situation, possible reactions to any negotiations that might be in progress, information obtained from other humanitarian organisations, changes in the military situation, and the roles played by neighbouring countries or others further afield and by the major international organisations.

The head of delegation is responsible for circulating information of a general nature and organising exchanges within the delegation, including locally hired staff, who are not only entitled to be kept abreast of developments but are also a very important source of local news and reports on changes in the overall climate.

As regards the exchange of information between the ICRC and other organisations and entities, it is essential to adopt an attitude that is as open as possible. Indeed, if there is one area in which the ICRC wants to learn as much as it can, not only to safeguard its own staff but also to prevent incidents that might affect other organi-

secure02

sations, and thus to engage in a very liberal exchange of information, it is the area of security. Nonetheless, care is taken not to overstep the limits of confidentiality; for example, by never seeking to obtain or pass on information of a military nature.

4. THE SECURITY REGULATIONS DRAWN UP BY INDIVIDUAL DELEGATIONS

Each delegation has its own security rules which prescribe proper behaviour. They are drawn up under the authority of the head of delegation and are therefore specific to the country concerned. Where necessary,

sub-delegations also have to draft security rules applicable to the local situation. On their arrival in the field all staff are briefed about security and sign a statement accepting the rules. The head of delegation is responsible for ensuring compliance with the rules; breaches will incur penalties which may go as far as dismissal from the ICRC, depending on the gravity of the case. The rules should lay down only the basic precautions and leave some room for manoeuvre. They are in no way a substitute for the responsibility every individual must assume towards himself and those affected by his or her decisions.



The rules must be as concise yet as comprehensive as possible. Indeed, it is vital that they should cover all relevant subjects while stating only the essentials, so as to ensure that they do not lose their full impact. Security rules are constantly updated in line with the situation and deal with both preventive measures and appropriate reactions in the event of a security incident.

5. PERSONALITY

The safety of the ICRC's field activities depends to a large extent on the personal attributes of its staff, the most important of which are solidarity and a sense of responsibility.

In dangerous or threatening situations or in other difficult circumstances, the security of several individuals may depend on one person's reactions and attitude. Both of these are determined not only by that person's character and level of physical and psychological resistance but also, and above all, by his or her sense of responsibility. Furthermore, what is needed is not so much a remarkably well-balanced personality but an awareness of one's own

limits, the capacity to remain calm and clear-headed, and acceptance of any weak points that might be revealed in the course of the mission. In this respect, to discover in the heat of action that one is not cut out for the job and to give it up is evidence of courage and a sense of responsibility.

Another way of showing a sense of responsibility is to maintain a healthy lifestyle in the delegation. Although some weakening of one's resistance to danger is natural, everyone must combat fatigue and nervous tension and preserve his or her physical and psychological well-being by eating properly and getting enough sleep and time off, rather than resorting to alcohol and medicines. The use of narcotic drugs and other illegal substances is totally prohibited.

If, in spite of efforts to keep to a healthy routine, a staff member experiences fear, despair or premonitions of death, or, at the other end of the scale, a sense of euphoria and invulnerability, it is important to recognise these feelings and to talk about them openly with colleagues or the head of delegation. In the face of danger, these reactions may be normal and can

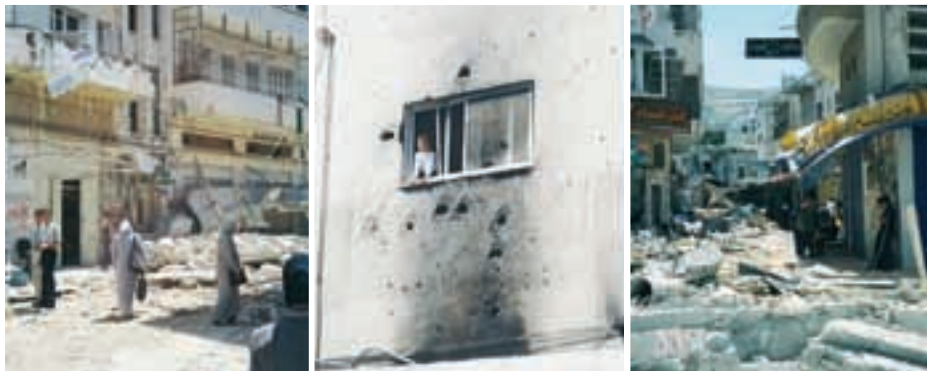
play a useful role in alerting us to and regulating stress. If they are acknowledged and discussed, they soon dissipate. If they are ignored and suppressed, they lead to the taking of unnecessary risks.

In this connection, solidarity is of fundamental importance. As everyone's resistance varies according to the circumstances and individual perceptions and sensitivities, staff must support each other in the delegations and during field operations. Talking over one's concerns and emotions is always the best way of maintaining a sense of perspective.

6. TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telecommunications play an important part in security by facilitating the transmission of information and notifications, the monitoring of and checking movements in the field, giving warning of a deterioration in the situation, or dealing with any crisis that may arise.

**THE FACILITIES MADE AVAILABLE ARE GEARED TO THE SPECIFIC SITUATION, IN TERMS OF BOTH QUALITY AND QUANTITY:
– modern, reliable equipment, which can be operated independently of the local infra-**



structure and is serviced by the ICRC;
– **a network appropriate to the geographical situation, with ICRC staff on site to set up and develop the telecommunications system as required;**
– **round-the-clock radio monitoring, if circumstances require;**
– **training of the users, facilitated by the greatest possible level of standardisation.**

7. PASSIVE AND ACTIVE PROTECTIVE MEASURES

Protective measures, whether passive or active, are taken only in situations where there is no other way of ensuring security. Sadly, such situations are on the increase. They fall into two main categories:

(a) When there is a risk of indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population, the ICRC is no longer protected by its special status. For preventive purposes, delegations will opt for premises that are not in an exposed position and that have passive protective facilities, mainly bomb shelters. Individual protective measures such as bullet-proof vests are not normally used, for two reasons: the ICRC does not accept that its staff might be potential targets, and it does not want them to take greater risks because they feel protected. Whatever the protective measures taken, they are always as discreet as possible and must never be of military appearance.

(b) In situations where crime and banditry are rife, ICRC expatriate staff are in the same position as any other foreigner living in the country. In such a context the emblem offers no protection. Vulnerability becomes a risk factor and delegations must make sure they are hard targets by adopting protective measures such as physical barriers, alarm systems, guards, etc.

Active protective measures include armed escorts, which are used only in very exceptional circumstances and with the approval of headquarters.²

Conclusion

The effectiveness of security regulations may be likened to the strength of a chain, which is as strong as its weakest link.

Thus security in the field depends on coherence between all seven factors described above. Heads of delegation are responsible for ensuring their proper application by each and every staff member.

Notes

Original: French

1. See *Regulations concerning identification*, Annex I to Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of international armed conflicts.

2. In accordance with Resolution 9 (Armed protection of humanitarian assistance) of the Council of Delegates (Geneva, 1995), *IRRC*, No. 310, January-February 1996, pp. 150-151.





Legal considerations regarding the protection of humanitarian workers in the field

ALEXANDRE FAITE, LEGAL ADVISOR, ICRC

While many aspects of the safety of humanitarian personnel in the field tend to be focused on techniques and procedures, it is equally important to consider a number of legal issues that have a direct impact on the problem. The protection of the personnel of humanitarian organisations is a matter which falls within the scope of both international and national law.

I. Applying the law of armed conflict

One important legal question that arises is whether or not the situation prevailing

within a given context amounts to an armed conflict. By the very nature of their activity, humanitarian workers often work in places where security is a serious concern. However, not all dangerous situations constitute an armed conflict. For example, a country can face situations of internal violence, generalised banditry, riots, etc. As unsafe as such situations can be, they do not trigger the application of the law of armed conflict, also known as 'International Humanitarian Law' (IHL). When IHL is not applicable, only international human rights law and domestic legislation apply (see IV, below).

An armed conflict is a situation where fighting takes place between the armed forces of two States in an 'international armed conflict'; or within the territory of a State between its regular armed forces and organised armed groups or when such groups fight one another in 'internal' or 'non-international armed conflict'. When a situation can be qualified as an armed conflict, IHL applies. The application of humanitarian law has a number of consequences as mentioned below.

II. Protection under international humanitarian law

Under IHL, the cornerstone of the protection afforded to the personnel of a humanitarian organisation is founded on the principle that: within the context of hostilities a distinction must always be made between combatants and civilians. Under IHL, humanitarian workers are considered to be civilians. Accordingly, they must be respected and protected in all circumstances, and must never be made the object of attack.

For members of humanitarian organisations the general principle of protecting civilians is strengthened by other specific rules of IHL. Contained in IHL are a number of provisions for the protection of human-

itarian personnel who are involved in relief operations. Under a number of conditions, relief operations that are humanitarian and impartial in character and are conducted without any adverse distinction may be undertaken (Articles 69, 70 and 71 of Additional Protocol I and 18 of Additional Protocol II). Offers of assistance fulfilling these conditions shall not be regarded either as interference in the armed conflict or as hostile acts.

IHL also contains provisions for the protection of medical personnel and transports. This protection, which also applies to military medical units and transports, is represented visually by the Red Cross/Red Crescent emblem. However, it must be noted that in principle most humanitarian organisations which are **not** part of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are not entitled to use that emblem.

Effective, preventive measures must be taken by States to limit any risk to the security of humanitarian workers. They must suppress breaches of international law and prosecute those responsible of war crimes. Any intentional attack against members of a humanitarian organisation would constitute a war crime. War crimes can also be prosecuted in another country on the basis of universal jurisdiction.

III. Other relevant rules of IHL

In situations of armed conflict, humanitarian workers should be aware of and respect a number of rules so as not to jeopardise the protection they enjoy under IHL. Obviously, they must not take part in the hostilities and they should always refrain from committing any act that could be construed as hostile towards one party to the conflict.

Humanitarian workers should also keep in mind what constitutes a lawful military objective according to IHL. Objects or places which by their nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action could become a military target. Whenever possible, members of humanitarian organisations should stay clear of such objects and places.

IV. Situations not amounting to an armed conflict

As noted above, when a situation, no matter how unstable, does not amount to an armed conflict, IHL does not apply – only domestic laws and norms of international human rights are applicable.

In addition, there exists the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associ-

ated Personnel, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1994. However, this instrument primarily protects personnel engaged directly by the UN (or its specialist agencies) and personnel of organisations which are in a contractual situation with the UN. Even so, for this category of people, the Convention only applies once the Security Council or the General Assembly has declared that there exists an exceptional risk to the safety of the personnel participating in the operation.

V. Conclusion

Humanitarian personnel are exposed to security risks in situations not always covered by IHL. However, without minimising the security risks that occur in other circumstances, there is little doubt that armed conflicts pose the greatest danger to humanitarian workers. Accordingly, this chapter concentrates on the rules relating to the protection of such workers in situations of armed conflict.

Analysis of security problems is multifold. Awareness of possible risk factors and also of applicable laws is therefore essential to enable humanitarian workers to react in an adequate and professional manner.



'Hard Talk' on security

TOR PLANTING, SECURITY COORDINATOR, IFRC,
INTERVIEWED BY HANNELE HÄGGMAN.



Q: What is a security incident?

A: A security incident is a situation/event in which the security and safety of Federation staff or commodities are at risk. The reported security incidents include traffic accidents, armed robbery, thefts, looting, muggings, burglaries, attacks, vehicle hijack, threats, kidnappings/detention, harassment, and acts of war including all mine incidents and situations where gunfire is closer than 300 metres from our staff or Federation installations.

Q: Could you briefly define the key elements of the Federation's security policy?

A: The Federation's Security Management System is based on the following:

- a) The Head of Delegation is explicitly responsible for security.
- b) The preventive approach by which we – through dissemination of our mandate, clear identification of staff and premises, compliance with the fundamental principles, correct personal behaviour, transpar-

SECURITY

1. Acceptance
2. Identification
3. Information
4. Regulations
5. Behaviour
6. Communication
7. Protection

ent operational conduct, operational planning and movement control, information sharing and vigilance – try to minimise the probability of encountering incidents that will put in jeopardy the security of our staff or commodities.

c) We have a well functioning security management structure.

d) Security procedures and a strict management in delegations.

e) We don't expose our staff to unnecessary risks because if we, due to the security situation, cannot be operational and a continued staff presence would only result in too high a risk, then we conduct a preventive relocation.

f) Each delegation has local hospitalisation and medical evacuation procedures.

g) Full compliance by staff with security procedures. If these are breached, then disciplinary procedures will be used.

h) We have the 'seven pillars of security' as a foundation for our security code of conduct.

i) Support and confidence from the National Societies.

Q: How would you define the overall aim of the Federation's security management?

A: Well, in a nutshell, it is: 'to provide Federation delegations, delegates and employed national staff with maximum oper-

ational and individual security and safety while working in Federation-led humanitarian operations.'

Q: Have you achieved your aim and what is your proof of that?

A: Yes, we have, and my support for saying this is the fact that we have approximately 600 delegates and roughly 3500 locally employed staff working for the Federation and the reported security incidents for year 2002 were only 26. This indicates, at least for me, that security is being taken seriously by our staff and that the Heads of Delegation fully understand their accountability and are doing a good job. This trend of positive low incident rates has continued through the past six years.

Q: How do you keep your security systems updated, and is there still room for improvement?

A: A very relevant question. We keep our systems updated through constant monitoring of the worldwide political/security situation, both by using the information networking established in our Geneva based security office, then through the countrywide external relations and information network our Heads of Delegation have in a particular country including the

National Society (NS), Inter Agency meetings, governmental authorities and the diplomatic community.

Another important tool is the security assessment missions that I and my assistant Lars Tangen are undertaking, essentially as a preventive measure, and as a 'trouble shooting' reactive mission when necessary. During such a mission we analyse the prevailing security situation and review the delegation's security procedures to ensure they are relevant and focusing on protection and the prevention of any breaches in the delegates' security in accordance with the existing situation.

There is always room for improvement and we do it primarily through selective recruit-

ment of the right delegate for a specific job, a comprehensive briefing and debriefing system both in Geneva and in the field, an increased number of security assessment missions, specialist training, strict security management at the delegation level, functioning security procedures, full compliance with rules and regulations and finally, but a very important issue, the use of sanctions which essentially means the termination of a delegate's mission if s/he doesn't comply with the delegation's security procedures.

Q: We will return to training later, but will you elaborate a little on what is the overall security management structure in the Federation and what does 'strict security management' mean? Who is responsible for what?

A: The management structure and decision-making chain starts in the field with the Head of Delegation, with links to the Head of Regional Delegation, then the Security Unit with me and my assistant and, finally, my line manager the Director of Development Coordination Division.

Compared with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations (UN) our system includes fewer people. Naturally, this has its pros and cons but



the great advantage is that the flow of information sharing is good, advice to field managers can be given directly when needed, and an important decision such as the relocation/evacuation of staff involves only a few people who all respond immediately. So, what I am saying is that the Security Unit in the Secretariat is very much the focal point for all Federation security issues.

As to the second part of your question, strict security management essentially means that at all times the Head of Delegation has an updated risk assessment and that s/he has security regulations specifically customised for the delegation in a particular operational security environment. Worldwide, the security regulations are a must for each Federation delegation and should include issues that aim to improve staff and commodity security. Naturally, the content of the regulations depends on the operational location but should usually include at least the following: personal code of conduct, information networking, office security, residential security, driving safety instructions, fire safety issues, telecommunication, reporting system, health issues, and then of course the important emergency plans such as operational relocation and hospitalisation and medical evacuation procedures.

In addition to this we request from our staff full compliance with rules and regulations and if any fail to comply with them, then we use the earlier mentioned sanctions. This makes it 'strict management'.

Q: What is your view on training; is it at a sufficient level or is more needed?

A: In my view, you can never be over-trained in security. Training gives you more skills and increases your capacities and preparedness, so it is absolutely clear that it is the 'key' to improving individual security awareness. Today, we are giving training to delegates and national staff but this could be far more effective if only we had adequate financial and human resources. My unit gives management training for Heads of Delegation or designated security delegates, awareness training to delegates and national staff in conjunction with our security assessment missions, and upon request and availability we also facilitate National Society training. I am very supportive of the special security training given by some National Societies, where the Finnish Red Cross is absolutely in the driving chair. This training is focused on providing additional technical skills, then the very important 'situation awareness' which is to give general guidelines, not standard solutions for 'how to behave in different threat situations'.

I would like to be able to provide far more training but, as I said earlier, as the situation stands today it is a question of resources. The Security Unit is two persons – myself and staff-on-loan provided by the Norwegian Red Cross since the year 2000. However, the staff-on-loan function is always provided for one year only and is then subject to negotiation for a possible ex-

tension without ever becoming part of the permanent infrastructure. This makes it difficult to commit oneself in long-term planning and besides we have more than 80 delegations to monitor and a lot of daily security routines including external information networking relations and keeping National Societies informed of prevailing security issues. So, currently, I don't have adequate resources to increase training facilitated by the Security Unit.

IMPROVING SECURITY

- **Recruitment**
- **Preparation**
- **Training**
- **Psychological support**
- **Security management structure**
- **Sufficient security management**
- **Security coordinator function**
- **Constant support to the field**
- **Cooperation with the ONS**
- **Support from the PNS**
- **Full compliance with regulations**

REASONS FOR SECURITY INCIDENTS

- **Lack of basic sec. awareness**
- **Lack of common sense**
- **Ignorance of procedures**
- **Profile/provocation**
- **Relations**
- **Lack of information**
- **Personal problem/s**
- **Risk challenging**
- **Lack of security management**
- **Not a team player "outsider"**

Q: What is the solution in your opinion?

A: I think the solution, for which I have been fighting over the past years, is a sufficient security infrastructure both in the Secretariat and in the field. My proposal has been to have in the Secretariat two security officer positions within the basic infrastructure, and to strengthen the field structure by having one security delegate based in operational regions, at least in the most security sensitive ones such as Africa and Asia-Pacific.

Q: Have we been targeted as the Red Cross, and has the increased insecurity you mentioned affected the operations?

A: No we have not been particularly targeted as RC/RC but have been victims of the increased criminality because we are perceived to be wealthy and in possession

of money and attractive items like high profile vehicles, communication equipment and warehouses full of valuable relief material and, as we know, poverty increases criminality.

Operations have been temporarily suspended in some regions due to insecurity, and delegates must be relocated to safe areas. Sometimes it has been difficult to find delegates for some operations. You cannot send delegates of a particular nationality to some regions. Such factors make the operations more difficult today.

**OPERATIONAL SECURITY CODE
OF CONDUCT, BASIC PRINCIPLES**

- 1. Impartiality - Neutrality - Independence**
- 2. Code of Conduct for the RC movement**
- 3. Operating basically with the ONS and ICRC**
- 4. Independent security management and contingency planning.**
- 5. Donor response and beneficiary identification through Red Cross channels.**
- 6. Clear division of labour and mandates when joint operations with UN or NGOs**
- 7. No armed escorts to protect a transportation or a distribution.**
- 8. No arms/armed personnel in RC premises or vehicles.**
- 9. Collaboration with military forces to be decided by the Secretariat.**
- 10. Perceived as a "clean" Red Cross operator**

The fact that terrorists have chosen the tactics of 'soft targets with mass casualties' imposes a lot of restrictions on delegates' movements, particularly during their time off. You have to know when and where to go. In some countries, public venues, popular restaurants, cinemas, concert halls, theatres, and so on, are all targets for acts of terrorism and we have to avoid them as far as possible. So delegates to some locations have to be prepared to accept more confinement than before, simply because the world has changed and is less secure now, and our priority is the safety and well-being of our delegates.

A possible war in Iraq will further fuel fundamentalism not only in Middle East but worldwide and, of course, will result in even less security for Red Cross staff.

Q: What advice would you give to a so-called 'first-time' delegate when s/he starts a mission?

A: I'd tell them:

– the Federation sometimes works in a volatile security environment, so we have to be prepared to take calculated risks. Your Head of Delegation will be responsible for the overall security management but your responsibility is compliance with procedures.

- report all incidents to your manager.
- be a good team member who listens and also shares information.
- be vigilant and observe your surroundings; that is, walk with your ears and eyes open.
- if you feel insecure and not comfortable with a security situation, inform your Head of Delegation and we will repatriate you home or redeploy you to another delegation with greater security. We don't force anyone to stay against his/her will. Also, if you are not sure about something written in the security rules, ask for clarification. 'Think twice and act once.'
- most importantly, take care of your personal health and use your common sense.

Q: What is your view on preparedness/training at home prior to a mission?

A: The better prepared and briefed you are the better equipped you are, both physically and mentally, to maintain your health and well-being in a security sensitive working environment. While waiting for a mission, if security training is available I would strongly recommend all delegates to participate, even as 'refresher training'. Study the country's history, political infrastructure and recent political and economic developments as well as the military political situation. The more you know about your forthcoming operational context the

better. Contact your NS and ask for delegates' mission reports, if there are any, or any available updated assessment reports. Meet with delegates who have returned from a mission in your country of assignment. Also inform your dependants and relatives of the circumstances you will be facing. So, in my view, there is a lot more than just having the vaccinations that we can and should do at home while waiting for the departure date.

Q: How can a project like secureo2 address or improve the security and safety of humanitarian workers in the field? And what is your vision of the next step?

A: The first phase of the training which was the two day International seminar on security, gave basically a good introduction to the prevailing security problems for humanitarian workers. It elaborated clearly also on the liaison between armed forces and humanitarian organisations. It gave an in-depth briefing on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and linked issues, explained the UN's security approach and management, and touched on several technical aspects of security such as health, psychological support, personal code of conduct, and the very important media relations. I feel those days, regardless of the, to some extent, theoretic and hypothetical discussions about security,

secure02

REPORTED SECURITY INCIDENTS IN FEDERATION OPERATIONS 2002

Americas total 1
Traffic accident 1

Europe total 2
Traffic accident 1
Harrasment 1

MENA total 0

Africa total 19
Traffic accident 1
Theft 4
Armed robbery 5
Vehicle hijacking 1
Mugging 2
Burglary 1
Looting 1
Harrasment 2
Threat 1
Other 1

Asia Pacific total 4
Theft 2
Armed robbery 1
Harrasment 1

still gave a concrete context or a framework for the whole issue of field security for staff.

The second phase of almost two days focused on relevant security issues for the training of trainers. This is a very important phase if we want to increase and outsource training. More participants would have been welcome.

The last phase was the normal situation-awareness training with both practical skills training and a well-planned simulated ter-

rain day, particularly with enough 'teaching checkpoints' within realistic tasks or situations.

I think the next step would be to repeat this course but focus a bit more planning and substance on the seminar phase, then of course, ensure that we have enough participants for the 'training of instructors'.

In conclusion, I would say that this **secure02** training gave a wider view of the whole problematic security context today and the different players' approach to issues; and

for some participants the weekend produced a few pearls of sweat and maybe shaking knees as they advanced from one checkpoint to the other . . . but they certainly gained experience and learned some lessons.

Q: How would you describe the development of security and safety in the field over the past 10 years?

A: In general, the situation has deteriorated and in some areas, such as Africa, it has done so quite rapidly. There has been a clear increase in armed banditry, general criminality, vehicle hijackings, burglaries, traffic accidents and violent acts of crime. The numerous armed conflicts or wars worldwide have also exposed our Red Cross staff to dangerous acts of war, such as shelling, bombing, small arms fire, sniping and mines. Terror incidents in the USA and the declared war on international terrorism has imposed a lot of restrictions and made operations more complicated for the Red Cross staff worldwide. The looming Iraq crisis will certainly have immense security implications, not only in the region but possibly also worldwide. Some UN statistics from 2000 indicate that during the past 10 years more humanitarian workers have been killed while performing their duties than soldiers in worldwide peace-keeping operations. The Red Cross had roughly 145

staff members killed 'in the line of duty', including delegates, national staff, National Society staff and volunteers from 1992 through 2002. The situation is not good and I don't expect any rapid improvement within the years to come, so security awareness, good management, training and prevention will be essential tools in trying to maintain staff security and safety.

Q: What are the most common security risks we are exposed to today?

A: Traffic accidents, general criminality such as thefts and burglaries, diseases, then of course, as experienced during the last year, exposure to acts of terror as part of the worldwide increasing insecurity.

Q: What are your current security concerns in the field?

A: For the past days the rapidly deteriorating security situation in Abidjan in the Ivory Coast. The looming crisis in Iraq and staff security in Baghdad and the surrounding countries. The explosive situation in Palestine . . . and tomorrow is another day and we might have problems elsewhere! The greatest certainty is the constant insecurity!

Thank you very much for this discussion and I wish you good luck!





Safety and security management as part of human resource management

PIRKKO TOLVANEN, HUMAN RESOURCE COORDINATOR
(DELEGATES), INTERNATIONAL AID, FRC

1. Introduction

The security of humanitarian aid workers has become an issue of utmost importance as the number of civilian aid workers who have lost their life in the line of duty has increased over recent years. The number of targeted incidents has also increased, but the collected data and documentation for this trend is incomplete.

An article in the British Medical Journal, Volume 321 (15 July 2000), entitled 'Deaths among humanitarian workers' by Mani Sheik *et al.*, does provide research and statistics based on information voluntarily submitted by United Nations (UN) aid agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGO) and UN peacekeeping organisations between the years 1985 and 1998. This study reported 375 deaths among civilian

(UN and NGO) aid workers and UN peacekeepers during the 14-year period.¹ From 1985 onwards, the number of deaths rose, peaking in 1994 at the time of the Rwandan crisis. The high number of intentionally targeted deaths (253 of the total 375 incidents) compared to road accident fatalities (64 of the total) reflects the increasingly violent conditions faced by aid workers.²

The statistics based on the ReliefWeb document database for the years 1997–2001 show that almost half (47 per cent) of the non-accidental deaths of aid workers were the result of vehicles or convoys being ambushed by bandits or rebel groups. Among the incidents of intentional violence, 74 per cent of the fatalities were local staff, and 26 per cent expatriate. More than half (59 per cent) of these victims worked for or on behalf of NGOs, while 41 per cent were employed or under contract to UN agencies.³

Staff security concerns have regularly been on the agenda of the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. Alarmed by the increasing frequency of threats to the safety of humanitarian personnel, a resolution of the Council of Delegates in Seville in November 1997 appealed to the Movement to urge nation states to ensure unimpeded access to

vulnerable people and to take steps to maximise the security of humanitarian workers. It reaffirmed the need to broaden awareness of the protective significance of the emblem. 'The key to protection and safety lies in the integrity of actions and respect for the Principles, not in armed guards and bullet-proof jackets. We must ensure workers receive appropriate training and the necessary advice to reduce risks,' it was urged.⁴

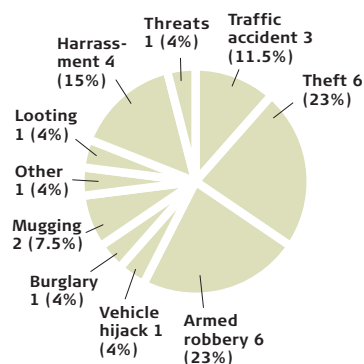
2. Safety and security in preparing delegates for a mission

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) study, common causes of anxiety among field workers included concerns about contract and employment, security, family and health issues.⁵

Results of the study support the requirement for the organisations to develop human resource policies that clarify the employment conditions and aim for best practice to support the well-being of staff members. The tasks, responsibilities and reporting lines should be clearly stated in a written job description.

It is emphasised at the Finnish Red Cross (FRC) that delegates should also be conscious of the need to develop their skills and competencies throughout a mission

REPORTED SECURITY INCIDENTS IN FEDERATION OPERATIONS 2002 PER NATURE OF INCIDENT



to enable them to fulfil the working requirements and adapt to the new working and cultural environment. Delegates willing to go on a mission should also make sure that their family relations are in order and that the family accepts their mission.

The recruitment procedure within the Red Cross, through its one-week basic training course, prepares future delegates for what awaits them on their mission. Personal safety (for example, health, accidents) and security issues (acts of violence) are also dealt with during the course, which is organised by a National Society (NS) in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Federation) and the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC). The course emphasises the importance of safety and security consciousness, the importance of cultural awareness when working in a multi-cultural development, and working relationships in the field.

The general briefing given to all delegates before a field mission is intended to prepare them. It includes information about the living and working conditions awaiting them in the field. All FRC delegates receive a briefing in security matters before their first assignment, regardless of whether it will be a development, a relief

or an emergency mission. Furthermore, the delegates are advised to take the initiative and actively seek out information on political and cultural matters that will deepen their knowledge of the country of assignment. It is also crucial for delegates to understand that their behaviour can affect both their own security and that of their colleagues. Thoughtless behaviour by any one individual can harm the whole delegation.

Before departure, all Red Cross delegates sign a code of conduct which clarifies what kind of behaviour is expected of them. The rules relate to matters which are directly linked to the security of a delegation, such as: respect for cultural customs and religious beliefs, abuse of power, use of alcohol, drunken driving, and clothing.

The information on safety and security is expanded on during a possible induction course given by the Federation or the ICRC and definitely within a delegation in the field where the briefing is, of course, region/country specific.

All delegates receive a personal health briefing before departure, their vaccination status is verified, they undergo a medical examination, and receive a personal medical kit. Psychological support can be offered before departure and, of course, after

the mission. Health issues and psychological support are considered very important, as health problems and stress can have immediate implications for the health of the staff member which in turn can affect team work and performance.

A debriefing takes place after a mission and security issues are discussed. Debriefings are an opportunity to check the individual's well-being and allow all concerned to learn from such feedback.

Since 1997, as part of its safety and security concept, the FRC has conducted special security training courses for delegates. Among other things, the course aims to familiarise participants with the security measures taken by the ICRC, the Federation and the FRC, to understand and know how to assess risks and threats to the security of a Red Cross operation, its personnel and beneficiaries, and to know the basic preventive and protective measures an individual aid worker can take to improve security.

To better prepare a person for their work it has been recommended that, before any field mission, all delegates attend certain training courses. These basic courses give a general picture and basic knowledge of Red Cross work, including security, organisational development, international hu-

manitarian law and first aid. It is worth discussing whether security training should become mandatory for all new delegates before their first assignment, especially if they will work in insecure circumstances.

3. Elements that affect safety and security in the field

Apart from personal behaviour, security is linked to different aspects of operations. It is linked to the communication and information sharing of the work the Red Cross is implementing in the region, the dissemination of Red Cross fundamental principles. Furthermore, the general acceptance of the Red Cross, its image and reputation, its range of contact with and support from the public, all have a role to play in security matters. Security is also linked to the transparency of all RC/RC activities.

Many other security problems exist for Humanitarian aid programmes, including: looting, warehouse security, management of stocks, etc. Programming decisions, analysis of needs, and exit strategies may all have consequences for the security of an operation and its staff.

In aid projects, aid agencies aim to be protected by the acceptance and appreciation of the local population. The aim is to make the population feel responsible



for the security of aid personnel by including local people and local authorities in the planning and implementation of the activities. It cannot be taken for granted that a population will appreciate the work of an aid agency. Aid agencies must work for such appreciation and merit it. Important elements of this are transparency in elaborating the criteria for the distribution of aid, continuous communication with the population and authorities, appropriate behaviour of the staff members, and good programming.⁶

Thus, the concept known as 'Do no harm' – by which aid programmes aim to reduce existing sources of tension within a society and to strengthen local capacities for peace – has direct implications for the security of humanitarian workers.⁷ Exist-

ing sources of tension, also known as 'dividers', can be reinforced by the way resources are transferred through aid programmes and by their implicit ethnical messages. For example, the preferential recruitment of local staff from people of only one ethnic group is likely to cause a worsening of the security situation for the aid workers. Weak programming or inappropriate operational policies can be perceived as being biased. Hence, the humanitarian aid organisation and its staff may end up as potential targets or victims of attack. Conversely, when aid is delivered in a way that reduces sources of tension and increases the local capacity for peace, the general environment for aid projects will most probably also improve. This allows aid-agency personnel to become part of the solution rather than the conflict.⁸

The meeting of heads of delegation and regional delegates of the ICRC, held in Glion in January 1997, drew up a number of recommendations regarding the development of practical and technical security measures. Among other things, the meeting recommended we 'extend the ICRC's capacity for action through local partners, through improved working methods, and by diversifying networks of contacts so as to increase the acceptability of humanitarian activities.' It also recommended a multicultural approach be developed for recruitment, training and assignment of field staff.⁹

It is also important that training in the humanitarian principles that guide the work of the organisation is given to all staff members and partners. If the principles of humanity, impartiality and neutrality are going to be respected and applied in daily work, they need to be known and adopted in depth by all.

4. Strengthening the role of safety and security in human resource management

The ICRC and the Federation are taking care of the security issues in the framework of multilateral aid operations and programmes within the RC/RC movement. Delegations of the two organisations are responsible for issuing updated security plans includ-

ing those for exit procedures, local hospitalisation and medical evacuations. They also provide assistance for bilaterally implemented projects through integrating the NS's in-country activities into their security management system. This has certainly made the Red Cross NSs less active in developing their own security policies. The fact that there has been no deaths or other serious incidents in the past is too easily used as an argument against investing in better safety and security management.

There are elements that might cause the NSs to start more actively including safety and security matters in their human resource strategies. Caring for personnel means that safety and security aspects are also taken into account. Giving a written commitment to the well-being of the personnel will increase the confidence of staff in the field. It also clarifies the responsibilities of the people in management, human resources and operations.

The NSs get funding from different donors who might put more emphasis on security matters and require safety and security policies for staff. Some donors might even contribute funding for security training and counselling. When the number of bilateral contracts increases, NSs are obliged to be clearer about responsibilities. It is also foreseen that there will be

more regional and national experts working for the donor societies and this will require us to check security policies. Many agencies still allow their local staff to continue working in unsafe situations after international personnel have been evacuated. Insurance companies also appreciate clear safety and security guidelines.

To avoid legal problems, each agency working in a conflict zone must be able to prove that the protection of its personnel is of the highest priority. Apart from material losses, damage to the public image and reputation of the agency could be significant. Hence, security awareness and risk minimisation are not only important in relation to being responsible for staff but should also be portrayed to the public and to donors as a prerequisite for working in conflict areas.¹⁰

The organisations need to consider a whole range of issues when they place personnel to work in emergency/relief operations and development programmes. To work effectively and responsibly, the organisations must have a safety and security policy.

What is a safety and security policy? Van Brabant has defined it as 'a key statement acknowledging risk, the responsibility of individual staff members and of the organ-

isation to reduce risk, and the fundamentals of how the organisation intends to do so'. The safety and security policy is a signal to all stakeholders, staff, trustees, management, partners and donors that the organisation takes the safety and security of its staff seriously. It also obliges management to act, and legitimises the allocation of staff time and other resources to improving safety and security management. It expresses the commitment of the organisation, and thereby becomes a key reference for accountability. In other words, it makes safety and security an organisational and corporate issue rather than an operational one.¹¹ Thus, senior management needs to be involved in the development of the policy.

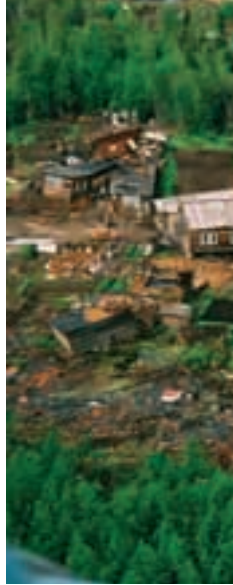
Van Brabant makes some suggestions for the contents of a safety and security policy. Briefly, they should include three headings as in the following extracts.¹²

-
- GENERAL INTRODUCTION,
DEFINITIONS AND BASIC PRINCIPLES:**
- a general statement acknowledging risk in aid work;
 - a clarification of what is meant by safety and security;
 - basic principles in the organisation's philosophy and practice with regard to security management (the pillars of its safety and security philosophy and practice).



YAKUTIA

In May 2001, severe floods in Eastern Siberia inundated 87 settlements in Yakutia, where 12,000 houses were damaged, 407 km of road were rendered unusable, and 160 bridges washed away.





BASIC PRINCIPLES IN RELATION TO EXTERNAL FACTORS:

- a statement on the basic position of the organisation towards national laws and local culture and customs.

Basic principles of the relationship between individual staff members and the organisation:

- a statement of the responsibilities and freedoms of individual staff members, notably with regard to the right not to go into a danger zone or to withdraw themselves from such without prejudice to their careers; the obligation to adhere to the personal code of behaviour; the obligation to report incidents and to alert other agencies to potential threats; the mandatory nature of security guidelines and disciplinary action in case of breach.

- a statement of the responsibilities and obligations that the organisation accepts with regard to the security of their staff, in relation to:

- a commitment to include a risk assessment in any general assessment;
- who decides to go into/return to a danger zone;
- who decides to withdraw from a danger zone;
- a commitment to develop competence in security management/incident survival;
- the need for security planning and crisis preparedness;
- the responsibility of management, and the precept that tasks can be delegated but not responsibility;
- a commitment to incident analysis;
- a commitment to provide insurance cover;

- a commitment to manage stress (including cumulative stress);
- a commitment to provide full medical and psycho-social support;
- the extent of the organisation's commitment, in case of arrest, abduction, or sexual assault, to the staff member concerned and his/her family;
- The extent of the organisation's commitment to nationally recruited staff.

It must be noted that attention should not focus solely on security in conflict zones, as many of the field personnel are working in development programmes far from such conflicts. It is important also to involve health and safety personnel to formulate the policy.

5. Conclusion

Security is often regarded only as a technical service to the operations and programmes. The human resource department is responsible for screening candidates for the basic training course, recruitment, organising security training, security briefing and debriefing - and learning from these. The operations are responsible for security planning, which should be part of the plan of action of any operation.

Historically, the security plan has been the pillar of the security management of many aid agencies. In practice, its production

often mainly fulfilled an administrative reduction of risk. Having identified the problem, more agencies are now developing guidelines for security planning against a generic template that needs to be adapted locally, putting more emphasis on the planning process and on a team approach. However, those most advanced in security management see the security plan as one tool among many. Maintaining alertness, active monitoring of the environment, proactive scenario thinking, analysing incidents, strengthening awareness, competence and discipline are other important components. The emphasis is on a management plan for security, at headquarters and at field level, rather than on the security plan.¹³

The human resource department has a very important role to play in ensuring safety and security standards in the organisation, and needs to be actively involved. Good safety and security management requires clarity about authority and responsibility, the lines of communication and decision-making. Good practice holds that authority and responsibility are vested in line managers, and that safety and security are managed 'close to the ground'.¹⁴

In general, human resource issues should be seen as a whole. The explicit human resource strategies and policies applied, ultimately affect the success of the whole op-

eration or programme. As part of good human resource management it is important to develop a safety and security policy in order to clarify the decision-making process.

Notes

1 King, Dennis: *Paying the Ultimate Price: Analysis of the deaths of humanitarian aid workers (1997–2001)*, 15 January 2002 (www.reliefweb.int).

2 Gent, Mike: *Weighing up the risks in aid work*, ODI HPN Report, 5 November 2002 (www.odihpn.org).

3 King, Dennis: *Paying the Ultimate Price: Analysis of the deaths of humanitarian aid workers (1997–2001)*, 15 January 2002 (www.reliefweb.int).

Note: The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies reported 30 incidents in 2001 (compared to 131 in 1996) when the total number of delegates in the field was 677. Around 13 per cent of the total were traffic incidents and 30 per cent thefts. Source: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, *International safety and security workshop in Finland*, 10–16 June 2002.

4 Daily Bulletin, Council of Delegates, 28 November 1997 (www.ifrc.org).

5 Press Release WHO/51, 9 July 1998 (www.who.int).

6 Deutsche Welthungerhilfe: *Working Paper on a Workshop 3 – Key Elements to Security Management in Conflict Situations*, *Aid in Conflict; Conflict in Aid*, 30–31 May 2002.

7 The concept originally introduced by Mary B. Andersson: *Do no Harm: How Aid can Support Peace – or War*, London, 1999.

8 Deutsche Welthungerhilfe: *Working Paper on a Workshop 3 – Key Elements to Security Management in Conflict Situations*, *Aid in Conflict; Conflict in Aid*, 30–31 May 2002.

9 Schmidt Frank: *Recommendations for improving the security of humanitarian workers*, *International Review of the Red Cross* no 317, p.152–155, 30 April 1997 (www.icrc.org).

10 Deutsche Welthungerhilfe: *Working Paper on a Workshop 3 – Key Elements to Security Management in Conflict Situations*, *Aid in Conflict; Conflict in Aid*, 30–31 May 2002.

11 Aid Workers Network: *Suggested content of a security policy based on 'Mainstreaming the Organisational Management of Safety and Security'* by K. van Brabant, May 2002 (www.aidworkers.net).

12 Ibid.

13 Van Brabant, Koenraad, *Mainstreaming Safety and Security Management in Aid Agencies in HPG Briefing Number 2*, ODI, London, March 2001 (www.odi.org.uk).

14 Ibid.





Conflicts between and within cultures – new trends

JOUKO KELONEVA, ANALYST, MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR

One of the aims of this article is to provide some background information and food for thought about conflicts for people who are active in international humanitarian aid work, people who are preparing and must adjust themselves to operate in difficult environments, sometimes even in dangerous ones. Red Cross operations often take place in such problematic areas. The world has changed during recent decades. The nature of conflicts, criminality and political violence has also changed radically, and this often directly influences whether or not humanitarian tasks can be carried out successfully. It is worth asking, why the world is as it is, in what respect it has changed, what should we understand about our operational environments, and what should we take into consideration when preparing our-

selves for humanitarian operations. Today, it is more important than ever to realise that in a larger context the right perception of such realities (or the lack of it) is also a security issue. Here, again, awareness is crucial.

From conflicts between nation states to conflicts between cultures

For over 400 years, the nation states of the West – Britain, France, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Germany, the United States, and others – formed a multi-polar system within Western civilisation. They interacted, competed and fought wars with each other. At the same time they also expanded, conquered and strongly influenced other civilisations.

During the Cold War, global politics became bipolar and the world was divided into three parts, composed of Western, communist and the Third World countries. A group of mostly wealthy societies, led by the United States, was engaged in an ideological, political, economic and military competition with a group of somewhat poorer socialist/communist societies associated and led by the Soviet Union. Much of the conflict between these two power players occurred in Third World countries which were often poor, lacked political stability, were newly independent and claimed to be non-aligned.

In the late 1980s the communist world collapsed and the Cold War international system became history. Peoples and nations tried to answer the most basic question humans face: Who are we? They answered that question in the traditional way human beings have always answered, by referring to the things that mean a lot to them: people define themselves by their ancestry, religion, language, history, values and customs. They identify with cultural groups, tribes, ethnic and religious communities, nations and at the widest level, civilisations. People use politics not just to enhance their interests but also to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not, and

often only when we know who we are against. As a result, it can be seen today that in the post-Cold-War world the most important distinctions among peoples are not ideological, political or economic but cultural. Professor Samuel P. Huntington has issued his thesis of *Clash of Civilisations* in which he states that although power has always counted in international relations, culture has become an essential part of it.

Nation states are to remain the principal actors in world affairs. As in the past, their behaviour will be shaped by the pursuit of power, but it will also be influenced by cultural preferences and differences. The most important groupings of states are no longer the three blocks of the Cold War but a number of major civilisations, says Huntington. According to Huntington, the major civilisations are: Western, African, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, and Japanese. In this new world, local politics is that of ethnicity; and global politics is that of civilisations. The rivalry of superpowers is replaced by the clash of civilisations. The most important and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities. Tribal wars and ethnic conflicts will occur within civilisations.

Henry Kissinger, former U.S.A. Secretary of State, has noted that 'the international system of the twenty-first century will contain at least six major powers – the United States, Europe, China, Japan, Russia, and probably India – as well as several medium-sized and smaller countries.' Kissinger's six major powers belong to five very different civilisations. In addition, there are important Islamic states whose strategic locations, large populations and natural resources make them influential in world affairs.

Václav Havel, former President of the Czech Republic, has observed that 'cultural conflicts are increasing and are more dangerous today than at any time in history,' and Jacques Delors, former President of the Commission of the European Union, has agreed that 'future conflicts will be sparked by cultural factors rather than economics or ideology'.

From single-issue conflicts to multi-issue antagonisms

International and internal conflicts used to be about control of a geographically definable territory, mostly in relation to its independence from colonial rule or the replacement of an existing government by a new one, usually abiding by a different political conviction or ideology. In Afghan-

istan, however, things became rapidly more complicated. From rising against a foreign-imposed government, armed groups soon split along religious and ethnic lines and started to fight each other as fiercely as they had previously fought the common enemy. When the latter collapsed, inter-group fighting continued.

In Africa, decolonisation was based on artificially delimited colonial territories, whose borders cut across ethnic communities and within which often irreconcilable ethnic groups were made to live together. Thus tribalism has become a ferment which hinders efforts at nation-building. Many internal conflicts and emerging conflict situations in African countries are based on ethnic, religious and cultural antagonisms.

From organised conflicts to uncontrolled violence

The traditional definition of armed conflict requires the presence, on both sides, of organised armed groups facing each other in open fighting and obeying a recognisable command structure. The leadership of armed groups or other movements have control over their followers at every stage of a conflict. If they agree to a cease-fire or a peace deal, they are usually able to impose it.

The international community itself no longer makes a distinction between organised violence and the collapse of any kind of order. It has tried to intervene to protect and save innocent victims of both parties. But separating the combatants and killers from their victims is becoming ever more difficult. Thus, large parts of the humanitarian laws of armed conflict risk will become irrelevant if there is no agreement to apply them in all situations of violent conflict and no authority to enforce their implementation.

Generalised violence and banditry

Increasingly, over the last few years, one has witnessed situations in which violence

runs out of control. Organised movements either lose control over their fringe areas or split into irreconcilable factions. For instance, in Africa violence has led to a complete collapse of institutions, the original conflict parties have split, and banditry and armed conflicts have become indistinguishable. Such tendencies could be noted in Somalia, where clans split into ever-smaller groups, some of which have turned to unadulterated banditry.

In an increasing number of situations those who are officially leaders no longer fully control those whom they claim to lead. Smaller, undisciplined or openly dissident groups tend to act on their own, often sabotaging whatever arrangements their leaders have agreed to. As the difference between banditry and fighting among organised groups is vanishing, it becomes ever more difficult to distinguish organised fighting from random violence, which can range from occasional acts of terrorism to mass killings.

Challenges to international organisations – importance of impartiality

Conflicts, banditry and other forms of criminality in the field where humanitarian organisations and their individual workers operate, constitutes a serious challenge to them. One of the most important prereq-



uisites for the work of the personnel of various humanitarian organisations is the existence of unreserved and adequate support of the host government, other relevant organised local authorities and beneficiaries. Unpredictable and chaotic operational environments create risks which must be seriously taken into account. Here the key word is *impartiality*.

For the United Nations, active military intervention in international and internal conflicts creates a problem of maintaining the position of an impartial representative of the international community. In Somalia and Bosnia, UN forces were labelled as external enemies by one or more parties to the local conflict and accused of taking sides. One major and worrying consequence of a similar situation is that international bodies which are providing humanitarian relief or other forms of assistance may also be perceived as partial and may be actively prevented from playing their role. In an extreme case, such a situation can become a concrete security threat against the health and lives of individual humanitarian workers.

However, if humanitarian institutions succeed in getting their impartiality and overall credibility widely accepted, they can become the last outposts of the international community in places where all local struc-

tures have collapsed and anarchy reigns. They can then become conduits of international assistance and provide channels of contact that might otherwise be impossible. It has become obvious that success in this respect can only be gained at grass-roots level and with enormous patience. This approach has been adopted by some humanitarian organisations and in particular the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This has led to the gradual build up of the confidence of fighters and their leaders in the impartiality and truly humanitarian aims of the ICRC and its delegates, who are often the only ones able to remain in trouble spots. Unfortunately, such a unique position can attract representatives of some conflicting parties to force the ICRC and its delegates to leave, thus securing a near total blackout of information about their activities.

Trends in international terrorism

I will not, in this paper, go deeper into the phenomenon of terrorism, its sources and other characteristics. I will refer briefly only to latest developments. Touching on it in this context is necessary due to the fact that it is a 'hot' issue of today and terrorism as such is often a consequence of an ongoing conflict and sometimes a factor in the creation of new ones. It could even be called a manifestation of a conflict.

Terrorism has changed in a fundamental way. Terrorism in the 60s, 70s and even the 80s was rooted in gaining publicity and public attention for the group instigating the attack. Often, innocent civilians were not targeted. It was largely about spreading an ideological or geo-political message. The terrorists often claimed responsibility for their acts. In the past, terrorist groups were recognisable mostly as collections of individuals belonging to an organisation with a well-defined command and control system. Counter-terrorism thinking was based on the fact that one could 'negotiate' with terrorists and that they wanted to survive the encounter.

Even in the 90s, some acknowledged terrorism experts were of the opinion that 'terrorists want a lot of people watching, and a lot of people listening, but not a lot of people dead'. The same people said, about scenarios involving the deliberate dispersal of toxic radioactive material, that 'it doesn't appear to fit the pattern of any terrorist actions. They have tended to be aimed at producing immediate dramatic effects, a handful of violent deaths, not severe illnesses, and certainly not a population of ill, victims seeking revenge . . .'

Increasingly, in recent years, such assumptions have been called into question by terrorist attacks that have either involved

a weapon of mass destruction (Tokyo subway system, March 1995), or caused a large number of fatalities (New York, September 2001). No-state terrorists of the late 90s and in this new twenty-first century no longer seem concerned about public opinion of them. Instead, they seemed concerned only with increasing the body-count of their perceived enemies. And, to further complicate matters, they themselves have no expectation of surviving their own attack. Also, terrorists of today do not necessarily claim responsibility for their acts. On the contrary, they often engage in spreading misinformation about who might have carried it out.

Terrorism and psychological manipulation

Boaz Ganor, the Executive Director of the International Policy Institute for Counter-Terrorism (ICT), has examined terror as a strategy of psychological warfare and stated that modern terror organisations invest much time, effort, and extensive resources into it.

Terrorists carefully observe their target population to find weaknesses and cracks in the society which can be widened or exploited. They study the target country's media to learn how best to get their threats across and how to magnify the fears of the

population and stimulate criticism of the government and its policies.

A terror organisation knows from the outset that it will not achieve its goals by terror attacks alone. It must enlist the help of its victims themselves in gaining its objectives. A victory that would be impossible by military means is thus brought within reach through psychological warfare. Such policy in action is the effect which a terror attack has on the minds of those members of the target population who were not directly hit.

Personalising the attack

The influence of 'personalising the attack' can be seen immediately after a terror attack has taken place in a busy street, crowded shopping centre, the discotheque in Bali, or in the heart of New York City. The immediate reaction of many people upon hearing of such an attack is: 'I was there last year!' or 'My brother lives there!' People have a natural tendency to seek a

personal connection to events – a tendency of which terrorist organisations are well aware.

By such 'personalising' of terror attacks the effect on the target population is made to extend beyond the immediate victims, to those who weren't even close to the area of the incident. The message conveyed – even when totally unfounded – is highly dangerous. Members of the target population come to believe that only by chance were they safe from harm and that such chance cannot be counted upon next time. Of course, statistically, such fears have no connection to reality. The likelihood of being harmed in a terror attack is less than the likelihood of being harmed in a traffic accident. In fact, the chance of dying of a serious illness is far greater than the chance of being even slightly injured in a terrorist attack. Nonetheless, by using psychological manipulation, the terrorists succeed in creating a disproportionate amount of fear and restlessness in relation to the actual threat. They are masters in creating irrational panic. While the physical damage caused by terrorism may be statistically less than that of traffic accidents or other mishaps, the atmosphere created by a terrorist act casts a greatly magnified shadow over the mind of each and every member of the target society.

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Relevant information and communication are tools for safety and security in disaster areas

The many roles in conflict arenas and role casting in the theatre of war

HANNU-PEKKA LAIHO, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, FRC

Introduction

People who work in environments of crisis and catastrophe must possess a complex mix of professional skills. It's not enough to be a good doctor, refugee worker or administrator. To succeed you must have an all-round ability to function,

to observe the various activities and interest groups that influence a situation, and to process all the information rationally.

When it comes to safety and security, it is vital to have a good knowledge of the political, ethnic, religious or cultural background of the area and the changes tak-

ing place. In information gathering, it is of prime importance to understand the role and behaviour of the media. Relevant information has to be filtered out from biased propaganda. In this article I shall discuss the influence of the media in disseminating information relevant to security, as well as information gathering (or 'environmental scanning') as a security-enhancing process.

The media, particularly the English language press, tend to use theatrical terms when reporting on crisis areas, as if the whole process of conflict or crisis were a drama unfolding on a stage. This has been especially noticeable as the war against terror, launched after the events of 11 September 2001 in New York, is building up to a war in Iraq. The same process was apparent in Kosovo, where a humanitarian disaster unfolded in 1999. The terms are also familiar to officers leading the military operations. Generals and press staff appearing at public briefings regularly referred to the 'theatre of operation/war', and to 'actors', when they were speaking of Kosovo and the air strikes against Yugoslavia, and of the organisations or people involved there.

Thus, it seems pertinent to try to analyse the various roles taken by different organisations active in a disaster area. One fo-

cus might be the 'role', 'content', or 'function' that the media – that is, journalists – assign to the different actors. Relief organisations and aid workers are ascribed specific roles, as are the other actors in areas of crisis or disaster.

Why, then, is this scrutiny of the different roles and contents important?

Since 1978, I have worked as a journalist reporting on international disasters and conflicts. All through the seventies, eighties and nineties, I followed the Cambodian civil war, the famines in the Horn of Africa, the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the war in Kuwait and the Balkan crisis. In addition to my work as a journalist, I have worked for almost four years as an information officer of the International Red Cross in the Balkans during the war in Bosnia and in Eastern Europe in connection with the 1999 Kosovo crisis.

In the course of this work I have noticed that reporters tend to structure conflicts through the interest groups, parties and organisations involved. These frames of reference are needed to present a coherent view to readers or viewers, but also because they facilitate writing the report itself. By giving clearly defined roles to the different parties, a complex political and

social conflict is made to seem a structured chain of events.

To understand this casting and the background to the assigned role is of vital importance to the security of aid workers; for example, when the local media engage in biased criticism of a relief operation. The frames of reference have thus been chosen in order to make the report or news item more understandable, the story clear. In most cases the journalist's job is to structure the surrounding world and its events, to function as its interpreter. Of course there are also cases where journalists directly channel the propaganda of some interest group, a government, a guerrilla group, or some other organisation.

The 'role maps' or frames of reference used by journalists should not distort the content of what is being reported. The framework should not lead the reader or viewer astray, but this is always a very real risk. According to studies by the University of New York and by the Princeton Survey Research Associates, the choice of a reference framework may endanger the balance of reporting as well as imbue the report with implicit meaning or values. Some news items are always presented in the same frame of reference. In leading US newspapers a third of the news on the

front page contains an element of polarity or competition: a conflict between two parties, winners versus losers, good versus bad. (Rosen, 1999).

Taken to extreme, this may lead to a situation where news is presented in propagandistic way in black and white as a factual series of events. This serves to support solutions chosen by those in power rather than to present a balanced view of the consequences of actions taken.

This was the conclusion drawn by Stig Nohrstedt, who studied the US coverage of the war in Kuwait. The American press was favourably inclined towards the United States, President George Bush and the Western coalition, and less favourable when it came to Iraq and President Hussein. The military aspects of the situation were emphasised, and initiatives for negotiation and the role of the UN were played down.

This perspective seemed to have a wider impact. During the first stages of the Gulf War the Swedish and Finnish media stressed the importance of the UN in solving the conflict, but as the war dragged on, they shifted towards the American view. (Nohrstedt & Ottesen, 2001).

One of my own hypotheses is that in the media's coverage of a crisis, relief organisations and aid workers, especially outside the conflict area itself, are often used as mouthpieces of the victims to describe the human suffering, and as mediators of political balance in armed conflicts. They are made to function as a kind of referee, interpreting among other things humanitarian law and human rights agreements. To draw a role map may clarify a complicated chain of events, but what happens, if the preassigned roles don't fit, do not reflect reality or if the roles significantly change? Examples of this are the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) led by Yasser Arafat.

In 1999, the KLA was presented in the Western press as the legal defence army of the Albanians in Kosovo, although a few years earlier they had described it as an anarchist terrorist organisation.

The same kind of shift has happened in the case of the PLO. In the seventies – for example, in relation to the strike against the Munich Olympics on 5 September 1972 – the PLO was unequivocally presented as a terrorist entity. A couple of decades later, the PLO had been transformed into the leading political representative of the people of Palestine. Now, in the first years

of the 21st century, the organisation is again being branded as a terrorist group, especially in Israel and the United States.

The changing role of the news media

In the early seventies, the Finnish media analyst Pertti Hemanus wrote that part of the mass media is openly propagandist, while another part functions as latent or hidden propaganda. This is called indoctrination. Such covert influence strengthens common social attitudes and beliefs. There are many basic examples of covert moulding of our thinking. Presentation of world events is often skewed to a Western viewpoint in the news. Entertainment and advertising show people living a middle class existence.

The world as presented by the media does not seem to have changed very much in 30 years, at least not in relation to the need for news reporting to be objective. Hemanus has pondered this question and notes that Western journalistic culture traditionally upholds the norm of objectivity – taking sides is not allowed in the choice of news items, its content, or its journalistic presentation.

But is such objective reporting possible? Hemanus clearly thinks the journalistic

culture itself makes wholly objective reporting an impossibility. He takes no stand, however, on the normative question of whether or not striving towards such objectivity is desirable.

Striving for truth, balance, and the presentation of multiple views, are issues journalists have always grappled with. What this soul-searching and debate has led to is another matter entirely.

During the 1990s, the mass media – and news reporting – are said to have veered sharply in the direction of entertainment. This is a result of commercial competition. The trend towards infotainment/entertainment came to a sharp halt, at least in the United States, with the terrorist strike against the World Trade Center towers on

11 September 2001. Television news, in particular, became more serious and fact orientated. But only for a while.

Four months after the events in New York the US media had returned to their old ways, giving less space to experts and more to opinion, speculation and comment. As a result, the public's trust in the news media has collapsed. In September 2001, 56 per cent of Americans found the news reporting excellent, in November the number was down to 30 per cent.

The reasons for this breakdown in trust are that 'the news' moved abroad and became more complex, but also the US government and its department of defence have severely restricted the journalists' access to information. A third reason is to do with



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money. For financial reasons, the large television companies and publishing houses have cut back their teams reporting on the war on terrorism.

Analysts find it significant, that the public started to lose interest in news reporting, although the press and television were unanimous in supporting the government's policy. It can indeed be inferred that the media can best preserve the trust of the public by functioning as an independent agent for the dissemination of information. The globalisation of news coverage seems to be of vital importance. Up until the 1980s the analysis of information media was focused on national news and information and the influence these had on national culture and so on. The unit of analysis was one person, or one nation. International media were seen as outside – foreign – influences. Globalisation and the electronic media – 24-hour satellite channels, the Internet, mobile communi-

cation – has changed this nation-centric thinking in about a decade. International news is instantly available to many nations. The CNN news channel can be seen simultaneously by 850 million people. Global news therefore has totally new audiences, international messengers and even wholly new social frames of reference. Internationalism has become a psychologically effective reality.

The relief industry and the humanitarian aid market

Humanitarian aid workers are well advised to remember that not everyone sees relief work as the selfless helping of others. Securing, storing, transporting and distributing relief material involves many factors, and the local press, in particular, may show a lively interest in such things.

The ultimate aim of humanitarian relief work is of course to help people in need.

But this is not the only facet of the work in relief operations. For example, during the bombing of Yugoslavia, a decision was made to help cities which were then in opposition to the ruling government. Food and energy supplies were thus given a political dimension.

Specific donations are often linked to certain products and purchases. During the war in Bosnia in 1993–95 considerable food aid, mostly grain, was brought into the area. This grain was cited at world market prices and the aid shipment was given a rather large monetary value. In reality, the cereal was surplus grain stores to be got rid of.

Many states have granted aid funds – for example to Bosnia – which are linked to domestic purchases. The humanitarian aid shipments are part of international business and trade. This can lead to tensions. The humanitarian aid market represents about 50–55 billion US dollars a year (Girerdet, 2000).

Business and trade linked to relief shipments are often determined by the publicity around specific projects and operations.

The conflicts and the decisions surrounding them also have many other economic links,

which aid workers in the field should be aware of.

Complex armed conflicts, natural disasters, and humanitarian aid operations

The Finnish analyst Katarina West recently noted that a glance at the areas of conflict and crisis will show that they are run almost exclusively by the UN, The International Red Cross, humanitarian non-governmental agencies, peace-keeping forces and those who fund relief operations. In evaluating the future of Afghanistan, for example, it is to be remembered that whatever political situation unfolds, the relief organisations will play a vital role in the country.

The West uses the term *humanitarian shadow state*, where a multinational, technocratic community of relief workers and administrators have taken over and replaced the splintered organs of state. This is a topical issue, but the West confuses some of the terms, and shows that despite their expertise they apparently have insufficient knowledge of the mandates of the different organisations in crisis areas.

Such a mixed bag of mandates misreported in the media can very quickly affect the security situation in a relief operation, and



INDIA

A devastating earthquake struck the Indian state of Gujarat in January 2001, killing over 20,000 people and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless.



misunderstandings can sometimes stop or hinder the whole project.

It's important to remember that some international organisations operate on a purely political mandate. This applies to the UN and its organisations, the EU and the EU's humanitarian aid effort.

Inter-governmental organisations, like NATO, also operate on a political mandate. Some international organisations have a special mandate based on international agreements. The best example is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which is an internationally recognised neutral organisation whose status is guaranteed by the 189 signatories to the Geneva Convention. The status of the Red Cross differs from other organisations in other ways as well. Apart from the Red Cross there are dozens of private relief organisations that receive state funding from different nations. The religious aid organisations constitute a sector of their own, and in addition there are thousands of other non-governmental organisations functioning as relief agencies for different reference groups.

Why is it important for aid workers to recognise and know the mandates and backgrounds of different organisations?

In an international crisis the aid organisations are a significant source of information for journalists. If the data they provide isn't put in the right framework, the assessment of the situation may be wrong. The mandates of the organisations and agents also influence what they do and what they leave undone.

The media's role in the coverage of conflicts, refugee crises and natural disasters

For as long as they have existed, the press and other media have reported on wars and armed conflicts, great natural upheavals, refugee crises and floods. And they have always been blamed for having influenced wars in one way or another, whether by contributing to the build-up to them starting, or the way they subsequently develop.

The depth of the worst European crisis since the Second World War, the civil war in Yugoslavia has in many contexts been blamed on journalists. The media were central to the sowing of hate among different groups, to constructing images of the enemy, to the spread of lies and incitement of revenge. In all states of socialist Yugoslavia both electronic media and the press were tightly controlled by those in power. It was thus relatively easy to steer the writing and emphasis of media workers in the 1980s

and especially after the outbreak of civil war. The reporters themselves found it to be their patriotic duty to support nationalistic tendencies, in Bosnia as well as Serbia and Croatia.

The role of the press in an escalating crisis is nothing new. For example, the Spanish-American war in 1898 is said to have been fanned into flame by the self-conscious arrogance of the American newspapers.

Decades later some American politicians and military leaders claimed that unpatriotic commentary on the Vietnam war in the American media was to blame for their defeat. And nothing seems to have changed, especially in the United States. In 2001, the media were castigated for uncritical support of the political and military leadership, when they lauded the war against terrorism declared by President George W. Bush. Allegedly, the media have played a strategic part in the US administration's build-up of the operation against Iraq.

Although the media have always been important as reporters of conflicts and disasters, it is only over the past few decades that there has been serious discussion about the media, in fact, having significant power and direct influence over the

birth, development and solution of conflicts.

This debate has been fuelled by the rapid development of the electronic media and information technology during the last decade. Nowadays, television cameras can zoom in on aeroplanes leaving their bases in real time, and a few hours later on the bombs falling over, for example, Yugoslavia or Afghanistan. This means that, in many cases, those being bombed can watch their own fate unfolding on international news channels as it happens.

The intensified news reporting has also led the various participants in conflicts to make use of their own media to spread their view, that is their own propaganda. After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 the war began in the Persian Gulf. It has been called the first real television war. For the first time, American television reporters were able to file reports live from an enemy capital, and for the first time representatives of an enemy government were able to speak directly to American politicians and at the same time a broader public.

In the early stages of the war in Yugoslavia and indeed during the whole Balkan crisis the local media had a pivotal war-mongering role, inciting hatred and enmity. The international media played a different

role. During the war in Bosnia the reporting by CNN, BBC and other international news and photo agencies significantly changed the Western view of the war. Only in retrospect has the debate begun over whether the presentation of the war in Bosnia was, in fact, all that it seemed to be in terms of old-fashioned news criteria: honest, balanced, neutral.

During the so-called Great Lakes crisis in Africa more than 500,000 people were killed and millions were made refugees. The president of Rwanda later admitted that he had effectively exploited the ignorance of the foreign correspondents and directed international opinion the way he saw fit. Osama Bin Laden – who, during the Afghan crisis, was named the world's number one terrorist – repeatedly sent video interviews out into the world by way of a television station in Qatar.

Just as the role of mass media in humanitarian crises has changed, the role of other agents in the arena of conflict and crisis – parties to the conflict, armies, intergovernmental agencies, international relief organisations – has also changed. As recently as in the 1970s, there were only a few international aid organisations in the world, but today there are hundreds of different agencies that spring into action when an international crisis occurs. For

example, at the end of 1999 there were 430 different relief organisations active in Kosovo.

The enormous rise in the number of relief agencies is dictated by the multiplication of funds directed to aid, but there is another reason. The organisations have learned to make use of the media to market their contributions.

Crisis journalism, with all it entails of military operations and relief efforts, has become part of the media's news 'entertainment'. There is reason to ask whether all those involved are professional enough in their activities, whether ethical ground rules are observed, and whether the work is sufficiently responsible.

The media's controversial role

'The heroic times of war correspondents are clearly over. Now they must decide for themselves whether to continue as mediators of propaganda, builders of myth or helpmeets to the warmakers. The media and the army have fought a long and bitter 30-year war and the army has won. After the Persian Gulf War, Kosovo and now Chechnya it is painfully clear that future wars will be reported in accordance to the strict norms of the witchdoctors of armies and governments. 150 years of independ-



ent war reporting has come to the end of the road.' Thus, the illustrious *Sunday Times* war correspondent Philip Knightley, author of the book *First Casualty*, commented on the changed role of the media in crisis reporting.

There are a few main reasons for this change. Even in the midst of crisis, commercial competition between news media continues. This lessens the desire or ability to withstand the military's restrictions on access to and dissemination of news. War correspondents often move quickly from crisis to crisis. The nature of their

work is such that obstacles, failures or difficulties in general are not analysed or stored.

Armies work in a totally different manner. They are institutions where a lot of effort and resources are used not only for advance planning but for recording the course of operations and later analysing and drawing lessons from the events.

Knightley contends that both the US and British military continually update their instructions and manuals regarding the role of journalists in a crisis and how to work

with correspondents and reporters. Every mistake as well as every successful move is analysed in detail.

During the war in Kosovo NATO had a meticulously planned information strategy, which even mapped out the rhythm of the daily briefings.

At the end of the war in 1999, when NATO marched into Kosovo, the troops were followed by 270 members of the press. In comparison, at the height of media interest in the Vietnam war, there was a maximum of 500 journalists covering the conflict. (Knightley, 2000).

The relationship between political decision-making and the media, known as the CNN phenomenon since the Gulf War ten years ago, has been significantly refined during the past decade. Political and economic powers are no longer at 'the mercy' of the media. World leaders make use of top scientists and expert psychologists in order to get the media to support their political and economic decisions.

We are thus currently in a situation where the media, quite often unwittingly, act as advocate for an interest group. It is disturbing that a working journalist may not even be aware of the fact that he or she is putting someone else's strategy to work.

News or entertainment?

The general public may not necessarily know where Bosnia is, or which groups are aggressors or victims in Rwanda, but it is the responsibility of the media to try to explain to them why they should know. They should also be able to explain such things in a way that makes them seem interesting and worth knowing. The seeds of lack of compassion lie in ignorance.

Accidents, crises and disasters always engender a lot of emotions, anger, fear, excitement, and even rage. The media make use of these emotions and may thereby knowingly or unwittingly create dangers for aid workers.

Dr Anu Mustonen of Finland has studied the emotional content of news reporting and the fact that the media present such a Ferris wheel of feelings.

In a state of heightened emotion, self-control may slip and rational thought become confused. Problems, conflicts and repellent things are at the heart of drama. The more the media public is made to suffer and fear for the characters in, let's say, a television soap, the more satisfying the relief when a solution is shown.

Factual material is also tinged with emotion. Our general news criteria stress emotional content, at least indirectly, since news is supposed to be novel, special, interesting. Conflict and negative feelings are underlined: good news is no news. In the media language of the West the world is seen through a problem frame, with weighty problems and danger more in evidence than positive things. A sedate, everyday existence does not contain enough experiences, surprises and feelings and it is not newsworthy. Emotional experience is born of identification and empathy.

Propaganda or truth?

Crisis always spawns propaganda. The concept is often linked to dictatorial rulers, which is why many people are surprised to find that almost all armies today have detailed and well researched manuals and guidelines for psychological warfare, operations pertaining to publicity and information.

John Merril, legendary for his thoughts on media ethics, has said it is hard to give a precise definition of propaganda, but in journalism propaganda might be to knowingly present something just a bit off the facts. Any partisan, fraudulent, irrational,

distortive or oversimplifying report from which facts are left out and a balanced view avoided is propagandistic.

The important thing is not always what has risen to the level of news but what has knowingly been left out. In field work, the person responsible for security must be especially aware of precisely that which is not necessarily news.

The Balkan wars, Bosnia or Kosovo, have been mentally very hard for many Western journalists. For the first time the refugee or victim has had a 'European' face. The cruelty and vicissitudes of war have also been brought home to many journalists, who have been faced with the killing of civilians, rape, and mass murders. Many reporters have asked themselves whether it is at all possible to remain an observer, coolly deferring to journalistic rules of ethics laid down in distant newsrooms. One of the main problems with those rules of ethics and the serving of truth is that no rule can say precisely what truth is. Another frustrating problem is that the ethical norms do not acknowledge the conflict between truth and ethics. What is the truth? Can a news story be true, if it leaves out certain facts? Or if the journalist clearly takes a stand? Can truth be only what is stated or known, or may that which is left unsaid also be the truth?

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Manipulating the messenger

The nature of armed conflicts has changed totally during the last decade. In the past, ideologies confronted each other, for example in Latin American countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador or Guatemala. The parties in the civil wars had clearly different views of how society should function. Although the wars were fought locally, their defining character was in a broader struggle between East and West. The Soviet Union or Cuba gave covert support to their chosen sides.

In former Yugoslavia, this constellation broke down in the beginning of the 1990s. Ideology no longer explained war. The crisis in Yugoslavia was diametrically different from the Central American conflicts, and it seemed to start a whole new type of conflict: Rwanda, East Timor, Central Africa, Niger. In this type of civil war the conflict is not contained within the borders of one state but spills over into neighbouring countries.

Another explanatory factor is the role of the media. Many civil wars are founded in hate and propaganda spread by the local media. Often the crisis smoulders and grows in secret, without outsiders noticing anything going on.

In the early stages of war in Bosnia, Chechnya or Rwanda there was hardly any country with a diplomatic or other representation in the area. The 'frames' for understanding the conflict were actually built by the first foreign correspondents' coverage. The reports by the first journalists to reach their stations were constructed from the materials these reporters then had. And whatever basic facts were wrong or misunderstood in these initial reports took a long time to correct.

The situation is probably unchanged. It seems probable that officials at the Finnish Foreign Ministry, if suddenly faced with a surprising development in some small Central Asian or African country, would have to rely on the framework given by the

international news agencies to get a grasp on the situation.

In an area without strategic significance, a crisis that has demanded a lot of victims may fester for quite some time before anyone takes notice. On the other hand, some small country may be designated important and is suddenly the focus of everyone's attention.

How to collect information – the process of environmental scanning

Being a successful, security cautious humanitarian aid worker often depends on an ability to collect information and adapt to a rapidly changing external environment. When it comes to sudden disasters or slowly developing trends in human suffering, the operation needs systems to collect and analyse information.

Multinational corporations have for years used highly sophisticated methods of environmental scanning to evaluate information. For some this has been a key to their success. Information means profit, a rising stock price and lavish bonuses for management! They know already today what is likely to happen tomorrow.

But, increasingly, the non-profit sector has adopted the techniques of environmental

scanning. The process has helped them in a rapidly changing world. But what exactly is environmental scanning?

It is not necessarily something completely new. Communicators and journalists do it every day, but often on an *ad hoc* basis. All of us can be better scanners. Environmental scanning reduces the random nature of the information flowing into the organisation. It focuses on relevant information that can be distributed immediately or used for planning.

Scanning is a kind of radar that systematically sweeps the world for new, essential information. The operators of that gathering process translate information into understanding and knowledge, which will help the organisation's security, actions, planning and decision-making. Scanning can provide important early warning signals to managers too.

The most common source of new information is the media and increasingly the Internet. Every day when we read the national or local newspapers, surf the web, listen to the radio or watch TV, we receive a lot of new information. Some of it could be used immediately but too often we forget to take action.

A few simple examples. Regular news about ethnic demonstrations or small clashes could be a signal that there might soon be a real war. New rules, regulations and decisions made by the government or local authority may significantly change the role and situation of a delegation.

One or two letters criticising the humanitarian operation in a newspaper might indicate that there is something wrong with its activities or at least that the image of operation might be changing. The letter could be an early warning sign that soon there will be more public criticism, or even demonstrations.

The main objectives of scanning are: detecting social, political, economic, humanitarian and ethical trends or events important to the movement; analysing potential threats, opportunities and changes implied by those trends; developing an orientation in the thinking of management and staff; alerting to trends that are converging, diverging, speeding up, slowing down or interacting.

But what environment should we monitor? You don't have the resources to monitor everything. Focus first of all on the core areas of activity and start with the custom-

ers and stakeholders; that is, issues relevant to beneficiaries, the authorities, politicians and donors. Then select the most important enterprises associated with a particular organisation. Finally, take the macroenvironment, where changes in the social, economic, political, and technical sectors affect us directly or indirectly.

Remember to monitor values, lifestyles and attitudes too.

Passive scanning is what most of us do when we read magazines and newspapers. However, the organisational consequences of passive scanning are that we do not systematically use information for action and planning and we miss many indications of change in the environment.

In active scanning, it is important to include information resources that represent different views of each social, economic, environmental and political sector.

The first step in establishing environmental scanning is to decide which level of scanning commitment is best for your organisation: irregular, periodic or continuous. Irregular systems are used on an *ad hoc* basis and tend to be crisis-initiated. Periodic systems are used when planners pe-

riodically update a scan, perhaps in preparation for a new planning cycle. Continuous systems use the active scanning mode of data collection to systematically assist strategic planning.

A quick way of getting started is to interview major decision-makers on the most critical trends and developments that could affect the institution. Use the interviews and conversations with your colleagues (including those at other institutions) to identify critical trends and developments. Also examine programme reviews, the last institutional self-study and the current master plan.

What do you look for? Seek signs of change. Review the social, political, economical, environmental and technical sectors, looking for signs of change. Look for signals of potential events on the horizon.

Look for forecasts by experts. Many national and international organisations and institutions provide regular forecasts. Look for indirect effects. It is important to remember that many trends or events that do not have direct implications for us nevertheless have second or third order effects.

Select the best statistical resources. For example: government ministries, UN agencies, the World Bank, the EU, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Write abstracts. These are excellent vehicles for crystallising thoughts and communicating what is known about changing trends and patterns. Be aware that there are few guidelines on how to do scanning. There are no hard and fast rules that lead to correct interpretations. The data do not speak for themselves. The skills, abilities, experience and judgements of the scanner are critical to interpreting data.

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Safety and security

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General

Safety and security are two different aspects of ensuring viable working conditions for a person or team during a mission.

In this paper, security relates to the protection of team members and/or their property from threats made towards them by other people. Security risks are usually high in complex emergencies but also when working in areas of natural disaster. Even where security risks are low, appropriate security measures must be set up according the level of risk.

Safety is related to working and living in a disaster area. Typical safety issues are fire protection, safety in traffic, health, food and water, unstable building structures, etc. Proper precautions must be taken to ensure the safety of every mission.

In general, the level of safety and security measures should be realistic and appropriate to each specific situation, and not set at a level higher than the circumstances warrant. Some people, especially those from safe and secure countries, are not always fully alert to the need for safety and security measures. Similarly, those who

work for long periods in an unsafe and insecure situation can become so accustomed to the heightened level of risk that their alertness to its dangers may diminish. However, it is essential that safety and security measures continue to be taken seriously and unrelentingly.

Basic safety and security must be built up before a mission. People who are to be sent out on a mission must be well prepared by training and education in safety and security.

Security

Security is more complex and often not as visible a threat as are the problems of safety. In this presentation it is not possible to give detailed and exact rules for security precautions to be taken within specific situations. However, it is wise to follow some general rules for security, such as:

BEFORE GOING INTO A COMPLEX EMERGENCY OR CONFLICT AREA:

- investigate, through different sources, the security situation within the country.
- get acceptance of your agency from all parties involved in the conflict (remember there are often rebels or other armed groups who are not accepted by anyone and with whom it is not always possible to negotiate).

- make an initial security plan which includes plans for emergency evacuation out of the area or country.
- nominate the security officer for your team.
- fully brief all members of the team.

IN THE AREA OF OPERATION:

- on arrival contact the Red Cross representative, the UN, the local authorities, and any other relevant organisation to find out about the local security situation (safe/unsafe areas and roads, etc.) and act accordingly.
- if authorisation is required to operate within a designated area, be sure to apply for and get it.
- in humanitarian operations refer to International Humanitarian Law if needed.
- make the security plan and rules for the field operation – procedures for field trips may differ depending on the situation. Make sure that every member of the field team knows what to do in case of emergency, and that headquarters is able to help the team when necessary.
- maintain constant vigilance by keeping informed of the security situation and any way it changes.
- ensure that every member of the team is always aware of the security rules and any changes in the situation.
- remain neutral and impartial, and follow your mandate.
- protect your personnel, property, camps, etc. by displaying your agency flag and emblems.
- do not set a regular pattern of activity or travel around the area, as such predictabil-

ity may endanger your team members. Always vary travel times and routes.

– at all times the team must know the whereabouts of each of its members and their estimated time of arrival in a target area or their return to headquarters. Telecommunications must be set up between team and base.

– prepare evacuation and relocation plans, including a clear designation of who will make the decision to evacuate or relocate the team.

Safety

Safety measures and precautions as well as security measures are meant to ensure safe working conditions in which every team member can carry out the work of the mission. As previously mentioned, safety problems are not only related to violence or aggressive behaviour towards the team or its individual members, but can also occur during normal daily work, travelling and living in the area. Every team must have a safety person. If he/she is not the team leader (who is anyway always in charge of overall safety and security) he/she can be a specialist in this area, and it is usually best that such an officer is made responsible for both safety and security.

Although safety and security are closely related issues and must always be dealt with together, sometimes the precautions needed to meet the required targets for

each can be in conflict with one another. For example, it may be necessary to fix bars in front of office or apartment windows and to block the exits to keep out unwanted visitors. Such measures will improve security but at the same time decrease safety levels by reducing the number of escape routes needed in case of fire or other emergency.

To deal with such problems, first identify risks and assess what danger and threats exist. In accordance with this assessment, make decisions about what measures and precautions must be given priority. If it is necessary to accept a less than ideal safety level in some sector then it is essential to find a way to compensate for that. For example, if there has to be a reduced level of fire safety, compensating measures must be taken both to minimise the risk of fire and to keep to a minimum the number of people who would be at risk in the event of a fire.

Health

Health is one of the basic issues for the team. If a member of the team becomes ill, not only does it mean the loss of his/her ability to work, but can also cause other members to leave their work to care for the sick person. In a worst case scenario sickness can jeopardise the whole mission.

BEFORE THE MISSION:

- there should be regular health screenings for members of the roster to ensure they remain in the best of health. Such screenings enable the early detection of medical problems which can cause difficulties in the field.
- a deterioration in public health conditions often accompanies an emergency and can increase the risk of team members contracting an illness. A vaccination programme for delegates must be set up and inoculations begun as soon as possible in any emergency situation.
- it is recommended that each team member maintains their own health data which indicates their own state of health and record of vaccinations.

DURING THE MISSION:

- in malarial areas all team members must receive malaria prevention treatment appropriate for the area. Preventive measures such as the use of mosquito nets, insect repellents and full-cover cloths are also recommended.
- all team members should have first-aid and medical kits appropriate to the situation.
- diet should be well balanced. Safe food is essential for all team members. Remember the dictum: cook it, peel it, or leave it. Avoid eating any food that you are not entirely sure is safe.
- drinking or using contaminated water is one of the main causes of illness in foreign countries. Bottled or otherwise packed drinks are usually safe. Whenever there is



any doubt about the safety of drinking water, it should be boiled or disinfected with a reliable system such as disinfectant tablets or by filtering. Safest of all is to treat water with a combination of all these methods before drinking it.

– personal hygiene is an important part of each member's welfare and health. Water used for oral and dental hygiene should be treated in the same ways as drinking water (see above). Bathing water may also be contaminated, even in the sea near the mouth of a river. Without reliable information about the safety of water, avoid bathing in it.

Fire safety

Fire is a dangerous hazard in houses, offices and other accommodation, and in camps. Fire in a house or camp will spread within minutes and allow only very limited time for escape. After five minutes in a serious fire, nobody will survive. Fire can have a variety of causes, including: the mishandling of open flame, short-circuits in overloaded electricity wires or damaged sockets, faulty heaters, cookers, fireplaces, etc., but in western cities manmade fires, arson, accounts for 30–50 per cent of all reported fires.

Measures to prevent fire damage can be divided into two phases. The first and best methods are to prevent fire or not to allow a fire to spread, and to ensure that every person knows where there are safe

escape routes to use in the event of a fire. Second is to extinguish the fire.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

– Handle open fires safely. If open fires must be used for cooking, lighting, heating, etc., in a house or camp, a safe place and safe equipment must be provided for it.

– Heaters and cookers must be safe and be handled properly.

– Handling and storing inflammable liquid or gas should be carefully planned. Storage should be outside of the house or camp or in an isolated place well away from inhabited tents or escape exits.

– Electricity wires must be checked. The local wiring may not be planned according your required consumption of electricity. Check the capacity and condition of the sockets if you have to use the local network. If you need your own generators, it is better to also use your own cables wherever there is any doubt about the cables in the house or camp's network.

– Fireproof materials should be used whenever possible. The use of fireproof material for tents in a camp is crucial to preventing the spread of fire.

– Exits from houses, offices and apartments. A safe house will have at least two different exits to a safe area or the open air. Lower floors are safer to be in than upper floors. In the event of fire, take a deep breath, hold it and walk quickly to the safe area.

– In a camp the distance between tents should be 8 metres to prevent the spread of fire from one tent to another and to allow enough space for personnel to escape in the

event of a fire. It is also recommended that a camp be set up with the tents arranged in blocks divided by lanes that can be used as maintenance and access routes inside the camp.

- Fire extinguishers and blankets should be brought from the home country if it is not certain that they will be available in the operation area.
- Prior to any mission, all team members must be trained to extinguish real fires with extinguishers and blankets.
- Extinguishers should be placed in any office, apartment or camp where team personnel work and live.
- In open tent camps, filled water buckets should be placed to provide fire extinguishing equipment.
- If a camp has guards they should all be trained to observe fire hazards and to act quickly in the event of fire.
- Information should be made available to everyone in a camp about how to handle fire safely as well as how and when to escape from it.

TO EXTINGUISH A FIRE:

- all team members must be trained to handle extinguishers. Everyone should know the position of their nearest extinguisher and how to use them in the event of fire.
- everyone should know how to contact the local fire brigade, if there is one, and do so as quickly as possible in the event of fire.
- in some cases it could be wise to train your own fire-fighting group for the area.
- in the event of fire, alert all the people in danger. Try to extinguish the fire. Close the

doors and the windows. Leave and help others to leave the burning building or area.

NEVER RE-ENTER A BURNING BUILDING.

In many instances it may not be possible to achieve the required level of fire safety. If all safety measures cannot be met then some way must be found to compensate for the shortfall. For example, if for security reasons the windows and exits must be blocked then other measures must be taken to ensure people's safety, perhaps by reducing the number of people working in or visiting a house, by stopping the use of open fires, and by relocating high risk activities such as cooking and smoking to outside the building, etc.

REMEMBER: FIRE SPREADS IN MINUTES, ITS SMOKE KILLS IN SECONDS.

Traffic

Road traffic has proved to be the cause of a high percentage of casualties in the field. Team members need to acknowledge this fact and remain alert to the potential dangers of traffic.

ROAD TRAFFIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Using a local driver is recommended in foreign areas and conditions.
- Always wear a safety belt.

- **If you must drive yourself, never drive when tired or after drinking alcohol, or if you feel unable to drive for any other reason.**
- **Check the vehicle carefully before driving it.**
- **Driving during hours of darkness is not recommended.**
- **Ensure all team members know how to act according to common rules in the event of an accident.**

Work related safety

Work related safety should to be kept at the same level as it is at home. In addition, all appropriate protective measures and equipment must be taken when in action in the field. Safety and protective devices should be taken along with all the other equipment carried by a team when they leave for a mission.

Safe environment

In many natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tropical storms and floods, the structures of buildings and other constructions will be damaged. Local people may continue to use their houses, bridges or roads but that does not mean they are actually safe to use. All too often, one sees families living in partly collapsed multi-storey buildings – a hotel may remain open even when some of its walls are damaged.

Many people are unwilling to leave their property behind or they feel insecure about leaving the area. For economic reasons, hotels and restaurants are often re-opened as soon as possible.

In any event it is safer to stay out of unchecked houses and not to use roads, bridges and other constructions, even though the locals are using them.

Conclusion

There are limiting factors for humanitarian operations, such as the issue of safety and security. If safety and security is not at a required level, the mission cannot be carried out.

The key issue is preplanning and training of personnel prior to any mission. Clear guidelines must be set for missions to follow. It is recommended that rules and regulations be collected together in a handbook or similar, where they will be easy to refer to and apply in the field.

The most important element of team safety and security is the personnel themselves: the real professionals, well-trained in safety and security issues. The safety and security officers who, together with others, have planned the mission are the best guarantee of a successful mission.





Security, health and stress in the field

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The risks humanitarian workers face today are very different from those faced as little as a decade ago. Increasingly, humanitarian workers are working in ever more complex political and social environments. Internal conflicts have largely replaced wars between states. Security risks now extend

beyond bombs, mines and bullets. The collapse of society and increased criminal activity have brought other types of threat. The Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) emblem does not always receive the respect and protection it used to engender. In fact, RC/RC delegates have gone from being

relatively protected by the emblem to, at times, becoming intentional targets. Living in such environments makes safety, good health and stress management vital considerations for field workers.

Besides the changing security trends in the field, workers also face hazardous health conditions. Among RC/RC delegates, malaria and road accidents are the major causes of death. Alcohol related accidents and illnesses are on the rise and HIV/AIDS is an ever-present threat.

Security and health go hand-in-hand, which makes it essential that RC/RC delegates are well prepared both physically and mentally before undertaking a mission. A well-prepared delegate, fully informed and equipped for a mission, will have fewer surprises and be less of a security risk for him/herself and others, including local staff. A delegate is more likely to perform better on the job, acclimatise to the new environment faster, and cope well with stress if s/he has had an all-encompassing briefing beforehand. Equipped with essential knowledge of and protective measures against the threats of international fieldwork, the delegate will feel more secure in the new environment and will know how s/he is expected to behave and carry out his/her work according to RC/RC principles.

What are the risks?

RISKS

- **Cumulative stress**
- **Malaria**
- **Food- and water-borne diseases**
- **Insect- and vector-borne diseases**
- **Risky behaviour**
- **Exacerbation of chronic diseases**
- **Accidents**
- **Injuries**
- **Violence**

Most of the time we live in a state of equilibrium with the micro-organisms and climatic conditions in our home environment. Changes brought about by unfamiliar micro-organisms, fatigue, stress or climate can upset that equilibrium and bring on illness. International travel can further upset this equilibrium.

Stress is an unavoidable reality of going on a mission. Everything – the environment, housing, work, colleagues, friends, the climate – is likely to be new or different. This is normal, basic stress. The challenge is how to cope with the everyday stress brought about by such differences. Cumulative stress is caused by prolonged exposure to stress factors (work and/or personal). It can result in all the normal

coping mechanisms becoming exhausted, and lead to 'burn out'. The last type of stress to which delegates may be exposed is traumatic or critical incident stress, caused by involvement in situations which are outside those of normal, everyday experience. In such situations, a delegate perceives their life to be in immediate danger, or they have experienced or witnessed violence or disaster.

Drug resistant malaria is on the rise in many parts of the world. Country or region-specific food- and water-borne diseases as well as insect- and vector-borne diseases may pose serious health hazards. Pre-existing medical conditions such as chronic respiratory disease, immunosuppression due to medication or HIV infection, diabetes, inflammatory bowel diseases, epilepsy, chronic hepatitis, cardiovascular or renal diseases may be exacerbated by international travel. Altitude and climate can pose health risks to the unprepared traveller. Accidents, injuries and violence are significant risks regardless of where you are, but humanitarian workers are becoming more at risk due to the increasingly violent circumstances in which they work. In these times of increased criminality many delegates around the globe risk being the intended target of house break-ins, banditry, street crime, rape, assault, kidnapping, and even extortion and bullying.

A delegate's risk behaviour can easily have catastrophic consequences for him/herself and others. Casual and unprotected sex, alcohol, too much work, not observing the customs and traditions of the host country all make a delegate more vulnerable to other risk factors.

Road accidents are one of the major causes of death and injury among RC/RC delegates. Around the world, many factors contribute to making driving conditions dangerous. In many developing countries the traffic conditions, including a complex mix of cars, buses, trucks and animals on the road, breached traffic laws, and poor surface conditions, all contribute to making roads dangerous for drivers, passengers and pedestrians.

Prevention / management

Delegate selection is probably the primary and most important criteria for assuring a 'good' mission for our delegates. Careful recruitment and screening is crucial to ensuring the right person/job fit. This would include matching job descriptions with personal and professional skills, history of employment, contacting past employers and referees and looking at successes/failures in past missions. It is essential that delegates have a good break between missions, particularly if the pre-

BEFORE LEAVING

- Delegate selection
- Medical clearance
- Vaccinations
- 'Alert' bracelet
- Own medicines
- Insurance plan
- Health briefing
- Basic medical kit
- Malaria prophylaxis
- Mosquito net
- Malaria self test kit
- PEP kit
- Condoms
- Security briefing
- Country specific briefing
- Policy briefing
- Stress session

IN THE FIELD

- Useful telephone numbers
- Medivac plan
- Security plan
- Security updates
- Team building
- Communication
- Rest
- Normal work hours
- Exercise
- Hobbies
- Safe sex
- E-mail
- Friends
- Stress counsellors
- Workshops

IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG

- Know who to call
- Know how to use radio
- Stay calm
- Know security rules
- List of persons to contact
- Notify Geneva

END OF MISSION

- Complete PDR
 - EOM medical
 - Vaccinations
 - Stress session
 - Health debriefing
 - Technical debriefing
 - Regional debriefing
-

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vious mission was stressful, difficult, traumatic, dangerous, threatening or oppressive. The nature of the missions should vary. We tend to put the 'good' delegates in hardship postings because they handle them well. But this durability cannot continue indefinitely. Eventually, the accumulation of stresses does take its toll. Experiencing a mission 'badly', does not nec-

essarily make the person ineligible for another posting. A delegate may fail miserably in one country or type of mission yet be the shining star in a different environment. This makes it a real challenge to recruitment personnel to get the right person into the right position, to ensure a 'good' mission. Retention of good delegates depends heavily on all these factors.

A major prerequisite for feeling secure on a mission is to know that your family is well and accepting of the new situation. Running off from a bad relationship or a divorce is a poor start to a mission. Especially important is good health and knowing that any matters of possible concern have been addressed before leaving for a foreign environment where health care may be less than ideal. Before a delegate is accepted for a mission s/he should have passed a complete medical check-up, including a full medical history, lab work and physical examination. For delegates over the age of 45 this should include an electrocardiogram (ECG), a chest x-ray, and for men a blood test and physical examination for prostate cancer. Females should have a full gynaecological check-up including a pap smear before leaving on a mission. All delegates should have a full dental check before departure. Vaccinations, as recommended by the Federation, need to be completed if at all possible before departure. It is good to carry a blood card stating your blood group and RH type. It is recommended that anyone with a pre-existing medical condition or severe allergy, should wear an 'Alert' necklace or bracelet, or at least carry a card in their purse or wallet. It is also a good idea to let someone at the delegation know about it, particularly if medication is needed for immediate treatment.

For anyone on medication, it is important to carry their own 3-6 months supply as well as the original prescription, as it may be difficult or impossible to obtain it in the country of assignment (COA). Bring medicines with sufficiently long expiry date and note that some medicines will not retain their efficacy if left at room temperature in a tropical climate.

One would not feel secure without knowing s/he was completely covered by an insurance plan. No delegate should start a mission (including day of travel) without personal insurance to cover illness, accident, plane risk, war risk (where indicated), luggage/personal effects, and medical repatriation/evacuation.

Ideally, every new delegate should undergo a thorough health briefing covering a wide range of topics such as stress, alcohol consumption, HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases, how to take care of their food and water, how to protect themselves from the climate, how to treat diarrhoea, and road safety. A country- or region-specific briefing should also be given, covering topics such as prevention of malaria, dengue fever and other prevalent diseases. Each delegate should receive a basic medical kit including condoms, a treated mosquito net, and chemoprophylaxis and malaria self-testing kit (if indi-



AIDS

HIV/AIDS will kill more people this decade than all the wars and disasters in the past 50 years. Since the AIDS epidemic began, 25 million people have died and more than 40 million are now living with HIV or AIDS.

In 2001 alone, 5 million people became infected worldwide.



cated). Some National Societies are giving PEP (post-exposure prophylaxis) kits to their delegates in case of possible exposure to the HIV virus.

All first-time delegates, HoDs, HoSDs, HoRDs, and any delegate going to a hardship post or conflict zone should have a session on stress with a psychotherapist. Some PNSs and the Federation/Secretariat offer this routinely at the briefing. The emphasis is on stress: how to recognise the signs of stress in yourself and others; what is considered normal, what is not normal; and how to cope with or manage stress in a delegate and within the delegation. The Psychological Support Team in Geneva (Health Officers and stress counsellors) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to listen, assist, and direct any delegate concerns.

Other routine briefings should be given to familiarise the delegate with the culture, climate, religion, living and working conditions, security issues, and the customs of his/her COA. Delegates need to know what types of personal item may not be available for purchase and which they may need to bring with them. The standard of behaviour expected from delegates needs to be discussed, as well as how the improprieties of an individual can adversely reflect on the RC/RC Movement as a whole.

Lapses in good judgement due to the influence of alcohol or drugs, and the effects of cumulative stress or fatigue, not only put a delegate's health in danger but may also pose security risks, sometimes for the entire delegation.

Every delegate must insist on having a security briefing. As previously mentioned, health and security go hand-in-hand. Every delegate needs to know generally how to travel safely by road, about home and personal security, and be thoroughly familiar with the delegation's security rules. But for missions into some areas, delegates will need a more intense briefing which may include information on how to pass safely through military checkpoints, land-mine awareness, how not to be a soft target for crime or kidnapping, how to use the radios. A delegate will feel more secure once s/he knows the rules, the possible threats and how to avoid them, how to keep informed and what to do if caught in a threatening situation.

How to stay safe/healthy

In order to be effective in your new position, it is essential that you take care of yourself and keep informed of relevant security measures, updates and health precautions. HoDs need to look at ways to encourage team-building, provide trust and

support to delegates, and to define and use the best methods to keep them informed. Open and free communication is essential to maintain a healthy climate in a delegation. Everyone's health and safety depend on it. Delegates should look for opportunities to attend workshops on security, healthy living and stress management.

One way to feel secure about your health is to acquaint yourself with the delegation's plan of action for accident or illness as well as medivac (medical evacuation). There should be an easily accessible list of useful telephone numbers in the delegation, as well as a list of persons to be notified in case of illness or accident. This may be the responsibility of the health delegate or National Society (NS) health officer, a private clinic or state-run hospital. The list should be regularly evaluated and updated to include the best quality of care in the area. The list should include hospital/s of sufficient quality to perform basic emergency services as well as surgery, paediatricians, family doctors, tropical medicine doctors, gynaecologists, and dentists. Ideally, a certified psychotherapist would also be included on the list.

If a delegate is hospitalised or seriously ill, the Health Officers in Geneva need to be notified. They will liaise with the del-

egate's NS or in the case of a Federation delegate, the Senior Officer in charge of the delegate's health. They remain the link for communication in cases of medical evacuation or repatriation.

It is important for the delegate to get plenty of rest, appropriate nutrition, exercise and social contact. Regardless of the workload (real or perceived) this is imperative to doing a good job. Except in times of crisis, when it may not be possible, try to maintain normal working hours and time off at weekends. Be sure to take the rest and recreation you are entitled to. It has not been incorporated into the job description without reason.

Insist on an e-mail connection for maintaining a healthy link with friends and family. Look for health or social clubs to pursue sports or hobbies. Bring your favourite music and books with you on mission.

When stress levels go up there is a tendency to overindulge in unhealthy habits such as increased alcohol and cigarette consumption, indiscriminate sex and recreational drug use. These behaviours are often seen as 'celebratory responses' when delegates survive or witness critical/traumatic events such as bombings, threatening checkpoints, acts of war, or other forms



of violence. It is important to recognise such responses in oneself as symptoms of stress and know how and where to get help. If they continue they can become a threat to one's own and the delegation's health and security.

High stress is frequently a source of conflict and can decrease the quality of com-

munication. In a cross-culture working environment particular emphasis should be put on team-building and the development of cross-culture communication and management skills. Try to identify one or two persons in the delegation or community to whom you can feel close, and trust; someone who can be a friend and listen to you non-judgementally. Find someone

to hold you accountable, and who will call you on it if you are failing. If you see unhealthy behaviour in a fellow delegate, try to approach him/her and bring it into the open. Again, the Geneva Health Officers and stress counsellors are also available to provide this type of support and advice.

If there are specific security threats in your delegation, ask for continued updates and advice on how to handle a situation if you should become a victim. Strictly adhere to the delegation's security rules, and make sure you know how and when to use the radio.

HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STD) can be transmitted by anal, oral and vaginal sex. Remember that without the protection of a condom, no sex can be safe sex unless it is with one faithful partner. The Federation does not require HIV testing and does not discriminate against a person living with AIDS. Therefore you are as much at risk of acquiring a STD by having unprotected sex with a colleague as you are with someone you have met locally.

End of mission

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure the delegate is suitable professionally, medically and psychologically for his/

her next mission. A thorough debriefing by concerned departments (health, psychotherapist, technical, regional) should ensure that all aspects of a mission are carefully reviewed. Successes and failures should be highlighted. The delegate and his/her direct line manager should complete a Performance Development Review (PDR) by the time of debriefing. A session with the psychotherapist will determine if there are any unresolved issues of cumulative stress or, in cases of traumatic incidents, post-traumatic-stress disorder (PTSD).

The delegate is entitled to an end of mission medical and should be encouraged to complete one to ensure that s/he has not contracted an illness during the mission particularly if it was in a tropical climate. This would include a stool specimen for ova and parasites testing. By completing the end of mission (EOM) medical, the delegate is in a good position for his/her next mission by receiving the medical clearance needed beforehand. A review of vaccinations should be done at this time in order to receive necessary boosters in preparation for the next mission.

The delegate is also entitled to a good rest/break before the next assignment, particularly if s/he has just completed a difficult assignment.





Security is a process of the mind

KIRSTI PALONEN, PSYCHOLOGIST AND PSYCHOTHERAPIST

*Papa Rabbit was building
a burrow for winter
when he and the kids saw
Mama Rabbit run like a sprinter.
'It's coming,' she panted and trembled,
'it's coming so near!'
'What is?' asked Papa Rabbit.
'There is nothing to fear.'
'Come on kids,
we have work to do here. . . .
Papa Rabbit grumbled,
'There is nothing to fear,'
and went on his way,
till a leaf from a tree
fell down in his path
with the slightest wee thump.
It made Papa Rabbit*

*quite suddenly jump
and run off much faster
than even a rabbit can see.*

Almost always there are risks and dangers involved in the work of international Red Cross delegates, much more so than in work and life in familiar circumstances. Within a delegation a wary worker, like Mama Rabbit, might be seen as a frightened wimp. But what about the fearless, work-orientated Papa Rabbit? Does he hide his head in a bush? How quickly does the fearless one become a frightened little bunny, running scared of a falling leaf. We are all more complex than we think. The brave are not so brave, and the cowards

not so cowardly. It is good to know yourself so well that you can accept your own limits.

When speaking about the safety of foreign assignments you often hear people say, as some sort of rallying cry: 'Security is a state of mind.' And one of the important rules new delegates are told is: 'Know thyself!' These tag lines give us an excellent starting point when we look at the psychological questions associated with security problems and how to tackle them.

Motivation and room for security

The Finnish term for 'state of mind' is *mielentila*, which literally means 'place of mind' or 'space of mind'. The word *tila* can be translated in many ways – in this context, it is the 'space' element I'm most interested in. In order to create a realistic sense of security and to maintain that sense, you need some space that is your own. Safety requires a space in the mind of the individual, in the interaction between the person and their environment, in the interactions within the delegation, and between the delegation and the community around it. Therefore I'd like to change the saying to read: 'Security is a process of mind.'

Security is not a static state of mind, but something that is born and reborn in accordance with each changing environment, in the potential space of the interaction between individuals or within a group. Security is created through psychological work, inside people and through regular group discussions of the situation. Creating a realistic sense of security and keeping that sense alive takes time. Each employee must have this time for him- or herself and the delegation must also have such time set aside.

In an over-stressed person, the potential space is diminished: s/he is worried, perhaps suffering from anxiety; s/he is tired; s/he is in a hurry because so much has been left undone; s/he rushes from job to job and may not have time or be able to get enough sleep. In such situations, our perceptual and cognitive processes change. As we run to and fro, our perceptual and cognitive processes are thrust into a tunnel, so to speak, which reduces our capacity to see existing dangers or risks. Nor, when in that state, do we recognise possibilities or options. In abnormal circumstances such stress-related behaviour can be lethal. Keeping up security presupposes realistic acknowledgement of risks and being able to assess them. Stress lessens our ability to assess problems and risks, as well as the good that may come out of our be-

haviour and actions. The stress levels of an entire work team can rise to unbearable levels and pose a threat not only to the health of each individual, but also to the safety of the whole team.

People who have been pushed beyond their limit lose their psychological flexibility. Their thinking and attitudes become rigid. They see things only in terms of 'black or white': in problem solving, their thinking simplifies into dichotomies (either/or, black/white, good/bad...); or in some scenarios there may seem to be a complete lack of options. They are in a hurry to find a solution, often before they have properly assessed the problem. Avoid overload whenever possible for your own safety and that of your co-workers. Pay attention to this both individually and as a group; make agreements about how to lower the general level of stress (such as seeing to basic needs, taking regular breaks, vacations and relaxation).

Everybody should know the signals their bodies and minds send when there is a danger of stress overload, when you have been under pressure for too long. These may include: difficulty in sleeping, upset stomach, tense muscles, tiredness, becoming overly sensitive to criticism, irritability, etc. Share your signals with close co-workers and ask them to tell you if they

see you showing any of the signs of overload. This is one way to help you avoid getting too far into the tunnel of stress, where you yourself will stop noticing the signals.

Today, tolerance of stress is often considered a good quality in an employee. But it is equally important to know the human limitations of how much stress a person can take. Many people feel ashamed that their level of tolerance for stress is not high enough, when in reality they have taken too much stress for too long and used up all their reserves. Why? To be good workers? Out of fear for being considered bad or inadequate workers? Or because they don't know how to wind down and rest? Because they feel anxiety if they stop doing what they are doing? For a Red Cross delegate it may be a very useful skill to be able to handle boredom, tedium, monotony, and the stimuli of their own inner world.

Work in a delegation may be repetitive, numbing, and frustrating, rather than offering new or exciting experiences. Particularly in dangerous areas a team that is prepared for action may spend days just waiting to get where they're going. This frustrating lack of activity may almost be harder for some people to handle than when there is so much work that it must be done quite mechanically. Unless there

is time in the delegation to assess work and give feedback, or this is not considered important, over-worked people can be left without the sense of gratification that comes from a positive response to their work or from learning new things on the job.

Opportunities to gain interesting and positive experiences outside work may also be limited, possibly due to security concerns. In such a situation, people who are looking for new experiences may end up stimulating their brains through breaking security regulations, drinking or other pleasures. Prepare yourself in advance for the frustration and stress that may be engendered by the limitations put on you. If you don't have hobbies and ways to relax that can be practised even when limitations are imposed, get some. Start practising them at home. When in new circumstances, it's easier to do something that has become a habit.

Nearly all delegates know how to prevent stress. It should be obvious to every adult that people need something sensible to do, but not too much of it. They also need time for themselves, in order to regenerate their resources. You also need enough sleep at night. So why do we behave differently? Why do we risk our health and that of others, our safety and that of oth-

ers? Out of ambition? As an ego-trip? To escape something else that feels even more difficult? To avoid feeling weaker than others? Because of the excitement that danger or breaking rules gives? Because we become over-involved in the suffering of others, whether the people in need or our co-workers? Know what it is that motivates you, keep asking what you might want to get out of this, personally, in addition to the common and official goals – or possibly to their detriment? If somebody constantly takes risks that put him, her or others in danger, you are entitled to ask if their hierarchy of motivations is suitable for humanitarian work.

Some people do look for excitement in their lives. Their hobbies may be full of thrill seeking as well. They play at being heroes. For delegates it is important to keep the need for personal excitement and heroism in check. In extreme situations it might be necessary to take risks, but any risk-taking should be carefully considered and be to the advantage of the whole group and its common goal, not a solo flight to show heroism and courage. Working in a delegation is not an exciting adventure, even though you will return many experiences wiser.

If taking a risk is deemed necessary, the delegation should embrace it in order to

achieve its common aims, not, for instance, in order to break the norms. You should know how you feel about norms. Is it difficult for you to handle the pressure of norms at home? It might be just as difficult in the middle of a strange country and culture. Some norms are just different, possibly stricter, than they are at home, and the consequences of breaking them can be fatal.

Knowing and respecting the values, norms, rules of behaviour and communication – both verbal and non-verbal – of the society around you is essential for your security. Such things can be learnt from books, but making theory and practice meet is a continuous learning process. It presupposes genuine interest in what you are experiencing and an openness to the foreign culture you are encountering. The sense of what situation you are in, that is so important for your safety, is born out of interaction with the environment, not through being an isolated bystander. The local network may work as a cultural interpreter and help to prevent and clarify any misunderstandings. It can also keep you up to date regarding dangers to your security.

A balanced and realistic view of yourself, a clear personal identity, is necessary when you interact with a different culture. As-

sessing your own security situation presupposes an ability to distance yourself from yourself and take a dispassionate look at yourself, your position and your behaviour from the point of view of others. At the same time, you need to hold on to your own identity and retain your judgement. A good listener arrives at a deeper understanding of a problematic and threatening situation than someone who is pushing his own views. An objective listener doesn't assume, doesn't judge, doesn't react by interrupting and giving their own view. Be conscious of how your behaviour, your verbal and non-verbal messages in a heated moment can be interpreted as being threatening, putting pressure on someone, or as derogatory, and thereby provoking to the other party.

We cannot escape ourselves

Knowing yourself means understanding that all the things we have experienced are present in us, wherever we go. For instance, our earlier experiences may sensitise us to certain relationship situations. Some people find it hard to handle being told what to do, whereas others respond adversely to not getting an answer when they speak to someone or have people turn their back to them. Some people can't handle being looked in the eye; others can't bear to be overlooked. Be aware of

how past experiences in your life may influence you in social encounters today. In a situation that calls for negotiations with a party known to be aggressive, it is not wise to be represented by a person who knows s/he turns inwards or loses his temper when threatened, bullied, bad-mouthed or humiliated. In a delegation such sensitivities can cause a lot of trouble if you are not aware of them. So, be aware of the effect of past experience on new relationships. Strive to distinguish which feelings belong in the past.

With age, the number of traumatic experiences you have had tends to grow. They are never completely forgotten, you are never totally rid of them. The best-case scenario is that we can integrate them into who we are, understand them and perhaps even usefully draw on the experiences to help us. Doing so may help you to calm yourself in a scary and unsafe situation or, if necessary, go looking for safety in a proper way. That means not denying your fear, but understanding that it is natural to feel frightened when there's something to fear. And from there you can go on to assess whether or not there is a real threat to your security that justifies your fear. If there is, you can draw on past experiences to calm yourself sufficiently to find alternative courses of action, such as seeking cover or trying to get away. If, on the other

hand, you have repressed your experiences of fear and helplessness, if you are afraid of your own fear, you may not be able to see the real danger – or you may find even your own shadow spooks you.

*'It's coming,' she panted and trembled,
'it's coming so near!'*

'What is?' asked Papa Rabbit.

'There is nothing to fear.'

*'Come on kids,
we have work to do here.
What is it exactly,
my dear?'*

'What is it, he asks!

*It is doom and it's gloom
and it's coming right here
with a bang and a boom!
That's what I heard
from a dependable bird!'*

*'Your mother's just jumpy
and that makes me grumpy.'*

Such a reaction means not being able to handle calmly another person's fear, need, or anxiety. If you can't calm a person down you may not be able to find out whether their fear is based on important information about a real danger, or how to improve security for the entire delegation. Don't deny fear. Be sensible in your fear. Try to work out what caused the fear, the sense of threat, the concern – whether it is your own or somebody else's. Listen to what

your emotions tell you: is there an increased external threat, or has your inner sense of vulnerability heightened due to stress, something that's happened at home, a physical illness, or for some other reason?

An important part of knowing yourself is admitting that it is impossible to know yourself completely, if only because we continue to change as we grow and experience new things. New situations can also provoke and bring out different and even surprising sides of us. When you feel unsafe or anxious, you might 'regress' and start behaving in a manner that you don't consider adult or that you, when you look back on it later, are ashamed of. Threatening situations give rise to a sense of insecurity and may reactivate childhood experiences of helplessness and fear. It is important to realise that these reactions are not 'childish' in a derogatory sense, but that they are part of the meaningful life experiences that you have and that you should accept and take into account.

How should you relate to these remembered emotions, reactivated years after the experience that triggered them? The thing to do is to get acquainted with your traumatic moments. If you or somebody else thinks you react with unreasonable fear in certain situations, ask yourself if the fear

is completely or partly due to some difficult situation that you experienced earlier in your life. Calm yourself down, tell yourself it is something you no longer need to feel anxious about, since it is already in the past. If you can talk to someone who is calm and a good listener about the emotions you remember, that usually helps to place them correctly in your personal history, then you can go on to take a more realistic look at the situation you are currently facing.

Working through the fears

In Virginia Ironside's children's book *The Huge Bag of Worries*, a girl called Jenny is plagued by worries (the dog has fleas, she might get bad grades, her parents are fighting, there might be a war...) which are becoming more and more of a burden, until the lady next door realises what is going on and helps Jenny by telling her:

'There's nothing a worry hates more than being seen. If you have any worries, however small, the secret is to let them out slowly, one by one, and show them to someone else. They'll soon go away.'

Psychologically working through worries can help to relieve our anxieties and fears. The neighbour went on to sort Jenny's worries into groups, making a separate one



TAIWAN

In September 1999, an earthquake struck Taiwan, leaving 2,368 people dead, nearly 8,000 seriously injured and more than 300,000 homeless.

The Taiwan Red Cross Organisation is playing an important role in helping affected populations and in mitigating the impact of any future natural disaster.





for those that weren't really Jenny's, but somebody else's. Some of them she pledged to take care of herself. The proportions of Jenny's concerns change as they are brought out into the open, one by one. Some of the worries are even 'aired' away completely. This story gives us a clear analogy of the process involved in the kind of psychological work that is used to create a sense of security.

In addition to sharing with others, there are other ways of making worries and fears visible. Sometimes they appear in dreams, whether we want them to or not. The messages sent to you in your own dreams can in stressful and critical times give you important leads into what it is you are trying not to remember or think about, what you have swept under the carpet to such an extent that it is now tripping you up.

In the year 2000, a group of Western tourists were taken hostage by the guerrilla group Abu Sayyaf and held on the island of Jolo. The last four of the group to be released spent 140 days in captivity. The hostages were not separated from one another, which meant they could share their fears, encourage and comfort one another, and together find ways to express their emotions and survive the ordeal. In addition to this, they kept diaries and wrote letters. Finnish hostage Seppo Fränti also

drew pictures of his experiences. Fellow Finn Risto Vahanen wrote from the island:

Here for the first time I have realised what power lies in letters. Writing letters you have to think things through and shape your view of things in a way that is different from everyday speech. Receiving and reading letters gives indescribable joy in these circumstances. In the following days, you read and reread each letter many times.

Innumerable times the hostages faced the fear of death both in reality and in their conscious and unconscious mind through their emotions and dreams. Dreams, even frightening ones, can be therapeutic and help you to face a reality that frightens you. Seppo Fränti wrote:

At night, I had the same dream twice. I was sort of a bystander when I was being carried to my grave in a crummy casket. First they got the wrong grave site. I said, it's supposed to be over there. But I decided not to look inside. I didn't want to know what was there or how I had changed. The atmosphere was sort of drab. There weren't many mourners or anything, but the grave was pretty big. I just kept looking at myself being buried. Then I woke up. I was a bit scared to wake up. I woke up Risto, who slept like a dog.

The diary of Vahanen and Fränti's 140 days of captivity in the Jolo jungle is filled with examples of extreme nervous tension, but it also tells of their psychological strength in a situation where there was very little they could practically do. Just taking care of your basic needs takes effort and self-discipline in a situation where you fear death is imminent at all times. But this struggle and the routine of attending to your basic needs gives you strength and a sense of self that is important for your survival.

Psychological work is something that is done at all levels of consciousness. It stretches from conscious observation, gathering of information and analysis to humour, sharing of emotions, and meeting your fears in your dreams.

When only four Western hostages were left on Jolo, they continued to analyse their predicament:

Daily we discussed the situation that had arisen and thought about our options – I said it is good to be mentally prepared for different scenarios. If another two of us were released and two were to stay on, the situation would be emotionally tough and something you needed to start preparing yourself for.

Psychiatric studies at general hospitals have shown that among patients who have had surgery, those who do best, psychologically speaking, are those who had been somewhat anxious about the operation beforehand, but had been able to control their fears. A debilitating fear of death is more likely to strike patients whose operation has gone well, but who had not had time to prepare for it beforehand because it had been an emergency, or who went into the operating room as casually as if they'd been going to have a haircut. It makes sense to try to prepare yourself for what might hurt you, what might feel difficult or frightening, what sort of risks or dangers are involved. It is sensible to think through how you can avoid the worst-case scenario or how you can minimise potential damage and handle a difficult situation if it cannot be avoided.

A survival bag of the mind

As children, we calmed down when our mother or father took us protectively in their arms, asked us what was wrong and listened to us tell them what the problem was. Often that was enough to soothe us. What else worked? Certain routines and sticking to them, the awareness of limits around us, fairy tales, songs and toys did. In the comic strip Peanuts we see what is

internationally known to comfort a child: his own blanket with its familiar smells. In psychology these blankets, teddy bears, dolls etc. are called transitional objects, whereas places or songs or poems that calm us are termed transitional phenomena. Emotionally astute adults also have their own transitional objects and phenomena. They create this soothing survival bag themselves and use it knowingly in situations of uncertainty and stress.

The survival bag of an adult may also contain a teddy bear, particularly if there are warm and loving thoughts and feelings associated with the person who gave them the bear. Depending on the situation, the bag may also contain a map, a telephone, the most important phone numbers, ID papers, necessary medication for a few days, pictures of people close to you, significant letters, pen and paper . . . It's good to give ample time to creating your survival bag.

Equally important is the invisible survival bag that no one can take away from you. In that bag you find a map that has been created in your mind, knowledge of the environment around you, the ability to make observations, listen and communicate, and your own values and principles as well as your memories. For when the going gets tough mentally it's filled with

different ways of winding down, such as an ability to have an inner dialogue of different views and alternatives, an inner conversation that is calming, supportive and comforting. There are calming, comforting and supportive songs that you remember and can hum to yourself or in your mind, there are poems, aphorisms and inner pictures. Each of us has the opportunity to find the transitional phenomena that suit us the best.

In an extreme situation your imagination can provide you with a space in which to move and keep up your sense of life and self. Kristina Saraneva has referred to Schreuder's example of the Bourequat brothers, who were taken captive without trial in Morocco in 1973 and who regained their freedom in 1991 after spending 10 of 18.5 years in complete darkness. The brothers told this about their survival:

We spoke to each other through the walls. We spoke of Paris. That is where our brothers lived. We started telling each other stories. We walked the streets of Paris, we went to the department stores, restaurants and told each other what we saw. We visited friends. We celebrated our birthdays there. Each day we picked a new topic. We rebuilt Paris, street by street, until our fellow prisoners got to know Paris too, even though they had never been there.

Saraneva says:

This way the Bourequat brothers created an imaginary reality for themselves and there they could live a life worth living. There they could control what was happening. They found a common transitional space, and that helped them to survive. Soili Haaramo and Kirsti Palonen (ed.) *The many faces of trauma. Psychological trauma as inner experience (Trauman monet kasvot. Psykkinen trauma sisäisenä kokemuksena)*

In traumatic and stressful situations, where we feel threatened and helpless, and we lack the ability to control our lives, the central thing is to stay in touch with who you are. Sometimes even the chance to do that seems extremely limited. We start protecting ourselves through different mental defences. Our defences may deny reality or warp it. In extreme cases we dissociate ourselves from some experiences, as Seppo Fränti did from his own death in a dream. But in dreaming, he retains some ability to control the situation. When your ability to influence your situation in reality has shrunk to zero or thereabouts, the opportunities of using your imagination shrink as well, and you are at the mercy of a destructive reality. A man who survived day after day of torture in Chile has said that he got through the ordeal only by repeating his name and personal

data over and over again. That way he stayed in touch with his existence and his self.

Luckily, earlier experiences of crises, threats and fear also have a positive effect on recognising our sources of energy and ways of survival. We tend to be reluctant to remember past hardships, but each and every one of us should occasionally go back to these master classes of life and try to remember – perhaps even write down – what it was that helped us through it, helped us to survive and keep or regain our peace of mind. What were the things then that seemed important enough to keep you going?

Start packing your mental survival bag in good time, while you are still at home. Begin a resource diary. Fill it with small things that happen in your daily life, things that give you joy, peace of mind, or satisfaction, that give rise to courage, optimism and faith in the future. Keep your diary with you and read it, a self-made self-help book. In times of hardship and trouble people show remarkable resilience, if they can learn to enjoy the small things.

The two extracts of children's poetry in this article are from *The Rabbits (Jänikset,)* by Lauri Pohjanpää, translated from the Finnish by Anna Torvalds. From the collection *Tales of the Woods (Metsän satuja)*, WSOY (1924).



Security in delegations

OLA SKUTERUD, HEAD OF DELEGATION, IFRC

Over the past years we have in general seen a growing need for further improvement of security rules and procedures for staff, expatriates and volunteers working for national as well as international humanitarian organisations in the developing countries. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RC/RC) is no exception in that respect. Where the Movement is mandated to or has been requested to run and or support relief and emergency operations, as well as development work our security rules have been regularly updated to

meet the needs of our delegates who are daily facing security problems and constraints. In many of the countries, where international intervention is being called upon to carry out lifesaving or relief programmes, an increased degree of lawlessness has become a serious obstacle to our humanitarian mission. In few instances, we have even seen that staff of the RC/RC Movement have become targets for attacks from various combating groups. Over the last few years, the customary respect for our protective emblems has diminished to



such a degree that it has become one of our great concerns. New methods need to be introduced and initiatives taken to more proactively disseminate our fundamental principles to the whole population and not least to the army and other armed groups in our host countries. In this work the national Red Cross or Red Crescent society will have to play the leading role alongside the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Federation, using all its network of 'satellites' around the country as well as its contacts outside the Movement. National as well as international RC/RC workers and volunteers have been facing serious setbacks as far as their own security is concerned. The new situation since 11 September 2001 – described by many as 'the new world', where national and international terrorism has become an increasing concern in every corner of the world – has meant all individuals must confront and take on new challenges and responsibility. These new challenges call for an active approach from humanitarian agencies and organisations in relation to security precautions when they discuss and prepare for interventions in a disaster-stricken country. It is equally important for all staff and volunteers to adhere to introduced rules and procedures.

While having sound common sense is important, keeping up to date with ongoing

developments is essential (read newspapers and situation reports, discuss them with your RC/RC colleagues and with staff of other humanitarian organisations, etc.). Keep yourself informed, but also pass on to your colleagues and to the hierarchy in the delegation any information that you deem valuable, so that the delegation can take the necessary steps and maintain a coherent approach. Your own experience will contribute to the comprehensive security rules and procedures developed in the delegation and can help others who could be confronted with similar situations.

From my work over a period of seven years, 1993–2000, in war-torn Somalia, followed by over two years in the open, hateful, and rapidly expanding confrontation in the Palestinian Autonomous and Occupied territories (Palestine A/OT), I have learned to appreciate a proactive approach to dealing with security issues, involving the experience of different people and operations in different contexts.¹ But perhaps above all I have learned to listen to my local counterparts, the local people who have extensive knowledge based on their own culture and a lifetime of experience. While every country and context, due to constant pressure from international media, the public and politicians, is becoming increasingly internationalised in terms of development and reaction to crises, it will al-

ways be of utmost importance to consider the local and regional approach and interventions when preparing ourselves and our organisations for possible security challenges. Even though safety is often considered to be a question of common sense, having the right reaction and attitude can be assured only when it is based on regulations that are known and respected by each and every national and international staff member and volunteer, and appreciated by our counterparts.

New delegates frequently joined our delegation in Somalia, which for the last years of my stay there was located in Nairobi, Kenya. The operation was inside Somalia, which was and still is in a completely different context to Kenya, not least in terms of security and political settings. Unfortunately, Somalia had over the years, particularly since the civil war in the early nineties, destroyed all its infrastructure and central authorities. Several years of dictatorship had also partly undermined and corrupted many of the deeply rooted problem-solving traditions and methods of this nomadic culture. The tragic consequences of this negative and devastating development is a country of anarchy and lawlessness. Despite the often years of experience in other countries, it was therefore of utmost importance for every delegate to be thoroughly briefed about the

local context of their new mission, and every aspect of it made clear. For most people, their own experience is the best teacher, but security issues cannot be left to self experience. Therefore, it was important for me not to avoid talking about every kind of security threat, even the most serious ones such as being directly threatened at gunpoint, suddenly being caught up in crossfire, or even being kidnapped. One can never be fully prepared for such events, but to talk about such possibilities regularly beforehand will, in my opinion, make an important contribution to the preparedness process for each individual and for all of us as a group of colleagues. It will help each individual to avoid being taken completely by surprise in the event of a real situation arising. How do we cope in the middle of such an event, and how do we deal with it from outside?

For myself, I can say such discussions were of great importance and helped to prepare me for the day a dangerous situation did become a reality. As part of my preparation for a Stress Management Workshop in Denmark in 1996, arranged by the Danish Red Cross, I presented a case study to the group. It described a situation where our house in Mogadishu was invaded by militia, and all of us were put under constant threat. Through this and similar case studies we were able to imagine a little of

what it means to be caught up in such a dramatic situation. We in the Somalia Delegation also frequently talked about how to behave and react, what to do and what not to do, and, perhaps even more importantly, how to cope in the event of such a life-threatening situation.

On the morning of 15 April 1998, something strange occurred. I suddenly found myself in a situation that reminded me all too much of my case study from two years before. As I had several times anticipated such events, I was not completely new to my reactions and feelings when I, together with nine of my Red Cross and Red Crescent colleagues, was kidnapped in Mogadishu, Somalia. My immediate reaction was to think, 'I'm lucky!' That is, I was not alone when kidnapped, but was with a number of colleagues. In my imagined scenarios, I had always 'prepared' myself to be completely alone if such a difficult situation ever became a reality.

That morning, after having all our belongings of any value looted, we were taken to the room where we were kept as hostages for the next nine days.² One idea that struck me was to talk to my colleagues about the 'Stockholm Syndrome'. Surprisingly, none of them had ever heard the story about the hostages who, in August 1973, were held at a bank in Norrmalm-

storg, Stockholm. During that long hostage crisis, one could see a special and very close relationship gradually developing between the captors and their hostages.³ I was worried we might fall into a similar 'trap' and develop personal relationships with our kidnappers, which in the long run would not be to our advantage. At the same time, it was important to build a positive climate between us and them, in which we – having been deprived of our freedom by people who clearly aimed to benefit from their criminal act – could survive the unpredictable situation. Throughout the nine days in captivity I think we succeeded in not falling into the 'Stockholm Syndrome', while at the same time having a positive influence on those of the kidnappers who were with us day and night. However, over the days, we registered a growing and dangerous tension between the kidnappers inside our compound and those outside. I thought this was partly caused by ourselves being, to some extent, too kind to them. Over the days our own opinion changed about how those negotiating on our behalf ought to deal with the situation. While from the outset we stated very clearly and directly, even dismissively, to our kidnappers that no ransom would or should ever be paid, we were – under the increasing psychological pressure on all of us – gradually changing our opinion about the payment

of a ransom. For the last days of our captivity there was a group consensus – which was transmitted over the satellite telephone as a clear message to our superiors – that the only way to get us out alive was to comply with the demands of the hostage takers.⁴ We had obviously been influenced by the constant pressure and the fear of being killed, which several times was presented as a real alternative if the demands were not met. This gradual change of opinion and approach by us as hostages is, as far as I can see, an important reaction to be aware of for anybody negotiating the release of hostages.

What I had learned from the Stress Management workshop in 1996 and from our internal discussions in the delegation was of enormous help to me during those nine days in captivity. Also, because I had had similar discussions with my family I knew that this unexpected situation would not have come as a total shock to them, even though it was an extremely difficult one to cope with.⁵ Keep as calm as possible. Don't use too much energy as the situation will need all your available strength. Do some small physical exercises to keep your mind clear and alert. Often, the kidnappers will be even more nervous and out of control than you are. Remember that it is normal to react with anger and fear when your life is in danger! It was a relief

for me when I allowed myself to cry. This emotional reaction of mine to the situation and to what the kidnappers were doing to us also seemed to help my friends to 'open up'. We saw a very good and caring relationship developing between all of us, which I think is of utmost importance in such stressful circumstances.

My experiences in Mogadishu illustrate why, in my opinion, it is so important to 'prepare' ourselves, the delegation, and our closest relatives for the possibility of our being caught up in a difficult and dangerous security situation. Even though nobody will be able to imagine the actual reality of it or predict how one might react and cope under such circumstances, it is of great help to have thought about such situations in advance. It is also important to read our security rules and guidelines frequently, to ensure we are thoroughly familiar with them and able to follow them. This might even help us to avoid unnecessarily getting into dangerous situations. It is of great value, and in many cases life-saving, to know our security rules and regulations if or when one is facing the 'bad side' of being a delegate in a country devastated by war or in an area with other security problems. All such rules should be regularly updated and amended whenever required by the circumstances so as to keep them at all times appropri-

ate to the current situation. Each and every delegate must have one copy of the rules. Disregarding the rules can put oneself, other individuals, or the whole operation at risk. There should also be a contingency plan in delegations where security is a real threat to the operation and/or where there is a danger of the outbreak of armed conflict. Reading of this plan and familiarity with its content should be obligatory for every delegate.

When talking about security issues in Somalia, there is not only the possibility of kidnappings to consider. Militia groups and warlords were, and still are controlling and

terrorising most of the country.⁶ Everywhere and at any time one might suddenly be caught in the crossfire between rival groups. Using our RC/RC protective emblems will at least distinguish us from the fighting groups, but we should not delude ourselves that these emblems will necessarily protect us from all danger. Most of the equipment being used in the Somali conflict is fairly 'primitive' or not appropriate for that kind of war. Anti-aircraft artillery is even being used in horizontal fighting between the hostile groups.⁷ Allied groups fighting alongside each other for a period of time can all of a sudden break up, and some even join their former rivals.



Foreigners analysing such a situation might find this impossible to understand if they do not take into consideration the typical and highly important clan system in the country. This clearly indicates how important it is to study and understand in depth the local structure of a country when making ready for an operation and preparing and adopting security rules.

Anywhere in Somalia one might be stopped at a checkpoint and told to pay money or face the gun. Most of the boys demanding this from you are illiterate and have been born and brought up in a country suffering from civil war and complete anarchy. Many of them have learned nothing but looting, banditry and shooting. Most likely they speak only their mother-tongue, which makes it impossible for us to adequately communicate with them. In such circumstances it is of utmost importance not to lose our control, but to know how to behave to reduce the tension, which is always present. It is also extremely important not to act in any way that will further inflame the situation. The militia groups in Somalia – like similar groups in many other conflict zones – are very much part of the fighting force of local warlords; but, at the same time, individual young men with little or no education often unite under the command of one strong person. The often random actions of these dan-

gerous groups don't always have a 'military' objective.⁸ Therefore, it is even more difficult, or even impossible, to predict the next action of these heavily armed groups. In many of the developing countries suffering from internal conflict similar groups are a threat to everybody's life. Strict security rules and procedures are therefore prepared in all RC/RC delegations and must be respected at all times by every single delegate.

When talking about checkpoints with heavily armed forces, the situation I have been experiencing for more than two years in the Palestine A/OT, with the uprising (*intifada*) against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, has provided new and important lessons for everybody about coping in an environment where one side uses the most sophisticated weaponry against individuals, while on the other side militant groups use their own blood as their strongest weapon by carrying out suicide attacks. This use of force has repeatedly been condemned internationally as 'disproportional use of power' against a population under siege. It has under these circumstances been a great challenge to all national and international humanitarian organisations and agencies to work out a system which, as far as possible, will secure the working environment of their employees and volunteers. For myself and

other international workers here in 'The Holy Land', it has been interesting and important to 'observe' our own reactions to a situation where: on the one side a piece of land has been under occupation for generations, keeping people constantly under siege; and on the other side, in their fight against the occupation, suicide bombers are doing everything they can to kill as many Jews as possible. The situation is increasingly unbearable for the people as well as intolerable for humanitarian organisations running programmes to save lives. This capital punishment of the whole Palestinian population, justified by the Israeli government as measures 'ensuring security for the Jewish people' and under the cover of 'war against terrorism' has further escalated the conflict, with a rolling cycle of retaliations from both sides.

Our question is always how can we incorporate all security challenges into the necessary security rules of an organisation working in such an environment? How do we make sure our rules are at all times up to date and useful to those they are made for? How do we strike a balance between providing lifesaving support to people and not taking unnecessary risks ourselves? Is it actually possible to develop security rules to cover all these aspects and needs for the security of our staff when working in a conflict zone which is poisoned by years

of hatred and where retaliation is a strong element in both cultures?

While approaching a military checkpoint or driving behind a military vehicle, you may feel that you are visible, but this will often not be the case. Always slow down, have your window open all the way and make a friendly gesture to the soldiers manning the site.

Moreover, when approaching a checkpoint at night, remember that what the soldiers see first are only headlights. To remain visible to them always turn on the light inside your vehicle.

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- **If required by the soldiers, allow a check of your vehicle and your personal items without any comment. You must, however, refuse to allow anyone to read confidential documents.**
 - **Always keep your papers ready for inspection (ID card or passport as well as your 'Titre de mission' or 'Carnet d'Identité').**
 - **If you are facing any kind of problem, ask politely to talk to the officer in charge. Only if he/she is unable or unwilling to solve the problem, contact the delegation for assistance (after explaining to the officer in charge what you are doing).**
 - **Under no circumstances should you be anything but calm and polite.**
 - **Avoid, except in real professional emergencies, overtaking other cars waiting at a checkpoint.**

On my many field trips in and around the West Bank and Gaza Strip – to facilitate the continuous running and sustainability of Red Cross and Red Crescent programmes in the territories, emergency as well as development – I am frequently forced to drive off-road in my Land Cruiser, over stones and rocks, to reach my destination. Very often staff of the National Society (NS) are prevented from joining me, due to movement restrictions imposed on all Palestinians by the occupying power.

'I am approaching a military checkpoint, guarded by heavily armed soldiers and two huge military tanks, threatening to shoot at me if I don't follow to the detail all orders from the soldiers. However, I can see no soldiers as they are watching me from inside the tanks. I can see that guns are pointing at me, but no orders are being given. What am I going to do that will be operating within our security rules? I'm wondering what kind of rule should be followed in such an unpredictable situation. Here I am sitting in my vehicle, completely in the hands of the soldiers. On the other side of the road I can see several ambulances waiting. With the emergency lights flashing around the whole area, it is obvious that they have been waiting for a long time. They are in the same dilemma as I am; can we go or should we wait? In the eyes of the soldiers, based on what

they have been told by their leaders, we might all of us be the next suicide bombers with a clear objective to kill as many Jews as possible, or we might be trying to smuggle explosives through the checkpoint for new, what they call, 'terrorist attacks'. In fact, travelling in a vehicle clearly marked with the internationally recognised Red Cross or Red Crescent emblem does not give us the expected protection in this conflict. This has unfortunately been proven too many times. I am dreaming about the magic rule, which can secure me and my colleagues in the ambulances safe passage through this situation. Did I ever read it, or perhaps we just never foresaw a situation like this when we wrote our security rules?'

By almost daily experiencing intolerable treatment of humanitarian workers, where both national and international staff have been killed and are daily under threat, being affected by the extreme situation is unavoidable. Observing, frequently and over a period of time, the constant humiliation and inhuman treatment of colleagues and the civilian population does indeed develop one's natural resistance and even great anger. In the name of humanity and in the spirit of impartiality it becomes 'impossible' for a RC/RC worker not to react against such behaviour. What kind of security rule can tell us what to do

when we are confronted and challenged by our own internal anger and emotional reactions? What we have learned as a golden rule in international humanitarian work is obviously no longer applicable for some of those fighting this endless and bitter war. It is becoming more and more obvious to me that we need to discuss further how to react in and to situations like this, and we also need to adjust our security rules to the reality on the ground.

- Maximum speed limits in the country are there to be followed by everybody, including RC/RC delegates.

- Movements by car after dark are under certain circumstances prohibited. If, for operational reasons, movements have to take place after dark, this will only be done in consultation with the HoD.

- It is your own responsibility to make sure that you, or your driver, are driving your vehicle safely and correctly, not only in accordance with the laws of the country of operation, but also in accordance with generally recognised international driving procedures. It is your duty to give correcting instructions to your driver if he/she doesn't follow such rules.

- It is your responsibility to regularly control the general status of your car and the standard equipment of the vehicle you are using. Make sure the equipment is there on every trip undertaken. Before going on a field trip make sure that the quantity of fuel in the tank of your vehicle is well beyond what is

normally required for undertaking such a trip.

- Make sure that your vehicle is properly and correctly marked with RC/RC emblems. If the security situation deteriorates suddenly and requires more visible identification, put the flag in position on your car, and make sure it is always lit at night.

- Make sure that the delegation is informed about your travel and the destination. It is your responsibility to announce your field trip in advance, as well as your departure and arrival to any of the destinations during your field trip.

In almost ten years of working in conflict zones, travelling from one place to another to visit RC/RC colleagues from the ICRC and the Federation, and of the National Society, or to monitor and/or supervise programme sites, sitting in a car on dirty or dangerous roads has occupied quite a lot of my time. Due to rough and hazardous driving, and in most of these countries roads characterised by potholes, stones and innumerable dangerous checkpoints or roadblocks, travelling has its special concerns, requiring its own strict security rules. Based on statistics we know that road accidents are the main 'killer' of international humanitarian workers during missions. Even though many of these workers are operating in war-stricken countries, the message of the statistics is very clear: the car is killing more of our colleagues



during missions than the gun! This leads me to some open questions: Do we have a tendency to forget our own behaviour behind the steering wheel when developing security rules for delegates in the field? There is no doubt that the cause of such accidents can usually be traced to the expatriate him/herself. It is right and, of course, of utmost importance that we are on high alert for shooting incidents and war related situations, but I think we need to develop better rules and control mechanisms concerning our own driving habits and skills. An always relevant question is: why do so many delegates, when on a mission, ignore the strict rules regarding

driving and alcohol to which they are accustomed in their home country? The combination of alcohol and driving is even more dangerous in war-torn countries.

- **It is the delegate's task to collect all relevant information on the current security situation of the area under his/her responsibility and to relay it to the HoD. Together with the HoD or his/her deputy, they will decide, whenever necessary, what measures have to be taken.**

- **If the delegate is coincidentally present where an incident is taking place the delegate should contact the delegation before intervening. This will first and foremost be in situations where:**

- **medical evacuations are required during a confrontation;**
 - **security forces misbehave within medical structures, or towards medical personnel;**
 - **security forces misbehave towards Red Cross or Red Crescent personnel, vehicles or buildings.**
- **Appropriate conduct is of utmost importance for personal security. The RC/RC acts only when all parties to a given situation accept our presence; by the same token, acceptance of expatriates by the local population implies compliance by all delegates to the customs of the society in which they live and move.**
 - **On a personal level, it is essential to make every effort to reinforce relations with people of the RC/RC's professional and non-professional environment. In many cases, within a complex and sensitive context of conflicting cultures, special attention should be given to respect for religious sensitivities.**
 - **Do not offend the feelings of local people (e.g. do not drive near a mosque or in a religious neighbourhood while playing loud music, etc.).**
 - **Under no circumstances should you be anything but calm and polite.**

For any delegate it is compulsory to follow security rules prepared for his/her particular delegation. The delegate will also have clear tasks to fulfil as part of the

mission, which will always be under the management and leadership of the HoD or his/her replacement. However, being accepted as a RC/RC delegate, and as part of the briefing process before joining a delegation, we will be working in a country and an environment which is unknown to us. We have to show respect for the local culture, religion and customs. For sure, we will occasionally, perhaps when something collides with our own experience and common sense, be tempted to give a short lecture about how, why and who; and not intervening may sometimes be a big challenge. We must, however, never forget that we are the strangers in their country, and that they have experience far beyond ours of how to cope in their environment. And they will often protect you. On several occasions I have seen my local counterpart or local people from outside the RC/RC Movement intervening in favour of an expatriate in a difficult situation between a delegate and local people. Several times we have seen local people intervening in dangerous situations, even at the risk of their own lives. Therefore, I repeat what I have already said that we must rely on our colleagues from the National Society and the local people who have lived in a country for the whole of their lives.

Notes

1 In the Palestine A/OT, the second *intifada* (uprising) which started 29 September 2000, when Palestinian youths attacked the Israeli Defence Force, has gradually become more violent and devastating, with all kinds of weaponry and explosives being used.

2 I was able to hide only my wedding ring and that of the colleague sitting next to me, who happened to be the new HoD of ICRC Somalia.

3 After their release the hostages started defending those who had for several days deprived them of their freedom and kept them as human shields.

4 The demand was an amount of USD 1,000,000 and the employment, as an ICRC Field Officer, of one of the kidnapers.

5 A few times in our family we had touched on the issue of kidnapping as a possibility, but of course it was more difficult to imagine for those at home as they had never been in an area where security is a problem. However, based

on our experience, I would be happy for our family to talk more about the possibility of such dangerous situations before they actually happen.

6 In Somalia the word 'technical' means a four-wheel-drive vehicle that has had its roof cut off and a huge gun mounted on it. This is 'the home and the life' for 10-12 heavily armed men, controlling their own territory and carrying out their criminal acts.

7 Several times I could see the fighting getting completely out of control, causing huge damage to properties and the civilian population.

8 As I'm writing this article news is coming in from Mogadishu that a school bus with children from eight to fourteen has been ambushed, and all fourteen on board were killed. One will always question why such gruesome acts happen. For sure, nobody, even the humanitarian workers, are safe from this kind of random criminal attack, which has in many war-torn countries become a habit of child soldiers.

secure02





International training and development

TUSA CLARK, OFFICER, BRC

Introduction

This document aims to report my visit to Finland in June 2002. It outlines the background to my attendance of the Finnish Red Cross Security (FRCS) workshop, followed by preparation for and attendance of the workshop. It also attempts to highlight implications of National Societies (NS) run workshops as well as International Personnel and Training Department (IPTD) discussions relating to delegate security training. This report will also evaluate the course from the perspective of a trainer and participant. In doing so it concludes and offers recommendations for security training for both the British and Finnish Red Cross.

Background

In early 2002, the International Training and Development Team (ITDT) carried out a security training survey that aimed to investigate training requirements. It asked whether the Basic Training Course (BTC) and Integration courses were enough for security training, and whether there are further training needs to be met. If any such needs existed, they could be categorised, and ways found to meet them. With the reduction in ITDT's capacity, development of a British Red Cross Security (BRCS) course was deemed to be not feasible.

The results of the survey were as anticipated. Most responses from those who had

been in the field for longer than two years indicated that experience had filled this knowledge gap. International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegates who attended the Integration course gave similar responses. However, it was evident that delegates with management responsibilities needed specific training in security management; and that first-time ICRC delegates without Integration training did have knowledge gaps.

The above issue was raised by the Head of International Personnel and Training Department (HOIPTD) at the Human Resource (HR) Seminar 2002 in Geneva. She reported back that other National Societies had similar concerns. And, furthermore, that the Finnish Red Cross would run a security workshop in 2002. Although this was not the first time FRCS were running a security workshop, this year's format would be different in the following ways:

1. It would include participants from other NS who had some responsibility for security (Security Managers at NS, HR Personnel and Delegates).
2. The workshop was therefore divided into three sections: International Workshop, Training of Instructors, and Delegate Workshop.

3. The workshop was a pilot funded by European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO).

The overall aims were stated as follows:

1. To strengthen the dialogue on security and safety issues in the humanitarian network by organising an international workshop.
2. To expand the know-how and preparedness for humanitarian aid workers' security and safety issues by giving a pilot training of instructors to qualified human resource personnel working with recruitment or field security issues and by organising the security training for delegates.
3. To deepen the understanding of humanitarian security and safety issues and to raise awareness of the humanitarian issues by publishing a book with full text on the international workshop and with the addition of professional articles.

THE AIM OF MY TRIP WAS TO:

1. **study course content, format and structure for future use by BRCS.**
2. **ascertain suitability for BRCS delegates in view of the recent survey conducted by IPTD.**
3. **gain knowledge of Federation security management systems.**

4. feedback via course to Federation/ICRC representatives regarding inconsistent security briefing in the field.

FINLAND 2002

Preparation

Some of the above aims were also communicated as expectations to FRCS. The workshop programme and contents were received prior to the course. However, joining instructions (travel arrangements, arrival times, accommodation at venue and clothing required) were not received. When I made enquiries, I was informed that all information could be found on the Knowledge Sharing Website (Quickplace). Sharing information via a centralised database is a brilliant idea, but navigation of the website was time-consuming. Arrival times for all were therefore e-mailed in the hope that FRCS would arrange 'meeting and greeting' parties. They did.

Workshop

The Training of Instructors (TOI) segment of the workshop commenced on 12 June. I arrived late in the evening having not anticipated a one-hour drive to the venue and having been unable to arrive on 11 June. I therefore missed most of the day's discussions including the opening of TOI.

OBJECTIVES

The objective of TOI was '... to sensitise participants to matters related to recruitment and career planning in connection to safety and security behaviour.'

The objectives:

AFTER THE COURSE, THE PARTICIPANT:

- **is aware of the trends of the security incidents in Red Cross operations.**
- **is familiar with the security measures taken by the International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the Finnish Red Cross.**
- **understands and knows how to assess risks and threats to the security of the Red Cross operation, personnel and beneficiaries.**
- **can read and understand behaviour in a threatening situation in the field.**
- **knows the basic preventative and protective measures an individual aid worker can take to improve the security and safety situation.**
- **is familiar with basic operational security planning, is able to draw up an evacuation plan for a team, and to design and give basic and context-anchored security and safety briefing to field workers.**
- **understands how recruitment and career planning links to safety and security behaviour.**

In view of the above and it not being a 'Training of Trainers' course, it was deliberately given the title 'Training of Instructors'.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were drawn from a number of NS, using the basic criteria of human resources personnel, security and relief managers, professional humanitarian field workers, representatives of funding partners and other humanitarian aid agencies. National Societies represented were Swedish, German, Swiss, Finnish and British. The composition was approximately 75 per cent female and 25 per cent male. Participants were divided into groups of four to carry out group work.

RESOURCE PEOPLE

The course was mainly facilitated by Tor Planting and Kalle Löövi from the Secretariat and managed by Kimmo Juvas. Other resource people were present to contribute, among them Philippe Dind from ICRC. Facilitators were experienced field workers, knowledgeable about their subject and competent in delivery. However, there was a lack of gender balance, thus the course lent itself to reinforcing a macho view of security issues.

PROGRAMME / CONTENT / METHODOLOGY

The programme was well paced and flexible. It was modular and therefore allowed sequential learning. It covered a number of subjects and allowed for discussion within the topic area. Trainers were aware of the participants' combined experience, and used their knowledge well.

There are minor issues to be considered. At times the course appeared too flexible and participants were unclear of expectations regarding the programme. From my perspective this was symptomatic of the workshop pilot phase. The TOI section appeared to be a continuation of the International Workshop and as such there was a disparity in the knowledge bases of different participants and late arrivals missed important discussions, such as security management, networking, health, safety, psychological support, and codes of conduct for field personnel and media. Although there was some reference to these subjects, it would have been helpful to have been there from the start.

TOI was divided into two sections. The first part was theory and classroom based, followed by two days of assisting with facilitating modules of the delegate workshop mini-simulations of safety and secu-

rity matters. Both parts of TOI were excellent in highlighting what instructors needed to be aware of for security training. The methodology was appropriate and very well balanced. Throughout the workshop, a combination of continuous case study, role-play, simulation, practice, presentations, and group work were used.

EVALUATION

The workshop ended on 16 June with participants evaluating the simulation and TOI workshop. My evaluation noted that the simulation debrief after the very successful exercises was insufficient considering the impact of the exercises. It mainly dealt with technicalities and reinforcement of learning points, and these were handled very well. However, knowing that participants were frustrated, I informed facilitators that a longer psychological debriefing process is required. I therefore offered a debriefing format similar to that used in BRCS BTC simulation exercise.

A concern expressed by one facilitator during the evaluation phase was that Security Training varies among NS. He informed us that TOI was an attempt to help standardise courses. I asked whether the Secretariat Training team should take the lead on the standardisation of security training (similar to that of the BTC). I ex-

pressed my concern for not marginalising this Secretariat Training team but also reinforced the concern vis-à-vis the lack of a consolidated Security Training programme for all NS to adopt. My comments were acknowledged.

In recent years, a number of NS have highlighted the need to consider security matters and at some point they will want to provide training for their delegates. Different NS providing training means varied methodology and course content, which may result in inconsistent understanding of security issues, structures and practice among delegates when they are in the field.

Most appreciated throughout the course were discussions of psychological and cultural impacts on security. The importance of such influences was acknowledged by the main facilitators and the issues raised as concerns were taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. I emphasised how security (considered a 'hard' subject) was combined with psychological and cultural issues ('soft' subjects).

Conclusion

Overall, the course was excellent and achieved its aim to increase awareness and put forward structure, format and content

for other NS to emulate. All who attended agreed it was very useful as it explained security responsibilities in the field, at the Secretariat, and within National Societies.

IN LINE WITH MY ORIGINAL OBJECTIVES, THE FOLLOWING CONCLUSIONS ARE OFFERED:

1. The content, format and structure of the delegate workshop are appropriate for the learning outcomes required for BRCS delegates. Although not tailored for security managers, such a course would also be appropriate for Head of Delegations, Head of subDelegations, programme/project managers and security officers. Having attended the course, it is possible to use this as a benchmark for placing BRCS delegates on other external courses.

2. Training of Instructors highlighted security issues and systems to be aware of when designing a training programme. Should capacity and funding base change in the future, a course could be developed using the FRCS model.

3. The Finnish course was not the appropriate place to give feedback about inconsistencies as there was no time allocated for such discussion. The course's aim to standardise training is a step towards consistency but more courses like this one are required.

The remainder of this conclusion is not new to IPTD, and this report merely reinforces what has already come under discussion.

There is a training need among BRCS delegates. The BTC serves the purpose of increasing awareness among delegates, but to increase understanding of structural and policy issues delegates would need to attend a course similar to that run by FRCS.

The survey results indicated that experience was the best teacher in security matters. I would agree but argue that people have different learning methods and therefore on-the-job experiential learning would not be suitable for all, and could cost lives. Training courses can also provide a useful reminder of important issues for experienced delegates.

As BRCS does not have the capacity and funding to develop a security course, it is proposed that external courses be employed. Since, as I understand it, the Finnish course is similar to and based on the RedR course, the BRCS could use RedR training. The content, format and structure of the delegate segment are all appropriate for the learning outcomes required for BRCS delegates.

The implication for IPTD is that a database needs to be developed, to record security training needs. This database could be used to proactively place delegates on appropriate courses. The Training of Instructors course highlighted security issues and sys-

tems to be aware of when designing a training programme. The same principles could be applied to identifying external training.

Recommendations

PRE-COURSE PREPARATION

- Complement Quickplace joining instructions with e-mail versions.

COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

- Restructure programme to minimise last minute changes therefore making it easy for participants to follow.
- Consider separating International Workshop and Training of Instructors as self-contained courses, or amalgamating the two to avoid repetition and/or confusion. This would also allow participants to start with a common knowledge base.
- Include a longer psychological debrief after simulation in delegate training, to alleviate frustrations and prevent lasting effects.

PARTICIPANTS

- Clarify and specify workshop participation criteria.

RESOURCE PEOPLE

- Include female facilitators to avoid reinforcing 'macho' perception of security issues.

OTHER

- Consider piloting for Secretariat with a view to producing security training guidelines to be shared with all National Societies.
- With Secretariat, encourage other NS to include security training as part of core training.

TO BRCS

- Continue to use RedR Security training.
- Design knowledge-sharing database and proactively place delegates on Finnish RC/RedR Security courses.
- Research other providers of security training to ensure ongoing availability of courses for identified needs.

secure02 workshop, training of instructors and security training course for delegates in Finland in June 2002.





Nurses' perception of safety and security in disaster settings

HANNELE HÄGGMAN, MSC IN DISASTER RELIEF NURSING, PROJECT ASSISTANT, FRC AND GEORGE KERNOHAN, PROFESSOR OF HEALTH RESEARCH, UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

Despite its obvious importance there is little evidence of knowledge and awareness of safety issues amongst disaster workers. These issues were explored by sending a questionnaire to nurses and midwives who were registered on the Finnish Red Cross (FRC) International Delegate Roster. Questions were worded to elicit how the participants perceived various potential threats to their safety. Completed

questionnaires were returned and analysed statistically. The results show the degree of safety awareness amongst the sample group and highlight particular areas of deficiency. Recommendations have been made regarding possible changes to the content of the FRC Basic Training Course (BTC). The results show that the principles of the Red Cross Movement have been well adopted by delegates. Safety and securi-

ty were seen as a basic requirement for enabling nurses to concentrate on their work. The level of awareness and knowledge about safety and security issues was quite high among the respondents, most of whom had field experience.

Keywords: safety, security, disaster relief nursing, disaster

Introduction

Safety is a basic human requirement for survival, development, health and self-fulfilment at every stage of life.¹ Safety and security is such a natural and obvious human need that one tends only to think about it when it is under threat or lost. Although it is an everyday concept it may not be fully understood in the context of nursing in disasters. Andersson states, that aid workers function under difficult and

sometimes dangerous circumstances.² In certain cases, the mere presence of international medical teams helps to promote the safety of victims, in accordance with international humanitarian law. This law is a set of rules aimed at limiting violence and protecting the fundamental rights of individuals, civilian non-combatants, in time of armed conflict.³ International assistance organisations have to cope with security concerns and violence directed at both displaced populations and relief workers.⁴ Whilst there is some international agreement about the safety of health workers, this may be insufficient for individual protection.

In 1994, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) published a *Code of Conduct* for humanitarian organisations and invited NGOs and others to become signatories to the doc-



ument. The *Code of Conduct* defines a **disaster** as a calamitous event resulting in loss of life, great human suffering and distress, and large-scale material damage.⁵ **Safe** means being out of danger, not threatened by harm, remain unharmed, not able to be hurt, protected. **Safe and sound** means completely undamaged and does not involve any risk. To be in safe hands may be considered as being carefully looked after. **Safety** is the condition of being safe, freedom from danger, harm or risk. **Secure** means safe, protected against danger or risk, secure from attack, having no doubt, fear or anxiety. Secure can refer to holding very tightly or to make safe. **Security** is the state of being secure, a protection against lawbreaking, violence, enemy acts, escape from prison; precautions taken to guard against theft, sabotage or finding out someone's secrets or personal information.⁶

A mission for disaster relief is not just a foreign adventure; it is more about long hours of demanding physical and mental effort and very often exposure to various real dangers. The work is done in a context of distress and instability, job insecurity and demands for high performance. In some circumstances the job can be life threatening; the murder of colleagues is not unknown in recent years.⁷ Most humanitarian organisations report that the

number of deaths among relief workers has recently been increasing.⁸ A special report claims that humanitarian workers are often deliberately targeted.⁹ According to Pratt, the targeting of international groups is increasingly seen as a way to attract global media attention to local causes.¹⁰ Nurses are likely to play an integral role both in the short- and long-term phases of the disaster relief process. Their professional expertise will be essential to managing the health-related problems created by disasters. However, in this capacity, nurses may be exposed to risks on a scale that substantially exceeds their experiences in the industrialised world.¹¹ Safety awareness is crucial in all humanitarian work. Today, aid organisations have become far more security conscious and are emphasising risk management and implementing basic security procedures. McCall and Salama say the rapid growth, in capacity and number, of humanitarian relief organisations in response to complex humanitarian emergencies has created concern about the professionalism of their relief workers.¹² Procedures for recruitment, selection, training, field support, and follow-up of relief workers vary widely. To be both successful and safe in complex humanitarian emergencies, well-trained health providers may need to be aware of integrated management, communication, negotiation and mediation, security and

perhaps even aspects of International Humanitarian Law.¹³

In order to maintain a stable existence, physical safety and security must be prioritised. This includes not only freedom from fear for one's life due to disaster, but security from banditry, from the fear of having personal possessions stolen by looters, and from the fear that disaster will lead to the permanent loss of one's land or home. Safety and integrity of one's family must be ensured.¹⁴ Even with the protection provided through a carefully created security profile, field workers are still vulnerable.¹⁵ Van Brabant says that better practice in the management of security is an urgent need, as security has become a serious concern among aid agencies, particularly since a recent series of targeted killings of aid workers.¹⁶

In 1997, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) noted that fully two-thirds of all staff, international and national, now work in security-risk areas, defined as areas in which some special security measures are recommended, such as Kosovo and many African countries. One-third serve in particularly hazardous duty stations, defined as locations where life is constantly in danger, such as Colombia, Sierra Leone, Chechnya and Afghanistan. Gnaedinger expressed con-

cern about different humanitarian agencies having different security policies in place.¹⁷ The *Code of Conduct* states that intergovernmental organisations should extend security protection provided for UN organisations to their operational partners, where it is so requested.¹⁸ Some relief organisations have begun to incorporate strategies in four main areas: staff preparation; personal and corporate security plans and guidelines; evacuation procedures; and mental health services.¹⁹ However, the responsibility for the security of aid workers seems to be unresolved. Van Brabant states, that we need agreed sector-wide standards that clarify the minimum requirements in terms of awareness, knowledge and skill with regard to security issues for aid workers, and similar minimum requirements for organisations sending personnel to dangerous environments.²⁰

Literature review

Most professions associated with danger or risk of injury or death have protected themselves using many safety features and guidelines. The army, fire fighters and pilots are included in the list of professions which take safety very seriously. As far as is known, disaster and aid workers are not to be found in this list. In a survey carried

out by the American Nurses Association 88% of nurses reported that health and safety concerns influence their decisions to continue working in the field of nursing and the kind of nursing work they choose to perform. More than 70% of nurses cited the acute and chronic effects of stress and overwork as one of their top three health and safety concerns. ²¹

During the last seven years, several aid organisations have published new books that go some way to raising the profile of safety in the minds of disaster workers and help to identify the major safety issues. But the publication of a book does not guarantee it will be read by all practitioners. The books may be read by some, but not understood by all. Those who do read

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them and do understand, do not always act in accordance with the best practice they recommend. All books about safety and security seem to cover similar issues, ranging from major threats to personal security. The United Nations Security Co-ordination Office published an *aide-mémoire* called *Security Awareness* (1995).²² Save the Children Fund published a book called *Safety First, Protecting NGO Employees Who Work in Areas of Conflict* (1998).²³ The International Committee of the Red Cross published *Staying Alive: Safety and Security Guidelines for Humanitarian Volunteers in Conflict Areas* (1999).²⁴ MARC Publications published *World Vision Security Manual: Safety Awareness for Aid Workers* (1999)²⁵ and the United Nations *OCHA Orientation Handbook on Complex Emergencies* (1999).²⁶ All these easy-to-read books give relief workers good advice which seems easy to integrate into practice. However, often the level of research and practice on which the texts are based is unclear.

There is little published data about the actual level of awareness that non-army health workers have of their personal risks in war. However, there is some clear data about the level of risk itself. Sheik *et al* analysed 375 deaths among humanitarian workers between 1985 and 1998. It was

reported that 253 (68%) deaths were caused by intentional violence involving guns or other weapons. Most victims died in crossfire or in cold blood. Unintentional violence caused 27 deaths (7%), motor vehicles 64 (17%), and other causes including disease and natural causes accounted for 31 (8%). Cause of death was unavailable for six workers. This paper gives an up-to-date and fair account of the situation.²⁷ But it leaves many questions open, such as: who should be responsible for adequate training in security?

Natural disasters

Natural disasters frequently threaten security, depending upon the nature of the event.²⁸ Sheik *et al* noted deaths caused by motor vehicles, accidents related to carelessness, drowning and aircraft crashes, diseases, alcohol related deaths and one suicide.²⁹

Macnair carried out a large survey among staff of 12 aid agencies, in which she tried to find out what kind of skills, abilities and training are needed in humanitarian relief work.³⁰ In her questionnaire there were several questions about safety, such as: 'Were you adequately briefed on security?' and 'Did you ever have anxieties about your personal safety?' Poor security was identified as a major stress factor for expatri-

ate workers. Security guidelines and planning for contingencies were not as good as they should have been.

Van Brabant (2001) points out that the safety and security of national staff in general remains a serious weakness, and there is even resistance to facing the issue. Context-specific threats are noteworthy, such as problems operating in jungle and desert areas, high mountains with heavy snowfall, or in situations of unsafe local transport. He also states, that where managers are not committed, the attitude is 'security expenditure is the first thing we can cut'. Where they are committed: 'expenditure on security is never blocked' and 'using the security argument is the best way of getting a request accepted'. He divides safety and security training into

four different stages: general crisis management training; security management training; incident survival training; and security awareness training.³¹

We have identified a gap in knowledge of what level of awareness disaster nurses have and what their attitude is to the risks to which they may expose themselves. This paper addresses the gap and highlights areas in which training is needed.

Background and aims

The FRC has had delegates on international missions for over 100 years. The provision of a Basic Training Course for future delegates began in 1969. This one-week long intensive programme includes a short introduction to security issues. Currently, within the Red Cross Movement, only the FRC organises a three-day-long second-level security training course for delegates. This course started in 1997 and it includes both theory and practical training. The security training has proved to be both necessary and beneficial to the participants.

This study aims to develop a tool with which to examine, measure and reveal the gaps in knowledge of safety and security awareness among nurses in disaster settings. The results will help to identify any



issues for which they need more training and knowledge. The intention is to carry out a pilot study of the questionnaire to assess the level of awareness of safety issues in disaster settings. The questionnaire could be used at a later date as part of planning for safety training for humanitarian aid workers.

Method

Following a thorough review of existing safety and security literature a questionnaire including 65 mainly semi-structured and a few open-ended questions was devised and tested with 26 postgraduate students of disaster relief nursing during the autumn of 2001. As requested by the FRC, the questionnaire was written in English. The FRC approved the study, and the questionnaires were sent from FRC Headquarters in Helsinki so names and addresses remained confidential.

An explanatory letter together with the questionnaire was sent to all 203 nurses and midwives in the FRC International Delegate Roster excluding those who have chosen not to give the FRC their address for any research or other purposes. One month later, a reminder notice was published in the Roster leaflet. Informed consent was implicit in the active participation of the students and disaster relief

workers who filled in and returned the questionnaire.

Reliability and validity was addressed through pilot work with student volunteers and consultation with subject experts, respectively. The Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyse the data using descriptive statistics.

Results

Out of 203 questionnaires distributed, 17 were sent to delegates on a current mission or permanently living abroad (for example, in Afghanistan, Fiji, FYR Macedonia, PDR Korea, Switzerland). Overall, 85 (36%) returned their completed questionnaires. Whilst this response rate is low, it is similar to a previous survey undertaken among all the delegates about their competencies (33%). The average age of the respondents was 48.5 years (they ranged from 31–74 years); 78 women and 7 men answered and their experience in nursing ranged from 3–40 years; 70 had been on a mission at least once; average number of missions was 4.3, with two respondents having been on 15 missions. The average experience on missions was 28 months, and the maximum 12 years. Of those who responded, many (34) had worked in a natural disaster and 38 had been sent to an active war zone. Most of

the respondents, 53 (62%), had received security training in addition to the basic training; two respondents did not answer this question.

The respondents were asked what the term 'safety' means to them in their work. For most respondents it meant the ability to concentrate on their work without interruption, to fulfil their tasks and perform their duties properly. In other words, to be able to do disaster relief work without fear of losing their own life or being injured.

Security problems

A significant majority of respondents, 44 (63%), reported violence related to a conflict at their postings; 34 (49%) reported civil unrest; and 25 (36%) had seen widespread criminality. Danger of landmines, breaking curfew, violently drunk soldiers and unsafe traffic problems were also mentioned. Most of the respondents felt adequately briefed on security: 45 (64%) before going; 45 (64%) on arrival; 37 (53%) during regular meetings; and 37 (53%) when necessary. A small number, 8 (11%), reported themselves to have been inadequately briefed; and 3 (4.3%) not briefed at all.

The 70 respondents, who had been on a mission, were asked if they have ever been

anxious about their personal safety in their field work: 2 (2.9%) said most of the time; 17 (24%) some of time; 41 (59%) occasionally; and only 11 (16%) had never been anxious. When asked, 'Have you ever been in a situation over which you have had no control and, for example, your life has been in danger?', 17 (24%) answered several times, and 18 (26%) said once. Amongst those who had never been on a mission, only one person had once been in a situation like that: 13 (19%) had been threatened physically, and 24 (34%) verbally by a patient, internally displaced person (IDP) or refugee. When asked if they had ever been scared of serious injury or death during a mission: 1 (1.4%) said quite often; 15 (21%) sometimes; 33 (47%) seldom; and 19 (27%) never. A few, 3 (4.3%), of those who had been on a mission reported that they had experienced physical sexual harassment, and 6 (8.6%) verbal abuse.

There were 14 (20%) who said they had never had to consider their personal water and food security, and only 15 (21%) said they had always been able to influence their personal food security in the field.

A number of those with field experience, 14 (20%), and one (6.7%) with no experience said they had sometimes felt pres-



AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan struggles to regain stability after the defeat of the Taliban regime. The ICRC programmes focus on getting emergency food and other vital aid to people affected by conflicts or drought. IFRC helped people after the earthquake in March 2002 in Baghlan province.







sured to do something unsafe in their work; 18 (21%) said they had occasionally; and 42 (49%) said they'd never been pressured in this way.

In response to the statement, 'Employees should be encouraged to raise safety concerns as well as solutions', 70 (82%) agreed absolutely, and 10 (12%) said sometimes. There was no significant difference between those who had received training and those who had not.

Most of the respondents, 75 (88%), thought one should point out a safety problem without necessarily having a solution; only 5 (5.9%) thought one should not.

Almost all of the respondents, 79 (93%), agreed that a team member has an obligation to report security problems; the same number felt they have the right to report safety problems. When asked, 'Have you been encouraged to report safety

problems?', 51 (60%) said yes and mostly by the head of delegation. In response to, 'Do you think your supervisor gave serious consideration to the matter when you pointed out a safety problem?', 30 (36%) said always, 22 (26%) said sometimes, and 2 (2.4%) seldom. One (1.2%) respondent, who had field experience, said the supervisor never gave serious consideration to safety.

When asked, 'Who, in your opinion, is mainly responsible for your safety in a disaster?': most of them, 66 (78%), replied self; some, 37 (43%), stated their employer; and 21 (25%) said the government of the host country; and 14 (16%) said their boss. According to UNHCR, the primary responsibility for the safety of humanitarian aid staff members rests with the host country.³²

When asked, 'At what point do you think the evacuation of staff should be carried out?', 62 (73%) replied when the organisation decides it is necessary; 41 (48%) said when the aid worker thinks so; and 31 (36%) when the host country says so.

Stress and work load

When asked if workload can effect the safety of workers, 49 (58%) of the respondents said yes it does; 12 (14%) re-

plied almost always; and 19 (22%) said sometimes. Some of those who had been on a mission, 26 (38%), had experienced a situation where the work overload of a colleague or oneself had actually effected security.

The respondents were asked about strategies to reduce stress. The most often used technique among experienced delegates 62 (89%) was talking about problems; 51 (73%) said being in contact with friends and family at home; 45 (64%) socialising; 39 (56%) exercise and sports; 37 (53%) being on your own; 28 (41%) being in contact with the employer; 21 (30%) relationships; 18 (26%) talking about unrelated subjects; 18 (26%) sleeping more than usual; 16 (23%) working fewer hours; and 14 (20%) working longer hours; 13 (19%) smoking more than usual; 9 (13%) meditation and yoga; 7 (10%) drinking more than usual; and 4 (5.6%) sleeping less than usual. When asked about drugs three people answered that they had used sleeping pills to reduce stress. No other drugs were mentioned by the respondents. Other strategies mentioned were reading books, writing a diary and listening to favourite music. Some nurses, 39 (47%), thought coping mechanisms always have an impact on safety; 35 (42%) thought they sometimes had an impact; and 4 (4.8%) thought they had no impact.

The majority, 56 (66%), said they know how to prevent harmful consequences of stress and frightening situations; 21 (25%) said they know a little; and 3 (3.5%) said that they did not know how to do so.

Of the respondents who had been on a mission, when asked if they or their team members had ever made a mistake due to fatigue: 24 (34%) answered never; 5 (7.1%) once; 35 (50%) a few times; and 1 (1.4%) quite often.

Attitudes

Several questions covered attitude to risk. The question, 'Have you ever knowingly jeopardised your personal safety in your work?' revealed a difference between those who had been on a mission and those who had not: for the answer *sometimes* it was 11 (16%) against 2 (13%); *occasionally* 17 (24%) against 2 (13%); and for *never* it was 41 (59%) against 10 (67%). The reasons given for jeopardising one's own safety were: lack of clean water; to reach wounded people; and travelling in unsafe conditions.

When asked, 'Is it important for the safety of an aid worker to receive detailed information about religious customs of the country?', 73 (86%) responded that it was

very important; and 10 (12%) thought quite important.

Approximately half of the respondents, 42, (49%), thought the different ethnic origin of an aid worker could have an impact on the safety of the patient, IDP or refugee; 46 (54%) on the aid worker; 40 (47%) on the mission; and 19 (22%) thought it would have no effect.

A great majority, 62 (73%), thought having a healthy lifestyle would have a big impact on safety; 19 (22%) thought it sometimes would; and 1 (1.2%) thought it would have very little. When asked, 'How can you promote a healthy lifestyle in the delegation?', 53 (76%) of those with experience and 7 (47%) with no experience said by setting a good example; 60 (86%) against 5 (33%) thought by creating a good team spirit; and 7 (8.2%) thought otherwise, such as by increasing information and raising awareness.

Just over half the respondents, 44 (52%), thought fear in an aid worker has an impact on safety for the team; 35 (41%) thought it had little impact; and only 2 (2.4%) said none at all. Of those who have been on a mission, 34 (49%) thought the security of several individuals may depend on one person's reactions and attitudes.

Of those who had no experience of a mission only one person (6.7%) thought fear would have an impact; likewise, of those who thought it was possible, 35 (50%) had mission experience and 11 (73%) had no experience.

In response to the question, 'Do you think you have the right to dress as you want even if your colleagues do not approve?', all 69 (100%) who'd had field experience said no; and most novices, 12 (92%), agreed; 18 (26%) respondents with experience and one (6.7%) without experience said inappropriate clothing can frequently jeopardise the safety of the team; 51 (73%) experienced and 12 (80%) with no experience thought this could sometimes be possible.

Over half of the respondents with experience, 37 (53%), and only 4 (27%) with no experience, thought team members should always be held accountable for their safety violations or taking unnecessary risks.

Many, 40 (47%), thought every employee should always have the right to a safe assignment, 20 (23%) thought mostly, and 19 (22%) if possible. One person (1.2%) thought that it not possible.

Most respondents, 66 (78%), thought that every employee should have the right to refuse or interrupt an assignment or an action because s/he perceives it to be unsafe; 17 (20%) said yes, sometimes. Nobody denied this right.

No respondents wanted to always have armed protection in their work, but 28 (33%) would like to have it if needed; 30 (43%) with field experience but only 3 (20%) with no experience said if required; 20 (23%) said never. Similarly, nobody would like to carry a personal gun at all the times; 5 (7.1%) experienced and 4 (27%) with no experience would like to carry one sometimes and 74 (88%) said never.

Knowledge

When asked what kind of natural disaster would be most dangerous for an aid worker, 49 (58%) answered earthquake; 20 (24%) volcano; 16 (19%) floods; 14 (17%) hurricane; 4 (4.8%) drought; and 4 (4.8%) tsunami.

Considering how best to protect oneself against gunfire, most respondents, 35 (66%), had received training in the use of bunkers for defence purposes. Some, 42 (49%) referred to sandbags; 19 (22%) to

walls; 3 (3.5%) to trees; and one (1.2%) suggested a car door . . . Helmets and bullet-proof jackets were also suggested.

The respondents were asked about several skills, the results can be seen in Table 1.

Traffic accidents are one of the most common causes of injuries and deaths during

a mission. Of the respondents, 7 (8.3%) thought driving a car him/herself would be the safest option in a foreign country; 10 (12%) said it would be an expatriate driver; 66 (79%) a local driver; and 4 (4.8%) thought it safest to use a taxi. A driving licence from their home country was held by 54 (63%); an international driving licence was held by 48 (56%); and 4 (4.7%) did not have a driving licence.



Training

In fire fighting, a minority of respondents, 21 (25%), had received theoretical training; 33 (39%) practical training; and 31 (36%) had no training at all.

For helicopter operations or evacuations, 9 (11%) had received theoretical training; 11 (13%) had done both theory and prac-

tice; and 60 (71%) had no training. More training was expected about biological weapons, evacuations, local situations, and discussion of real case studies.

Media

Today, the media has an important role in every mission and media training is a part of the Basic Training Course. Of the re-

secure02

QUESTION	Yes I have done it	Yes I think so	I am not quite sure	No
Do you know how to build a sand shelter	14 (16%)	35 (41%)	15 (18%)	18 (21%)
Do you know how to change a punctured tyre on a car	44 (52%)	29 (34%)	6 (7.1%)	5 (5.9%)
Are you comfortable in driving a four wheel drive car	61 (72%)	12 (14%)	3 (3.5%)	6 (7.1%)
Are you comfortable in using a short-wave radio	44 (52%)	14 (16%)	10 (12%)	4 (4.7%)

Table 1. Showing results of testing the basic knowledge of disaster relief nurses and midwives.

spondents, 26 (31%) said they had dealt with the media several times; 27 (32%) a few times; 13 (15%) had received training; and 5 (5.9%) said it is a necessary part of their work. 16 (19%) said they are not comfortable in dealing with the media but they manage it; 4 (4.7%) said they never give interviews; and 4 (4.7%) did not know how they felt about it. 27 (32%) thought there is a safety risk in dealing with the

media; 51 (60%) said it is possibly risky; 2 (2.4%) said there is no risk; and 3 (3.5%) did not know. When asked what kind of media training they would like to receive: 30 (35%) mentioned a lecture within another course; 27 (32%) a course over a few days; 31 (36%) a leaflet with advice and guidelines; and 3 (3.5%) said they needed no training.



Discussion and conclusion

Only 85 out of 203 delegates completed their questionnaire, a disappointingly low response rate. However, most of the respondents were very experienced disaster relief nurses who had each been on an average of 4.3 missions, totalling an average of 28 months. The nurses seemed very keen to tell about their experiences, several comments were written about the importance of such a study. Safety and security were identified as very important issues, but not always as the responsibility of the nurse. In most of the issues there was no significant difference between the 53 (62%) who had attended the Security Training Course and those who'd had only basic delegate training. The security course may raise awareness but that is difficult to measure. Naturally, nobody feels they are an expert after such a short course. Nonetheless, the Security Training Course was highly recommended by the respondents.

Some differences could be seen between the experienced nursing delegates and those with no field experience. This was

especially obvious in questions such as: 'Have you ever felt pressured to do something that was unsafe in your work?' and 'Have you ever knowingly jeopardised your personal safety in your work?' The experienced nurses had much higher positive response rates than those with no experience. These findings must be interpreted in the light of literature as there are no earlier published studies of safety and security in disaster relief nursing.

The relief operations provided cannot be carried out unless the security of the humanitarian personnel involved is guaranteed, but the very nature of the activity means they are always likely to be exposed to security incidents. Regardless of the measures taken, in the field a certain degree of risk remains inevitable, and expatriate staff have to learn to live with this.³³ In this study, most of the respondents, 40 (47%), thought they should have the right to a safe assignment. However, nobody would like to carry a personal gun. Comments showed how well Red Cross principles had been adopted: a gun cannot solve the problem; if you kill you will be killed; gun carrying would only provoke more violence.

By its very nature, complex emergency work involves threats to security and places disaster relief nurses in situations of stress and insecurity. In this study, the nurses showed a great range of strategies to reduce stress. Some of the respondents said they do not know how to prevent the harmful consequences of stress; this gap in their knowledge should be carefully reviewed and appropriate strategies implemented.

Recommendations for future research are to develop the questionnaire used in this study in order to better detect significant gaps in disaster relief nurses' knowledge. Attitudes to, and knowledge of safety and security could be measured with this instrument to evaluate the quality of security training.

Without adequate security measures and preparation being put in place aid work will be curtailed. This must be kept in mind when discussing safety and security within disaster relief nursing. The main conclusion of this study is that professional nurses need special training in safety and security before going on a mission. There is room for improvement in safety and security preparedness for nurses, and this is an important issue for all humanitarian aid organisations.

Acknowledgements

This article is written as a thesis for the Disaster Relief Nursing MSc, University of Ulster.

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