

To Deliver and Stay Secure. Adhering to the Four Humanitarian Principles in the Face of Kidnapping. Threats in Insecure Environments

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Adhering to the Four Humanitarian Principles in the Face of Kidnapping Threats in Insecure Environments

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Abstract

Humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence provide the foundation for humanitarian action. These principles are coming under increasing pressure due to an increase in attacks of violence against aid workers and kidnapping incidents. Most of these kidnappings take place in highly insecure environments, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Republic of Sudan, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic. This paper draws on the 2011 UN OCHA report “To Stay and Deliver” by outlining remaining risks, vulnerabilities and mitigation measures in order “to deliver and stay secure”. For aid workers and their organizations to be able to deliver assistance, it is imperative to have an adequate level of security. Organizations need to strike the right balance between the provision of assistance in line with the humanitarian principles and the duty of care towards their staff.

* This paper is a revised version of a Master’s thesis originally submitted at the Joint European Master’s Programme in International Humanitarian Action (NOHA) at the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict (IFHV) at the Ruhr University Bochum.

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List of Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
ANSO	Afghanistan NGO Security Office
AWSD	Aid Worker Security Database
BINGO	Balochistan INGO Consortium-Security Management Support Project
CIC	Centre on International Cooperation
CNES	Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales
EISF	European Interagency Security Forum
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
GPR	Good Practice Review
HPCR	Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IASMN	Inter-Agency Security Management Network
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
INSO	International NGO Safety Organization
IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
MdM	Médecins du Monde
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
NSP	NGO Safety Project
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OFDA	Office of U.S Foreign Disaster Assistance
PHF	Pakistan Humanitarian Forum
RPAS	Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems
SAG	InterAction Security Advisory Group
SiND	Security in Numbers Database
SIOC	United Nations Security Information and Operation Centres

SLT	Saving Lives Together
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SRA	Security Risk Assessment
SRM	Security Risk Management
SSAFE	Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments
SSS	Safety and Security Services
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
UN MOSS	United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standards
UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNSECOORD	Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator
UNSMIN	United Nations Security Managers Information Network
VTS	Vehicle Tracking Solution
WFP	United Nations World Food Programme

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I. Introduction

We are not perfect, we are not superior, we are not the world's fire brigade, we are not superheroes, we don't stop wars, we know that humanitarian response is not a substitute for political solution. Yet we do this because one life matters. Sometimes that's the only difference you make – one individual, one family, a small group of individuals – and it matters.

(Vincent Cochetel, TEDxPlaceDesNations, 2014)

Vincent Cochetel, who was kidnapped for 317 days while working for the UN High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR) in Chechnya in 1998, cuts right to the heart of the matter. Humanitarians provide assistance and protection in order to save lives. Yet, they are not immune to life-threatening acts themselves. They increasingly face acts of violence and have to fear for their own lives. Concerning insecurity of humanitarians, kidnappings of aid workers have increased fourfold over the last decade (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.1). Kidnappings of humanitarian aid workers capture headlines on a regular basis. With increasing frequency and a record level of incidents, international organizations face the dilemma of having the responsibility and willingness to provide humanitarian assistance in unsafe environments while at the same time ensuring the security of those who provide the aid on the ground. Furthermore, kidnapping incidents undermine the operational effectiveness and efficiency of organizations as well as their staff who can only fulfil their mandate if they can work in a relatively safe environment.

This paper argues that there is a tension between an international organization's ability to both ensure the security of staff from kidnapping threats while at the same time fulfilling the humanitarian principles. The paper aims to: (i) examine remaining security gaps and risks with a particular focus on kidnapping of humanitarian aid workers in high-risk countries; and (ii) suggest ways on how staff security measures, security risk management strategies and trainings can be further strengthened and made more effective with regard to the prevention of kidnapping. The paper will elaborate on the following main research question: To what extent do security measures taken by international organizations, including the UN, ICRC and NGOs, have to be revised or improved in order to reduce the vulnerability of their staff to kidnapping threats in the five highest risk countries in line with the four humanitarian principles?

The terms security and kidnapping have to be treated as distinct concepts from safety and protection as well as hostage-taking and abduction.¹

1.1. Global Statistics and Relevance

The need and importance of this research can be seen in different aspects. A first and foremost justification of the research topic is given by its high relevance mirrored by quantitative data. Between 2000 and 2015, more than 3457 humanitarian aid workers, including 2913 national and 544 international, were kidnapped, injured or killed (IRIN, 2015). Following a study by UN OCHA, kidnappings remain the fastest growing type of attack against humanitarians (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.11). A 66 per cent increase in the number of aid worker victims can be identified between 2012 and 2013 (Stoddard, Harmer and Ryou, 2014, p.2). According to the Aid Worker Security Report 2014, the year 2013 has set a new benchmark for the number of humanitarian workers being killed, wounded or kidnapped – see Figure 1.



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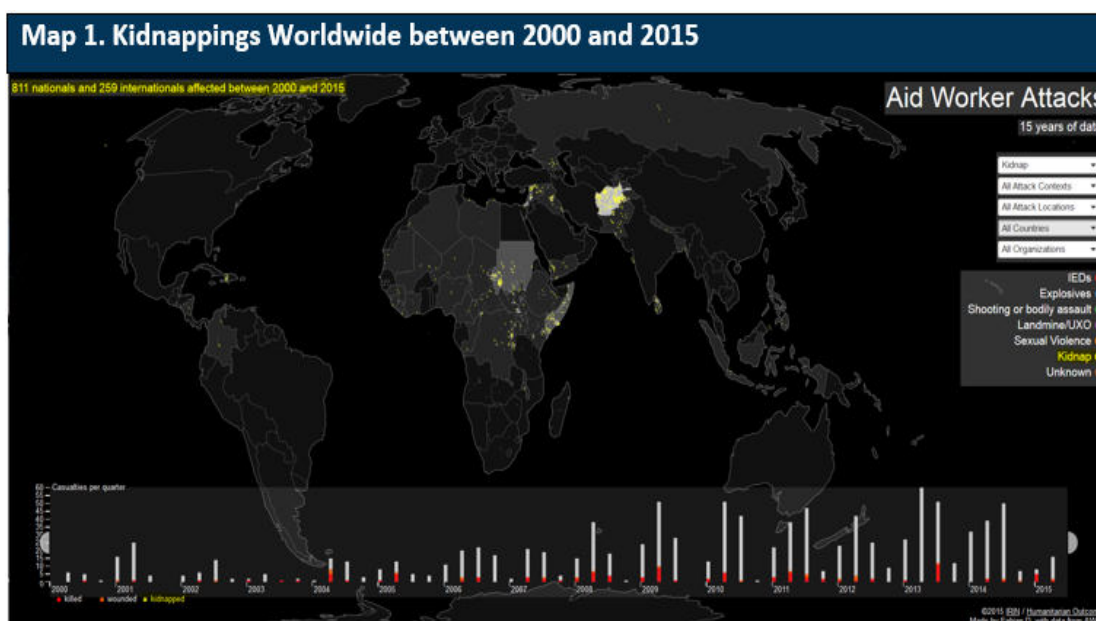
¹ The term 'kidnapping' is sometimes used interchangeable with 'hostage-taking' or 'abduction' as all three refer to a type of disappearance. However, as they do not have the same precise meaning, a clarification of the different terms is necessary. "Kidnapping refers to forced capture and detention with the explicit purpose of obtaining something in return for the captive's release" (ODI, 2010, p.229), whereas abduction "[...] refers to the forcible capture and removal of a person in an illegal way, but which does not lead to any demand" (Van Brabant, 2000, p.180) and hostage-taking as a "[...] term is used to describe a situation of siege. In such a situation the criminals and their hostages have been located and surrounded by security forces; the criminals threaten the hostages as part of their strategy of escape" (Van Brabant, 2000, p.181). Only an incident that lasts at least 24 hours is classified as a kidnapping, otherwise, it does not appear in the data (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2015). Interchangeability of terms is also presented with 'security', 'safety' and 'protection'. Whereas the term security refers to "freedom from risk or harm resulting from violence or other intentional acts" (HPN, 2010, p.xx), the term safety relates to "freedom from risk or harm as a result of unintentional acts (accidents, natural phenomenon or illness)" (HPN, 2010, p.xx) and protection refers to "the protection of civilians and non-combatants who are not aid agency staff" (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.xiv). Kidnapping is an intentional act and therefore safety as a concept does not apply, neither does protection as it excludes aid workers.

More than ten humanitarian workers have been kidnapped every month in 2013. Especially in high-risk countries, kidnappings are among the most frequent type of targeted violence against aid workers (Armstrong, 2013, p.10). Harmer, Stoddard and Toth (2013, p.4) observe that “not only have kidnappings increased in absolute numbers and as a proportion of overall attacks on aid workers, but also the average global rates of kidnapping among the field population of aid workers have risen by 28 per cent in the past three years compared to the prior period.” The number of kidnappings have increased in absolute and relative terms and remain unresolved (HPCR, 2014). Over ten years, the number of aid workers being kidnapped has increased from seven in 2003 to 134 in 2013². Furthermore, the Aid Worker Security Report 2014 (Stoddard, Harmer and Ryou, 2014, p.3) shows that 87 per cent of aid worker victims of deliberate violence are local employees working on aid projects for NGOs and Red Cross/ Crescent societies in their home country. Fassin (2012, p.240) outlines that national and international aid workers are often seen as unequally valuable, although they remain equally vulnerable.

Secondly, the importance of the topic is indicated by the consequences of kidnapping. Even though 86 per cent of the abductees survive their kidnapping, periods of captivity often lead to traumatic effects for the aid workers as well as psychological pressure for their families (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.1). One can barely comprehend the physical impact of being handcuffed, blindfolded, beaten, threatened, and deprived of sunlight, food, hygiene and air. As well as the psychological and mental impact of being at the mercy of someone every minute of the day, being unsure of what will happen the very next second, unable to move, talk to someone or listen to music, go through mock executions, live in isolation and fight against the own thoughts – just to mention a few aspects. Vincent Cochetel (2014) remarks “[...] darkness also creates images and thoughts that are not normal. One part of your brain wants you to resist, to shout, to cry, and the other part of the brain orders you to shut up and just go through it. It's a constant internal debate; there is no one to arbitrate.” Moreover, the kidnapping of one staff member signals a risk for other aid workers of that organization as well as other agencies in the area. Kidnappings are threats to organizations as they steer the debate towards ransom payments, media attention, management of the press and forms of negotiation up to the question of the organizations’ ongoing mandate in the country. Numerous examples have shown that kidnap situation may lead to suspensions of programmes or overall withdrawal of organizations from certain countries (HPN, 2010, p.7). The management of a kidnapping requires time, specialised expertise and collaboration at the headquarters and field offices. Coordination becomes even more complex, if aid workers from different organizations and different nationalities are collectively kidnapped (Van Brabant, 2000, p.193). Perpetrators often view humanitarian workers as “wealthy and soft targets” (Gordon and Toase, 2001, p.164). Kidnappings offer a rather cost-effective and lucrative tactic with high political impact, on the local, regional or global level, and a propaganda tool to demonstrate power (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.11). Therefore, kidnapping can be characterised as a “copycat crime” which can rapidly be duplicated (Van Brabant, 2000, p.181).

² Data of the Aid Worker Security Reports excludes those who have been killed as a consequence of their abduction as well as UN peacekeepers and human rights workers.

Thirdly, the relevance of the topic can be seen when looking at the future prospects and trends. It is very unlikely that the number of kidnappings will abate in the near future. Rather the opposite must be assumed as data is indicating that the number of aid workers being kidnapped has quadrupled over the last decade (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.1) – see Map 1. Due to the growing human costs, especially in high-risk environments, organizations have tend to become rather risk-averse for a long time (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.64). Organizations have only recently changed their mind-set focusing more on a “how to stay” instead of a “when to leave” approach (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.2) as well as investing more into Security Risk Management (SRM) (HPCR, 2014). Thereby, the delivery of protection and humanitarian assistance that is in line with the core humanitarian principles will be further jeopardized (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.59). When asked about his motivation to continue his job after experiencing his kidnapping, Vincent Cochetel (2014) answers: “If I had quit, that would have meant my kidnapper had won. They would have taken my soul and my humanity.” Of course, humanitarians are not the only target for kidnappers, yet they tend to be a more visible and soft target (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.11). All these personal experiences, numbers, factors and trends underline the importance and the need for this research. Organizations need to be able to fulfil their mandate by making their staff feel secure and protected to carry out their mission.



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1.2. Limitations

Security threats concerning kidnapping are a neglected area of study and research, as the focus has been more on fatalities and other high-threat incidents or on the dealing with actual kidnapping incidents. This paper does not intend to deal with insecurity incidents or threats in general, but rather focus on the threat and prevention of kidnapping. By focusing on aspects of prevention, recommendations for behaviour of abductees or negotiation processes with kidnappers will not be considered. The sensitivity of the topic makes research especially difficult. Three categories of humanitarian aid providing

agencies are taken into consideration, including United Nations (UN) agencies, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and non-governmental-organizations (NGOs). Furthermore, the focus on highest-risk countries does not mean that countries with lower level of insecurity deserve less attention, but due to the limits of this paper, a choice has to be made. Kidnappings mainly take place in countries, which are characterized by high security risks due to armed conflicts or insurgencies as well as failures of governance. According to the Aid Worker Security Report 2015 (Humanitarian Outcome, 2015, p.1), violent attacks against aid workers can be identified in over thirty countries worldwide, but three quarters of those attacks occurred just in the following five countries – sorted by frequency: Afghanistan, Syrian Arab Republic, South Sudan, Central African Republic and Pakistan. Yet, when looking at kidnappings incidents between 2000 and 2015, the order changes slightly: (1) Afghanistan, (2) the Republic of Sudan, (3) Somalia, (4) Pakistan and (5) the Syrian Arab Republic. Therefore, those five countries are taken into consideration. For a more detailed outline of humanitarian situations and needs of the five countries – see Annex 1. The interval of 15 years has been chosen, as the focus on one specific year could be misleading. For example, a decrease in kidnap incidents can be seen in Somalia, which is mainly based on the fact that many international organizations have not been present on the ground since 2010 (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.14). While countries labelled as high-risk cannot be treated as the very same and have their own unique dynamics, they certainly have some features in common. Those five countries share longstanding internal conflicts, political instability, ongoing violence or a legacy of violence and weak institutional capacity (Armstrong, 2013, p.25) as well as high kidnapping incidents – see Table 1.

Table 1. Kidnappings and kidnap-killings between 2000 and 2015 for national and international staff in the five high-risk countries						
Country \ Incident	National Staff Kidnapping	National Staff kidnappings & Kidnap-killing	International Staff Kidnapping	International Staff kidnappings & Kidnap-killing	Total Kidnapping	Total kidnappings & Kidnap-killing
Afghanistan	323	360 (37)	34	41 (7)	357	401
Sudan	100	103 (3)	25	25 (0)	125	128
Somalia	44	53 (9)	42	45 (3)	86	98
Pakistan	51	60 (9)	4	5 (1)	55	65
Syrian Arab Republic	30	32 (2)	13	17 (4)	43	49
Total	548	608	118	133	729	741

Table 1 shows that the most striking number is the information on the total kidnap victims in Afghanistan. 401 aid workers have been kidnapped over the last ten years, including 44, who have been killed during their kidnapping. The first kidnapping incident in the considered interval from 2000 until 2015 is marked in Somalia in July 2000. According

to the data of the Aid Workers Security Database, the first kidnapping incident in the 15-year interval took place in Afghanistan in 2005, in Pakistan in 2008 and in Syria in March 2013. Whereas workers in Somalia and Sudan have experienced constant kidnap incidents over the last fifteen years, 49 people have been kidnapped in Syria in just two years. With three nationals and no internationals killed during their kidnapping, Sudan shows the lowest number of kidnap-killings. According to the kidnap incidents, national and international aid workers show almost equal numbers in Somalia. Aid workers in Afghanistan experience a large number of short-term kidnappings. NGOs experience by far the highest numbers of kidnappings – see Table 2. However, it has to be mentioned that they also have more staff on the ground than the UN and the ICRC. 21 ICRC members have been kidnapped between 2006 and 2014, in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan and Syria. UN staff has experienced a steady increase in staff being kidnapped, reaching a peak in 2013 and 2014 (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2015).

Table 2. Kidnappings plus Kidnap- killings per Organization between 2000 and 2015 in the five high-risk countries			
Organization \ Country	UN	ICRC	NGOs (INGOs)
Afghanistan	43	11	341 (172)
Sudan	43	3	82 (73)
Somalia	29	0	69 (57)
Pakistan	7	1	57 (33)
Syrian Arab Republic	19	6	24 (22)
Total	141	21	573 (357)

1.3. Outline of the Paper

In order to provide an adequate answer to the main research question, the paper is divided into seven chapters. After the introduction, the second chapter provides a review of the existing literature, in order to analyse the key issues raised by authors, scholars and practitioners. The third chapter touches upon the research methodology and the theoretical framework. The fourth chapter analyses remaining risks and challenges. It addresses the following question: What are remaining constraints and risks for organizations in order to lower the kidnapping threat to their staff? In order to provide an answer to the question, the literature review shows that eight categories can be identified. Therefore, the fourth chapter is divided into eight sub-chapters: (1) legal protection; (2) security triangle; (3) security risk management; (4) security training; (5) staff; (6) context and location; (7) coordination and communication; and (8) humanitarian innovation and technology. The fifth chapter deals with recommendations for security improvements or revisions in order to decrease staff's vulnerability towards kidnapping. In order to address the risks analysed in the fourth chapter, the eight categories will be taken up again and will be matched with mitigation measures. Finally, conclusions are drawn and an outlook and recommendations for further research are presented.

Finally yet importantly, it should be mentioned that this paper does not intend to draw an unwarranted negative picture of the current security situation of humanitarian organizations. It aims to identify and compile remaining risks in order to consequently identify matching measures to reach more security for humanitarian workers and the delivery of aid. Furthermore, the paper hopes to stimulate the debate on the future of humanitarian aid delivery in insecure environments. Providing assistance in high-risk countries unquestionably bears a huge personal, ethical and financial challenge and immense progress has been made during the last years due to experienced and dedicated people involved. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to broaden the risk agenda by looking beyond the mere response to kidnappings, but the prevention side of operational security risk management. In line with the title of this paper, the aim is to reach a stage where humanitarians are able “to deliver and stay secure”.

2. Literature Review

Kidnappings, ambushes, attacks and the murder of humanitarian aid workers have brought security debates to the front pages as well as the professional discourse. Over the last two decades, insecurity and its related threats to humanitarian workers have become a matter of particular interest and a key element in emerging debates about aid policies and ongoing mandates (Dandoy and Pérouse de Montclos, 2013, p. 341). A survey of existing literature reveals that security issues have a long history in humanitarian action. The subject moved to the centre of concern in the 1990s, especially after the brutal assassination of six ICRC nurses in their beds in Chechnya in 1996 (Fast, 2010, p.365). Major studies on security and safety followed after 9/11 as media coverage of violent incidents in Afghanistan and Iraq increased. A peak was reached from 2003 onwards, after the targeted bombing of the Canal Hotel in Baghdad, which was used as the UN headquarters in Iraq and which resulted in 22 casualties (Fast, 2010, p.365). The same year, three French MSF members were kidnapped in Iraq. After those two incidents in 2003, the hypothetical danger became a real one (Fassin, 2012, p.236). Due to a sharp increase in numbers and well-publicized cases³, the issue of kidnap threats has gained prominence during the last years.

Even though this paper does not intend to deal with insecurity incidents and their consequences in general, but rather focus on the impact of kidnappings and possibilities of prevention, the two cannot be treated totally separated. However, it has to be mentioned, that while providing an overview and assessment on the existing literature on security and kidnappings of humanitarian aid workers, several caveats have to be made. First of all, the literature is scattered over a great number of different disciplines. Secondly, problems arise due to discrepancy between statistics and data as well as inconsistency of definitions, including “security incident”, “kidnapping” and “aid worker”. Thirdly, a variety of sources has to be taken into consideration from a broad range of organizations, countries and scholars (Fast, 2010, p.368).

³ For example, the 21-months kidnapping of who Spanish MSF workers near the Kenyan-Somali border in 2011 (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.2).

For the purpose of academic analysis, the literature studies can be classified into six theatrical groups. The first two subchapters deal with insecurity: (1) one stream focusing mainly on quantitative data collection; and (2) a second stream searching for qualitative explanations for the underlying causes of insecurity. The other four chapters deal with security: (3) literature discussing the legal protection of humanitarian aid workers; (4) security approaches and regulatory compliances; (5) literature published by international agencies including security manual and guidelines; and (6) good practice guides on security risk management.

2.1. Quantitative Data Collection

A first set of literature focuses on the quantitative documentation and mapping of security incidents and the measuring of deliberately targeted actions against humanitarian workers, with a special focus on kidnapping. Documentation can be divided, on the one hand, in publications mainly by the media, online news sources and journal articles and, on the other hand, research on data and statistics conducted by humanitarian scholars themselves. Both have in common that they focus rather on the micro-level, the individual case as well as specific patterns about the insecurity victim, the type of incident or the location (Fast, 2010, p.367). However, both types of sources vary in terms of their interests and further application of the data. Whereas the media has more of an interest in a one-time publication of the shocking details and to cover the breaking news, academics and statisticians are rather interested in capturing the dimension of security incidents and establishing a basis for further research.

In 2002, Randolph Martin (Cahill, 2002, p.225) begins his chapter “An Introduction to NGO Field Security” by outlining that “although clear data on the security of humanitarian aid workers are hard to come by, virtually anyone involved in the management and delivery of humanitarian assistance will attest to the deterioration of the security environment over the past ten to twenty years.” Mani Sheik and his colleagues were among the first ones who identified a number of risks and trends in aid workers’ security in 2000. In their article “Deaths among humanitarian workers”, they made some valuable findings concerning insecurity, including the fact that UN staff as well as office staff and drivers were most vulnerable and that one third of the deadly incidents occurred during the first 90 days of employment. On average, aid workers are 40 years old, when the incident occurs. Furthermore, deaths are rather related to the difficult and challenging adaptation to a new context rather than a lack of experience (Sheik et. al., 2000, pp.167-8). Dennis King (2002; 2004) examined sources on aid worker fatalities, which were published on ReliefWeb between 1997 and 2001 as well as again in 2003. His analysis revealed that more humanitarian workers were killed as a consequence of intentional violent acts than accidents and that national staff as well as NGO personnel are more vulnerable to violence than international staff as well as UN personnel. Additionally, since 2000, the UN is publishing statistics on safety of its staff in its annual report on “Safety and Security of

Humanitarian Personnel and Protection of UN Personnel”. Yet, these reports cover only data about UN personnel and only mention abductions.⁴

In 2006, based on Dennis King’s data, Bruderlein and Gassmann (2006, p.64) assumed that there will be 400 national and international humanitarian staff casualties and many more injuries over the next five years if sources of insecurity are not addressed. This claim has been regarded somewhat sceptically across the aid community, but the number rose further awareness (Dandoy and Pérouse de Montclos, 2013, p. 342). Two dissertations, which added further quantitative data analysis about fatality rates, have shown that this claim was not farfetched. Firstly, Bolletino (2001) analysed the creation of automated field reporting mechanisms. Later on, he published data collection for UNICEF (2003), as well as recommendations for security management (2006). Secondly, Abbott (2005 and 2006) created a database on humanitarian fatalities and concluded that most incidents happen among NGOs in Africa. Followed by research of Rowley (2005 and 2007) who added information on violence, morbidity and the death rate of humanitarians. All those studies underlined the growing threat for aid workers. Thereby, they focused more on mortality of aid workers rather than explicit risks related to kidnapping. Furthermore, they used a broad definition of aid workers by also including UN peacekeepers.

When researching empirical evidence to assess the scale of insecurity and risks aid workers are facing, including kidnappings, a joint study from researchers of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the Centre on International Cooperation (CIC), cannot be ignored (Stoddard et al., 2006; 2009). In 2006, Stoddard, Harmer and Haver released a comprehensive study on fatalities, serious injuries and kidnappings of humanitarian aid workers. The findings revealed an increase in NGO fatalities and a decrease in UN and ICRC fatalities. This empirical study investigated the causation between the intentional targeting of aid workers and six commonly cited contextual factors.⁵ The authors concluded that none of the six variables had a major contribution on the degree of violence against humanitarians (Stoddard et al., 2006 pp.17-19). In 2009, Stoddard, Harmer and DiDomenico published an update of their 2006 analysis on the provision of aid in insecure environments, which underlined the key messages that Afghanistan, Somalia and Sudan are the three most violent countries for humanitarian workers and that kidnappings have increased significantly since 2006 (Stoddard, Harmer and DiDomenico, 2009 p.1). Furthermore, they identified a shift in the increase of UN staff fatality rate and underlined the concern, which resulted from the increase in perceived targeting of aid workers.

Only in 2005, with the launch of the Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB), a project of Humanitarian Outcomes, the remaining lack of quantitative research on humanitarian insecurity and major violent incidents against humanitarian aid workers has been closed. The long-term project tracks major incidents of violence, including kidnappings, since 1997. Another statistical research project was implemented in 2008. The Aid in Danger

4 Defined as: “Act of restraint through the use or threat of force or through fraudulent persuasion, including hostage-taking involving demands as conditions for liberation, executed by non-State actors.”

5 The contextual factors included “intensity of the conflict, presence of UN peacekeeping forces, global terrorist movement cells, regional or UN Security Council member forces, and the use of a UN integrated mission” (Stoddard, Harmer and Haver, 2006 p.17-19).

project with the Security in Numbers Database (SiND) is presented by the Geneva-based non-profit organization Insecurity Insight. Its three main scholars, Christina Wille, Nathan Taback and Larissa Fast, gather data on the impact of insecurity on humanitarian aid workers. Fast, calling herself a “scholar-practitioner,” and Wille can be found among those scholars who pioneered the security debate and data collection. Their publications range from findings and data about violent incidents against humanitarian actors to research on the perception of aid workers towards insecurity.

Van Brabant (2010, p.274) outlined the main functions of those global statistics. These include awareness-raising among the humanitarian community as well as wider public provision of long-term trends and information as well as an increase in understanding of the range, depth and scope of operational challenges. Scholars like Collinson and Duffield (2013, p.27) mention that the claim that violence against aid workers has increased, has to be treated cautiously as “empirical evidence is unclear as to how, and in what way, aid work has actually become more dangerous, with the higher numbers of reported incidents also reflecting greater numbers of aid personnel overall and probably increased rates of reporting.” As mentioned by Dandoy and Pérouse de Montclos (2013, p. 342), those statistics and quantitative data are crucial in raising awareness of insecurity, however, “they must be carefully interpreted rather than taken as self-evident ‘facts’.” This is also in line with Wille and Fast (2013, p.2), who stress that data on security incidents can provide information on the organization, gender, status and so forth, and identify overall patterns, but it cannot provide a complete picture of the underlying causes. The absence of security information databases has been overcome and information about the type of organisation exist, but there is still little information about the circumstances of the kidnapping event as well as the country of origin, type of occupation, length of service and age of aid workers who have been kidnapped.

2.2. Underlying Causes and Explanations

As this research focuses on two key concepts, namely security and the opposing insecurity, a review of the existing security debate and explanations for insecurity are essential. Many academics and policy experts have contributed to the debate about increasing insecurity for aid workers by providing several explanations on the macro level.

First and foremost, the decreasing security of humanitarian work is explained by the changing context in which violence takes place. In particular, international relations scholars, by analysing global trends, base their explanations on the changing nature of armed conflict (McGoldrick, 2011, p.970). This includes intrastate conflicts or asymmetric non-international conflicts as well as protracted crises rather than interstate conflicts (Armstrong, 2013, p.6). Furthermore, scholars mention anarchy (Sheik et al., 2000, p.166), the absence of rule of law (Armstrong, 2013, p.3), increasingly complex emergencies and dangerous environments (Dandoy and Pérouse de Montclos, 2013, p. 342), fragmentation and privatisation of armed forces, increasing availability of weapons (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.68), corruption, criminality, lawlessness, radical ideologies (Van Brabant, 2010, p.7) and new means of warfare like unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) (McGoldrick, 2011, p.972). Additionally, it has been discussed that international NGOs are evermore perceived as “Western” institutions, bringing in their

own values and intentions and leading to cultural tensions. Their humanitarian role is therefore no longer routinely accepted by local actors, which results in political scrutiny and security threats (McGoldrick, 2011, p.973).

Secondly, a vivid debate has emerged on new challenges for the modus operandi of organizations, the increasing complexity of humanitarian action and “the shrinking of humanitarian space” (Van Brabant, 2010, p.9). This is based on the blurring of lines between humanitarian, political and military agendas (McGoldrick, 2011, p.966), the mingling of humanitarian action with peacekeeping (Bouchet-Saulnier, 2007), the emergence of new actors like the private sector and diasporas, whose actions are not based on the humanitarian principles, as well as a lack of coordination, the instrumentalization of humanitarian assistance as a foreign policy tool (Fast, 2010, p.378), and the spread of religious ideologies (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.72). Discussions are also heating up about multi-mandated NGOs, providing relief and development assistance, as it has been argued that they are contributing to a blurring of lines and humanitarian organizations being perceived as having political objectives (McGoldrick, 2011, p.974). The search for explanation of the existing insecurity, has also led to an extensive debate about whether humanitarian organizations should just focus on the alleviation of suffering or on getting more involved and on trying to resolve the root causes and underlying problems (Morris, 2008, p.25). Additionally, Eckroth (2010, p.92) mentions that aid organizations are more frequently perceived as “soft targets”, which can be attacked with impunity. More than ten years ago, Bolletino (2006, p.3) drew attention to the fact that limited success can be recorded concerning inter-agency security coordination and planning as well as common professional security standards and methods. Several gaps are identified: A gap in the importance of protection of local staff can be analysed. The existence of operational and legal protection gaps, especially concerning security management approaches (Brooks, 2015, p.9).

Thirdly, explanations for increasing insecurity can be found in the debate between adherents of acceptance measures versus adherents of protection and deterrence measures. This is also connected to a debate between humanitarian practitioners about the importance of international humanitarian law (IHL) and the humanitarian principles (McGoldrick, 2011, p.967), which can be found all over the literature. In general, the four humanitarian principles are of great importance to many organizations, especially the ICRC, which is the founding institution of these core principles. They are designed to lead to wide acceptance among different stakeholders and the local population. The gain of acceptance is associated with security (McGoldrick, 2011, p.967). Eckroth (2010, p.92) and other scholars outline that a loss of neutrality can be found among aid agencies. This debate has seen harsh criticism up until the declaration of some academics that neutral humanitarian action is not only in crisis, but de facto dead (McGoldrick, 2011, p.967; Rieff, 2002; Mills, 2005, p. 161). It is difficult to say or measure in how far belligerents take the humanitarian principles into consideration when attacking an organization and in how far the adherence to the principles can protect an agency (Fast, 2010, p.381). Nonetheless, Fast (2010, p.379) mentions that the militarization of aid as well as politicization through government funding of NGOs and therefore the blurring of boundaries between military, political and civilian actors has impeded the safeguarding of the humanitarian principles. Armed escorts have further heated up the debate and led to a decline in the perception of

neutral and impartial humanitarian aid (Van Brabant, 2000; Slim, 2008). All in all, scholars indicate that militarization, politicization, instrumentalization and securitization of aid have led to an accelerated loss of impartiality and neutrality and consequently triggered an increase in insecurity. However, only further research about the intentions and motivations of belligerents could lead to clarification about root causes.

2.3. Legal Protection

“Humanitarianism’ as a legal construct is grounded in international humanitarian law” (Van Brabant, 2010, p.9). Humanitarian aid workers are protected within the framework of the protection of civilians under international humanitarian law (IHL). The 1949 Geneva Conventions and their three Additional Protocols form the core of IHL. Afghanistan in 1956, Pakistan in 1951, Somalia in 1962, Sudan in 1957 and the Syrian Arab Republic in 1953 have ratified the Geneva Conventions. The Fourth Geneva Convention affords legal protection to civilians. The definition of “civilian” is laid down in Art. 50 (1) of Additional Protocol I and is formulated in a negative way: “a civilian is any person who does not belong to one of the categories of persons referred to in Art.4 (A)(1), (2), (3) and (6) of the Third Convention and in Art. 43 of this Protocol. In case of doubt whether a person is a civilian, that person shall be considered to be a civilian.” Consequently, civilians are individuals who are not combatants (Ronzitti, 2010, p.3). Hence, humanitarian aid workers fall under this protection. Furthermore, the presence of combatants does not deprive civilians of their status as outlined in Additional Protocol I Art. 50 (3). Additional Protocol I Art. 51 states that “the civilian population as such, as well as individual civilians, shall not be the object of attack.” As civilians, humanitarian aid workers are protected under IHL against all forms of violence and degrading treatment. Article 71 (2) of Protocol I outlines that “such personnel shall be respected and protected.” Deliberate attacks against individual civilians are considered grave breaches by Additional Protocol I Art. 85 (3)(a), as well as by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) Art. 8 (2)(b)(i) that qualifies a war crime as an intentional attack against individual civilians or against the civilian population as such not taking part in the hostilities (Ronzitti, 2010, p.3).

Following the Canal Hotel Bombing in Baghdad in 2003, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1502, which defines deliberate attacks, including kidnapping, against humanitarian actors as war crimes (Fast, 2010, p.365). Article 1 of UN S/RES/1502 (2003) “expresses its strong condemnation of all forms of violence, including, inter alia, murder, rape and sexual assault, intimidation, armed robbery, abduction, hostage-taking, kidnapping, harassment and illegal arrest and detention to which those participating in humanitarian operations are increasingly exposed, as well as attacks on humanitarian convoys and acts of destruction and looting of their property.” Furthermore, several UN resolutions have been ratified, including four UN Security Council resolutions,⁶ outlining

⁶ Resolution 1674 (2006) OP 8 and 9, Resolution 1296 (2000) OP 12, Resolution 1674 (2006) OP 22 and Resolution 1894 (2009) OP 16

prohibitions of attacks against humanitarians and several UN General Assembly resolutions, dealing with security of humanitarian personnel.⁷

Benjamin Charlier, Operations Advisor of the Health Care in Danger Project of the ICRC, stresses that the main responsibility of protection of aid workers remains with states. In times of armed conflict, parties to the conflict have to make sure that humanitarians are respected and protected in order to provide relief to civilians (HPCR, 2015). The primary responsibility for the security and protection of humanitarian staff members rests with the respective host government. This security responsibility derives from every government's normal and inherent function of maintaining order as well as protecting persons within its jurisdiction. Even though aid workers are protected under IHL in the context of international armed conflicts, the changing nature of armed conflicts and the appearance of militant and other armed non-state actors result more and more frequently in situations where the assurance of protection cannot be guaranteed. Many scholars, like Runge (2004, p.234), explain the increase in kidnappings with the non-compliance of civil war parties and militias with IHL. Consequently, questions about the effectiveness and relevance of IHL are raised. Significant debate exists in the humanitarian sector about whether there is a need to enhance legal protection particularly for humanitarian aid workers or for civilians in general (HPCR, 2015). Benjamin Charlier mentions that there is rather a lack of enforcement than an actual gap in the law (HPCR, 2015). Michael Neuman criticizes the growing contemporary discourse on the need to create a particular category of legal protection as it leads the focus away from the protection of the beneficiaries (HPCR, 2015).

Additionally, a wide range of literature draws on the concept of the duty of care. Organizations have a duty of care towards their staff, which is “the responsibility or the legal obligation of a person or organization to avoid acts or missions (which can be reasonably foreseen) to be likely to cause harm to others” (Business Dictionary, 2015). UN Security Council Resolution 1894 (2009) Optional Protocol 13 “stresses the importance for all, within the framework of humanitarian assistance, of upholding and respecting the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.”

2.4. Security Approaches and Regulatory Compliances

The urge to find a response to security concerns has brought two schools of thoughts to the main stage, which have been outlined by Bruderlein and Gassmann in 2006. The “community-based security approach” as well as the “system-based security approach”, also called the “standard-driven security approach”, have led the security debate over the last decades. Both were competing for influence on humanitarian agencies’ security orientation and response (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.65). Since the late 1990s, the community-based approach to security, whereby security is derived from widespread acceptance and understanding of the host community, became the standard for humanitarian staff safety. In order to gain acceptance, organizations have to work consistently with their guiding humanitarian principles and in a transparent manner

⁷ 52/167 (OP 2; 3), 53/87 (OP 10; 11), 54/192 (OP 3; 4), 55/175 (OP 4; 5), 57/155 (OP 5; 6), 59/141 (OP 17; 18), 60/123 (OP 4; 9), 61/133 (OP 4; 9), 62/95 (OP 4; 9), 63/138 (OP 4; 10), 64/77 (OP 4; 10), A/65/L.31 (OP 4; 11)

(Macpherson, Persaud and Sheehan, 2008, p.22). This approach does not only focus on the consequences of threats, but also on their sources and tries to find ways to prevent their emergences. The ICRC is a strong advocate of this approach. In contrast to the community-based approach, under the system-based security approach, all organizations in a given area centralize their security procedures, implement strict standards-driven security management and focus solely on the impact of the threat itself (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.81).

Fast (2010, p.376) indicates, whereas the 2001 UN Safety and Security report primarily puts an emphasis on dialogue with the communities and their acceptance as well as protection through its emblem, later reports emphasize a more proactive stance and UN security experts promote a centralized, standards-driven security system. Particularly, the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) and those agencies functioning in the security apparatus are created in this way and base their security responses on centralized generic standards, such as the UN Minimum Operational Security Standards (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.8). Kidnaping trainings fall under the standard-driven security management, which are for example provided by RedR UK (Bolletino, 2006, p.8). However, a lack of literature focusing on security trainings can be identified. This is supported by Eckroth (2010, p. 110), who mentions that authors and scholars who touch upon the topic mainly mention that organizations vary in their approaches, emphasis and framework of security trainings. While some argue for acceptance strategies and others for more protective and deterrent measures, Bruderlein and Gassmann (2006, p.65) mention that the balancing of the two approaches and security management of organizations' staff are strategically important in order to define the organizations' role in conflict situations. Bolletino (2006, p.6) goes a step further by indicating that these two approaches can be mutually reinforcing when properly exercised. According to Bolletino (2006, p.9), a lot of humanitarian aid organizations use a combination of the standard-driven security management and community-based approach in order to address the security needs of their staff. Bruderlein and Gassmann (2006, p.65) mention that the two schools of thoughts are competing in order to wield their influence on organizations' security orientation.

Later literature, which deals with the development of an organization's security strategy, replaced the terms system-based and community-based security approach and introduced the so-called "security triangle". Those three broad security approaches, which have been outlined and discussed in the humanitarian sector, are defined as follows:

Definitions Security Triangle

"An acceptance approach attempts to reduce or remove threats by increasing the acceptance (the political and social consent) of an agency's presence and its work in a particular context." (HPN, 2010, p.55)

"A protection approach uses protective devices and procedures to reduce one's vulnerability to the threat, but does not affect the threat itself. In security terms this is called hardening the target." (HPN, 2010, p.55)

"A deterrence approach aims to deter a threat with a counter-threat. It ranges from legal, economic or political sanctions (not necessarily by aid agencies) to the threat or use of force." (HPN, 2010, p.55)

Existing organizational security management approaches are commonly falling under at least one of the three strategies of the security triangle, yet, often used in combination. However, the triangle model has created confusion about its actual meaning as well as application (HPN, 2010, p.55) and has sparked a debate. For example, Brooks (2015, p.10) states that acceptance is often referred to as the cornerstone or foundation, as it is a requirement for operational access under IHL of humanitarian workers and at the same time a necessity for their security. The 2010 Good Practice Review 8 mentions that none of the three security approaches or a combination can “reduce the risk to zero” (HPN, 2010, p.55). A detailed analysis of the security triangle will follow in chapter 4.2.

2.5. International Organizations’ Security Manuals

This review outlines an examination of current agency security practices, including their policy documents, security guidelines and manuals. Before the mid-1990s, security was more a part of the programming approach or logistics of an organization (HPCR, 2014). Since then, an awareness for security arose and aid agencies have adopted an extensive amount of security measures and manuals (Collinson and Duffield, 2013, p.6). Not only have the 1996 assassinations of six ICRC staff members in Chechnya spurred the need for initiatives, which are enhancing operational security (Van Brabant, 2010, p.273). While some organizations continue, despite the ongoing security concerns, to operate without safety standards and protocols, most organizations have adopted sophisticated security analysis, new security management strategies, extensive risk mitigation measures and reporting procedures (Fast, 2010, p.366). The last decade has seen a substantial progress in the sufficiency and efficiency of security manuals. Literature published by international agencies ranges from UN agencies, including UN OCHA, UNDSS, UNHCR to the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement as well as several NGOs.

Concerning the UN, the 1993 Human Development report outlines in its foreword, that “we have to redefine our concept of security as security for people, not security for land” (UNDP, 1993). This introduction of human security, as a fundamental concept, changed the view on and the approach to security. Thereafter, the UN published four basic documents dealing with security policy and procedures plus thematic documents. First of all, UNHCR’s 1995 “Security Awareness – An Aide Memoire” and the 1996 developed UN Security Operations Manual to provide “how to” and “best practice” guidelines and instructions on more than 40 security subjects. Additionally, the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator published in 1998 “Security in the Field: Information for Staff Members of the United Nations System”. One chapter deals with hostage or kidnap situations (United Nations, 1998, p.24), however, the focus lies solely on considerations and recommendations for surviving such a kidnap situation and not the prevention of it in the first round. The Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of UN Personnel in Iraq, which was appointed by former Secretary-General Kofi Annan following the devastating bomb attack of the UN headquarters in Baghdad, has been charged with the task of identifying key lessons on security gaps. In its 2003 report, the Panel determined that the UN security management system failed in its task of providing security to its staff and that it is dysfunctional for several reasons. The Panel came to the conclusion that a new security approach has to be implemented in order to ensure staff security in high-risk environment, which should apply to all UN missions (2003, p.3). Therefore, “an in-depth

review and reform of the UN security system by independent professionals in security management” is needed (p.25). As a second main security document, the United Nations followed by publishing the “United Nations Field Security Handbook” in January 2006. It is considered a corner stone for UN security policy, as it establishes system wide security policies, identifies duties and describes security management structures and security plans. The handbook applies to staff members employed by the UN, including UN Volunteers and experts on missions, but does not apply to personnel who are both locally recruited and paid per hour. Thirdly, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) published its landmark report “To Stay and Deliver” in 2011, which lays the foundation for the title of this paper. The report outlines that organizations operating in insecure environments have implemented a shift from risk aversion and avoidance to risk management. The concept of the “enabling security approach”, which is an approach that focuses rather on “how to stay” instead of “when to leave”, has been introduced (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.7-8). This enabling approach has been adopted by the UN system as well as by many organisations. The report outlines several good practices for maintaining access in highly insecure environments, including the three security approaches, outlined in chapter 2.4, low-profile approaches, negotiated access and localised management strategies. The authors mention that “there continues to be a lack of system-wide analysis, guidance or compilation of good practices and lessons learned on initiatives, mechanisms, procedures, arrangements or policies that have allowed humanitarian agencies to continue to operate in these environments and which could be shared with operations managers and senior representatives to inform their on-going efforts and their discussions with security officials” (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.59). In this report, UN OCHA (2011, p.1) mentions kidnappings for profit-making as a top security threat. Fourthly, UNDSS published the “UN Security Directives” dealing with hostage incident management. Thereby, UNDSS has implemented solid field security reporting methods in order to collect standardized security data (Bolletino, 2006, p.6). The UN has developed the United Nations Minimum Operating Security Standards (UN MOSS) (Bolletino, 2006, p.9). However, further assessments are difficult to make as documents by UNDSS or reports by kidnapping victims are kept confidential.

The ICRC has also been a pioneer concerning the publication of security manuals. One of the first field guides was David Lloyd Roberts’ “Staying Alive: Safety and Security Guidelines for Humanitarian Volunteers in Conflict Areas” published in 1999. This report brought security management out of the logistics corner and turned it more into a kind of science itself. In 2006, an updated version has been published by the ICRC, addressing new threats like nuclear hazards and including a chapter on how IHL protects humanitarian workers. Like many other security manuals, a chapter under the category of special situations - which are characterized as not very common - is devoted to hostage survival. In 2003, the ICRC has developed, supported by the International Federation and a number of National Societies the “Safer Access Framework for National Societies”. It cannot be classified as a security training programme, but rather as an approach from the ICRC to improve preparation of National Societies to respond to conflict situations. One element of the Safer Access Framework includes the requirement of all National Societies to implement security and safety regulations (Leach and Hofstetter, 2004). Between

January 2012 and December 2014, following two previous reports⁸, the ICRC collected data on violent incidents against its health care workers in eleven countries as part of its “Health Care in Danger” project. It does not only focus on the security of its own staff, including local providers, but also on the protection of the patients. The report does not give a number for ICRC staff being kidnapped, but just outlines that 58 health-care personnel and one driver have been deprived of their liberty in those two years. In addition, the report underlines that incidents mainly take place in health-care facilities or on the road (ICRC, 2015, p.20).

Most of the bigger NGOs have adopted their own security manuals and their own Minimum Operating Security Standards (Bolletino, 2006, p.9). One of the pioneers was World Vision with its 1999 extensive 128-pages “World Vision Security Manual: Safety Awareness for Aid Workers”, in which the organization devotes five pages to kidnapping and hostage situations. World Vision states that no ransom payments will be made and furthermore outlines basic rules for survival in the four phases of a kidnap situation, namely abduction, transport, confinement and release (Rogers and Sytsma, 1999, p.6off.). Another NGO is CARE International and its 2006 CARE “Safety & Security Handbook. Following this handbook, NGO security coordination offices have been established on the country level, for example in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sudan and Somalia. Those offices have facilitated the collection and reporting of security incidents and the dissemination of security warnings. However, Fast (2010, p.372) mentions that they do not analyse the data beyond simple summaries. Bolletino (2006, p.11) adds that they do not have a single database, which includes all security data. An important cornerstone was laid in 2004 with the “Generic Security Guide for Humanitarian Organizations” by the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO). It is very comprehensive guide, which is available in different languages.

Many more NGOs have contributed with their publications. Most of those security documents mention progress in operational security management practices over recent years and the introduction by some organizations of a security risk management framework. Yet, the findings of the security reports and manuals point towards the need of further research to strengthen security management with regard to kidnappings. Particularly, aspects concerning interagency collaboration, training, overall duty of care and expansion in organizational policy have only been touched upon.

2.6. Good Practice Guides

An expanding body of literature can be found on several new security-related joint initiatives, consultancy work and so-called good practice guides. While most research has focused on insecurity in general and the need for improved staff security, a small body of literature has been directed to the risks of kidnappings and its remaining security gaps. These will be outlined in a chronological order. A foundation was laid in 2000 with the Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN)’s “Good Practice Review 8 (GPR8): Operational

⁸ ICRC, Violent incidents affecting health care – January to December 2012, ICRC, Geneva, 2013; ICRC, Violent incidents affecting the delivery of health care – January 2012 to December 2013, ICRC, Geneva, 2014.

Security management in Violent Environments” by Koenraad Van Brabant. Until then, humanitarian organizations barely had risk assessment tools, security coordinator positions, good practice guidelines and risk management protocols in place (Van Brabant, 2010, p.273). One year later, Van Brabant’s “Mainstreaming the Organizational Management of Safety and Security” was published. Whereas his GPR8 was rather field-oriented, his 2001 oeuvre focuses more on security management philosophies and practices. Van Brabant’s two security manuals still form the foundation of contemporary NGO security guidelines and trainings. In 2009, the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), an independent non-governmental organization, published its document “Risk Management: Principles and Guidelines”. In December 2010, the HPN, an independent forum at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), revised its 2000 GPR8. This review of operational security management argues that humanitarian organizations should conduct a Security Risk Assessment (SRA) in advance of starting a new project in an unknown location, as “gut feeling is not enough” (HPN, 2010, p.27f.). Whereas the older version of the GPR8 mentions kidnapping as one type of disappearance, the new version devotes one chapter to kidnapping and hostage situations. Van Brabant (p.8) calls the rising practice of kidnapping as a “boom industry”. The 2010 revised Good Practice Review (ODI, 2010, p.226) outlines general and more specific guidelines and measures to reduce the risk of kidnapping. A number of generally applicable measures like preparation, equal treatment, transparency, coordination, integrity, respectful behaviour, cultural awareness, and good communication might reduce the risk, but more explicit measures are crucial as well. Several measures can help in reducing exposure, including reduction of visibility and the avoidance of routines (p.229f.).

In 2010, the InterAction Security Advisory Group (SAG) introduced the “Security Risk Management: NGO Approach”, outlining instructions on the Security Risk Management (SRM) model, including a Security Risk Assessment (SRA). SAG underlines that a formalized SRM process is the key to accomplish security for NGO personnel. Concerning security-related joint NGO initiatives, the European Interagency Security Forum (EISF), which is an independent forum for Security Focal Points from European humanitarian organizations operating abroad, aims to foster coordination, documentation and dialogue of security management. The 2013 Humanitarian Futures Programme research paper by the EISF concludes that approaches to security risk management have not received enough attention and resources by humanitarian agencies themselves and donors. It adds that risk management and operational security approaches from the humanitarian community have not adequately addressed current challenges in fragile contexts. Many respondents of the EISF research mention that there is a clear indication among most working in the humanitarian sector that security management has become “a box-ticking exercise” which is too focused on reporting of past incidents than on the future (Armstrong, 2013, p.34). In the 2013 “Paradoxes of presence” HPG report, Collinson and Duffield (p.1) underline that little research has been done on the actual response of aid agencies to security threats. Furthermore, the authors add, “that the growing concern with security has highlighted the hierarchy of inequalities that define the aid system” by referring to the disparities between expatriates and local aid workers (p.2). Furthermore, the EISF outlines that gender is an overlooked issue concerning

humanitarian security (Wille and Fast, 2011, p.1). Brooks (2015, p.3) adds that little has been written about ways and possibilities of improvement as well as overlooked disparities in humanitarian staff's vulnerability and protection, based on gender, affiliation or status as international or national staff.

Abby Stoddard and Adele Harmer have been two of the leading scholars in the field. The 2013 Aid Worker Security Report, which has been published by Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, carries the title "The New Normal: Coping with the Kidnapping Threat". The author mentions that even though humanitarian organizations have identified the need for protection and security, they have not adequately dealt with the prevention, the interaction with the threat itself and the necessary risk assessment. Many organizations have invested a substantial amount of resources in managing the direct response to kidnappings, but missed to prevent it to begin with (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.2). The authors refer to kidnappings as "the new normal" as "one NGO leader observed that every agency working in unstable environments can reasonably expect to experience a kidnapping at some point" (Ibid., p.8).

All in all, given the fact that the debate about security is not really ground-breaking and has seen many contributions by different disciplines as well as scholars over the last two decades, a lot has been written about security of humanitarian organizations and their staff. A relatively small section of these security publications focuses on the issue of kidnapping. Then again an even smaller section deals with the prevention of kidnapping, than rather with the handling of the already occurred kidnapping. An overwhelming number of books and manuals has been written about responses to kidnapping. Recommendations have been given on how to behave during a kidnap or hostage situation, on ways to survive such a situation and on how to react as the family, organization, government and so forth. Yet, very little has been written on how to prevent such a situation. It has to be taken into account that security from kidnapping cannot be treated separately from overall security considerations, however, the literature review has shown that certain factors can be identified which relate mostly to the threat of kidnapping. This paper draws on the analysis of previous scholars and aims to fill the remaining gaps concerning the risks of humanitarian staff being kidnapped and on the prevention of kidnap situations. The literature review has highlighted the following areas, which need to be treated with attention when trying to fill those gaps: Legal protection, security approach, security risk management, staff, context, communication and technology. The following chapter will outline the methodology in order to explain how to proceed with these variables that have been analysed.

3. Methodological Framework

This chapter intends to present the research methodology and to justify the research methods being employed as well as the theoretical foundation. First of all, a broader scope of the research methodology aims to explain why particular concepts and variables were used in order to structure the research. Thereupon, a more detailed section will explain how the methodology has been put into practice by using specific methods. Secondly, the theoretical framework will elaborate on the specific concepts.

3.1. Methodology

While security is central to an organization's mandate and actions, humanitarian action follows four main humanitarian principles in the delivery of humanitarian assistance: Humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence – see Figure 2 for their definitions.

Figure 2. Four Humanitarian Principles

Humanity	Neutrality	Impartiality	Independence
Human suffering must be addressed wherever it is found. The purpose of humanitarian action is to protect life and health and ensure respect for human beings.	Humanitarian actors must not take sides in hostilities or engage in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.	Humanitarian action must be carried out on the basis of need alone, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress and making no distinctions on the basis of nationality, race, gender, religious belief, class or political opinions.	Humanitarian action must be autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives that any actor may hold with regard to areas where humanitarian action is being implemented.

© UN OCHA, 2012, p.1.

The four principles are particularly noteworthy in relation to security, because of the increasing interaction with non-humanitarian actors, like the military and the private sector, as well as negotiations with armed militant groups about access. The cross section between an organization's obligation to provide and maintain security to its own staff and the four humanitarian principles will be the focus of the paper. This paper starts from the hypothesis that there can be sensed a deficit in the approach of humanitarian organizations to ensure a balance between their duty of care with regard to security of their staff, especially towards the threat of kidnapping, and their obligation to maintain the four humanitarian principles. The objective of the paper is the analysis of how the obligation of humanitarian organizations to provide security to their staff, especially from kidnapping threats, affects the application of the four humanitarian principles. Therefore, the paper will elaborate on the following main research question: To what extent do security measures taken by international organizations, including the UN, ICRC and NGOs, have to be revised or improved in order to reduce the vulnerability of their staff to kidnapping in high-risk countries in line with the four humanitarian principles? The type of research question is twofold. On the one hand, it can be categorised as a research question predicting an outcome, as it intends to analyse under which circumstances kidnappings take place. On the other hand, it falls under the type of research question which intends to develop a good practice as the research tries to figure out how security can be improved (Bryman, 2012, p.9).

Quantitative data will be considered in order to understand the scale and magnitude of kidnapping incidents by providing a numeric overview. However, qualitative data will guide in understanding the nature of kidnapping threats, remaining risks, their impact and possible improvements. After phrasing the main research question and objective, it became clear that qualitative research is more suitable than quantitative research. Qualitative research is more applicable in terms of implementation and methodology of

this paper. Quantitative data is taken into account based on the Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB), but is not conducted by the author of this paper. In order to conduct quantitative research, based on questionnaires or surveys, more time and access to organizations would have been necessary. Addison, Hulme and Kanbur (2008, p.10) mention that value to research can be added by combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative research usually emphasizes words more than the collection of data and it often involves an in-depth understanding of the “why” and “how” of human behaviour and decision-making and the reasons which are behind it (Bryman, 2012, p.116). Qualitative research has the key benefits that it is explorative, more in-depth and that more detailed and genuine answers can be expected from interviewees and respondents. However, it should be expressed that qualitative research has a high subjectivity and is dependent on interpretation. Furthermore, due to the focus on five countries, no overall representativeness can be reached. This research does not intend to address the status quo of one specific organization or one single case study, as it would lack external validity and generalizability. However, it is not possible to take all humanitarian organizations based on an individual evaluation into consideration.

Encompassing the research methodology and the research methods being used, it is beyond the scope of this paper to explore the ontology and epistemology. Ontology, the study of being, which describes the nature of reality where the research takes place and epistemology, the study of knowledge, which describes the ways in which the researcher understands that reality, are both recognized as influencing the methodology. However, as qualitative research and an inductive approach are emphasized in this research, which predominantly reject the norms and practices of positivism, an epistemological position described as interpretivist and an ontological position described as constructionist, which views social reality as an outcome of peoples’ interactions, can be considered as the models to the overall framework (Bryman, 2012, p.380). The methodology process serves to illustrate and clarify the research process without further discussion of constructivism and interpretivism.

This academic research does not intend to address a theory at the beginning of the research project, but rather start with the key terminology around Security Risk Management (SRM) and Security Risk Assessment (SRA) and later on present theoretical ideas as an outcome of the research process. Therefore, the theoretical foundation will be built on an inductive approach, which means that data has been collected in order to build theory rather than to test it (Bryman, 2012, p.24). This more open-ended research strategy starts from a hypothesis, followed by data collection, which will eventually end in theoretical ideas and findings.

This paper primarily draws on document study as well as interviews. Secondary data in this paper is comprised of published research by well-known scholars and academics, media reports and security reports of organizations themselves. After a review of the existing literature on the concepts of security and insecurity with regard to kidnapping threats, eight main variables could be analysed, that were highlighted by scholars as recurring themes or problems. By identifying the eight main variables, information gathered in interviews could be grouped into these categories. In the following, the eight main variables were transformed into a set of questions. As publications specifically dealing with the prevention of kidnapping remain limited and the voice of national staff

often remains unheard, primary data has been collected through face-to-face interview and Skype interviews with humanitarian practitioners and experts. The face-to-face and phone interviews have been conducted between June and November 2015. Time and costs constrained the numbers of interviews conducted for this research, yet, 13 interviews were conducted in the end – see Annex 2.

It is important to include interviews in order to learn from the experiences of those who are working in the field for many years and how practical steps could be taken into consideration to find solutions. Nonetheless, relying only on interviews with staff from humanitarian organizations could also lead to bias. Therefore, key interviews were also conducted with experts and scholars. The sampling used in this research is nonprobability, as interviewees were mainly chosen based on their expertise. On average each interview lasted one hour and the expert interviews thirty minutes. Several experts agreed to respond to follow-up questions would come up at a later stage of the research process. The interviews were conducted in English and not the country respective language of the five high-risk countries.

Semi-structured interview questions were chosen to shed light on the problem statement and to provide an answer to the main research question. They combine standardized questions with flexible and spontaneous questions, which provide a structure of comparability and allows for more open answers at the same time (Bryman, 2010, p.12). A set of questions was asked to all interviewees in order to analyse and compare certain crosscutting issues. A questionnaire, which functioned as a framework, was prepared in advance and sometimes adapted to the organisation or expert – see Annex 3. Semi-structured interviews have the advantage that they allow the interviewer to ask follow-up questions or ask for further explanation. Interviewees generously shared information, ideas and data of different degrees of confidentiality. The interview questions were also designed to encourage the interviewees to add their own point of views or interests on the importance of the research or certain topics. Additionally, at the end of every interview, the interviewee was asked if he or she would like to add something. Due to the high sensitivity of the topic and in order to ensure the highest level of honesty among the interviewees, the respondents' names and details are kept confidential, with the only exception of their organizational affiliation. Making interviewees anonymous can in some cases distort data, however, in this research it made the provision of honest answers more likely.

In order to reach a broad yet in-depth overview of organizations working actively in high-risk countries, aid agencies from four categories were taken into consideration for the interviews: Firstly, interviews were conducted with UN agencies, including OCHA, UNHCR, UNFPA and WFP, and secondly, mail exchange with one respondent from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Thirdly, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Caritas International Belgium and Médecins du Monde (MdM) were approached. It should be underlined that great diversity, or even discord, exists between these broad categories of aid organizations or even organisations within one category, which makes generalisations impossible. However, all organizations selected for the research purpose fulfil the following criteria: (i) they have an international mandate; (ii) they conduct missions in at least one high-risk country; and (iii) they employ national

as well as international staff. Fourthly, an interviewee from Crisis Consulting, expert for security prevention, management and training, as well as a scholar from Humanitarian Outcomes agreed to an interview. In terms of bias, the research tried to cover all four groups to the same extent as well as try to include national as well as international staff.

3.2. Theoretical Framework

Operational security environments remain complex and challenging. High insecurity can impede, jeopardise or prevent humanitarian organizations from achieving their aims and put their staff at risk. That is why security is a basic requirement for aid organizations or as outlined by the Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) “security management is therefore a means to an operational end” (HPN, 2010, p.7). Nonetheless, humanitarians are bound by the four humanitarian principles. Therefore, humanitarian organizations need to find the right balance between the humanitarian principles as well as their obligation to provide security for their staff. Effective Security Risk Management (SRM) is essential from a moral, operational and legal point of view in order to make decisions about the implementation of new projects and its risks, the assessment of continuance of projects in dangerous environments as well as the withdraw of staff or cessation of programmes. Many humanitarian organizations have introduced a Security Risk Management (SRM) framework, which is defined as follows:

SRM is an analytical procedure that assists in assessing the operational context of the NGO; and identifies the risk level of undesirable events that may affect personnel, assets, and operations; providing guidance on the implementation of solutions in the form of specific mitigation strategies and measures with the aim of lowering the risk levels for the NGO by reducing the impact and likelihood of an undesirable event. (SAG, 2010, p.6)

As the definition shows, SRM includes two stages. First of all, an assessment of the operational context and activities of the organization and an evaluation of the problems and risks analysis, which will be conducted in chapter four. Secondly, mitigation measures and identification of solutions, which will be outlined in chapter five. In order to manage security efficiently and effectively, a proper assessment of risks is a crucial component of every security risk management approach (HPN, 2010, p.27). Current thinking on good practice concerning security holds that Security Risk Assessment (SRA) is a critical component of SRM and that humanitarian organizations should therefore undertake a SRA (HPN, 2010, p.27). SRA or risk analysis is defined as follows:

An attempt to consider risk more systematically in terms of the threats in an organisation’s environment, an organisation’s particular vulnerabilities, and its existing security measures. (HPN, 2010, p.xx; OCHA, 2011, p.xv)

Both definitions focus on certain key concepts, which are also reflected when taken the respective definition of the particular concepts into consideration. Security consists of managing risk, which is influenced by its potential, likelihood and extent. As outlined in the introduction, security is defined as “freedom from risk or harm resulting from violence or other intentional acts” (HPN, 2010, p.xx). The central component is risk, which is “the likelihood and potential impact of encountering a threat” (HPN, 2010, p.xx; OCHA, 2011, p.xv) or phrased differently: “Risk is a measure of vulnerability to threats in the

environment” (HPN, 2010, p.28). Therefore, it is often displayed as an equation: Risk equals threats times vulnerabilities.

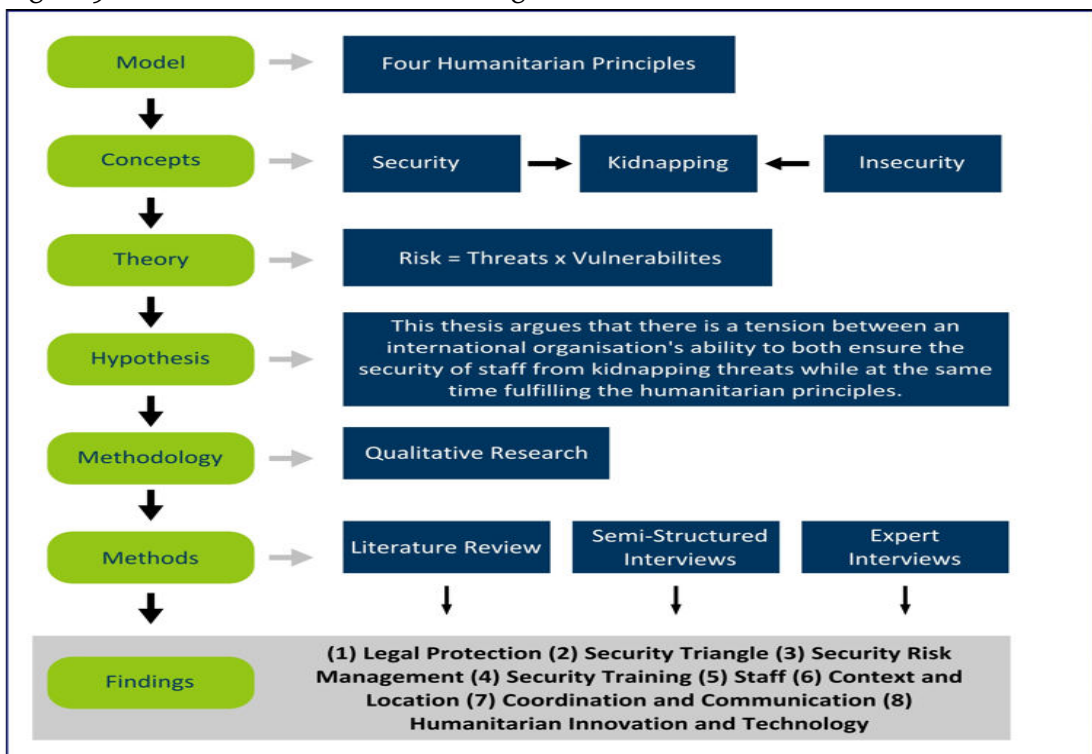
$$\text{Risk} = \text{Threats} \times \text{Vulnerabilities}$$

Vulnerability is the “likelihood or probability of being confronted with a threat” (HPN, 2010, p.28) and a threat refers to “a danger in the operating environment” (HPN, 2010, p.xxi; OCHA, 2011, p.xv). The analysis in this paper is in line with InterAction Security Advisory Group (SAG) “Security Risk Management” (2010, p.5), which outlines that “while absolute security can never be guaranteed, threats and their associated risks can be mitigated and vulnerabilities reduced once identified and assessed.” This paper does not take all threats in the operating environments into consideration, but focuses solely on the threat of kidnapping. Therefore, a general threat assessment is not necessary and threats can be replaced by kidnappings in the equation:

$$\text{Risk} = \text{Kidnappings} \times \text{Vulnerabilities}$$

Consequently, kidnapping is a combination of risks and vulnerabilities. In order to achieve more security and reduce kidnap situations, both risks and vulnerabilities have to be assessed. Both concepts can be reduced to two elements. When looking at vulnerability, which is the level of exposure to the kidnapping threat, likelihood and probability, have to be considered. Opposed to threats, which are external factors, vulnerabilities are more understood as internal factors (HPN, 2010, p.39). Dealing with risks, likelihood and potential impact have to be taken into account. With kidnaping being identified as the threat, the process of the SRA has to focus on the risks in terms of likelihood and potential impact and vulnerabilities in terms of probability and likelihood. After risks and vulnerabilities have been analysed in chapter four, mitigation strategies and measures can be identified in order to reduce the kidnapping threat in chapter five.

Figure 3. Schematic Overview Methodological and Theoretical Framework



4. Remaining Risks

The need for humanitarian aid is likely not going to diminish. The number of NGOs is increasing steadily with a current peak of 4,400 organizations and 274,000 workers worldwide in 2013 (Armstrong, 2013, p.6). In order to analyse how aid workers' security can be further strengthened, this chapter will focus on the analysis of risks and vulnerabilities, which influence the threat of kidnapping. In order to mitigate risks and reduce vulnerabilities to accomplish a reduction in kidnapping threats, these two elements have to be identified in the first place. Armstrong (2013, p.11) outlines a shift which has taken place during the last years concerning organizations' view on risk. Most organizations have acknowledged that they are not able to avoid risk completely, but instead they try to manage it. To avoid a lack of structure and clarity, the paper addresses eight categories of factors, whose influence is increasing. It is important to note that these eight categories, even though treated separately, are interlinked and that it is not intended to be an exhaustive list, but a selection of factors critical to the threat of kidnapping.

4.1. Legal Protection

This subchapter focuses on the legal protection as well as the humanitarian principles. Several gaps in the legal protection will be outlined, which relate to a hierarchy of legal protection, the role of the host governments and impunity.

Concerning the first aspect, even though humanitarian aid workers are protected under the framework of civilian protection, Brooks (2015, p.6) outlines that “the patchwork of international humanitarian law (IHL) relating to the security of humanitarian personnel in situations of armed conflict produces a hierarchy of legal protections that privileges certain categories of aid workers above others.” Three different groups are identified by Brooks (2015, p.6-9). Firstly, UN and associated personnel receive the strongest degree of legal protection, based on the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. Especially Art. 7(1)⁹ and 7(2)¹⁰, which outline the duty to ensure the security of UN and associated personnel as well as Art. 9(1a)¹¹ and 9(2)¹², which name kidnapping as a crime against UN and associated personnel, provide the legal basis. Additionally, the 2005 Optional Protocol, as well as the 2003 UN Security Council Resolution 1502 provide legal protection to UN staff. Out of the five high-risk countries considered in this paper, only Pakistan is a participant to the 1994 UN Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel.

⁹ “United Nations and associated personnel, their equipment and premises shall not be made the object of attack or of any action that prevents them from discharging their mandate.”

¹⁰ “States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel. In particular, States Parties shall take all appropriate steps to protect United Nations and associated personnel who are deployed in their territory from the crimes set out in article 9.”

¹¹ “The intentional commission of: (a) A murder, kidnapping or other attack upon the person or liberty of any United Nations or associated personnel;”

¹² “Each State Party shall make the crimes set out in paragraph 1 punishable by appropriate penalties which shall take into account their grave nature.”

The second group of legal protection applies to those who are entitled to use the Red Cross/ Red Crescent emblem, which is a protected and recognized emblem under IHL. This respective group includes affiliates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, civilian hospitals in wartime and medical services of armed forces. Their protection is derived from the four 1949 Geneva Conventions, as outlined by the first Geneva Convention in Art. 44.¹³ The third group includes humanitarian personnel in general as they are considered civilians or non-combatants. Therefore, they are protected under IHL. Protection of civilians is mentioned both in Protocol I and in Protocol II of the Geneva Conventions. However, challenges can be faced in terms of enforcement regarding Protocol II as non-state actors are not signatories (Brooks, 2015, p.7). Furthermore, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) defines intentional attacks against humanitarian personnel as well as their assets as war crimes in international armed conflicts under Art. 8(2)(b)(iii)¹⁴ and (xxiv)¹⁵ as well as non-international armed conflicts under Art. 8(2)(e)(ii)¹⁶ and (iii)¹⁷.

Brooks (2015, p.8) goes a step further in saying that this hierarchy of legal protection can be identified to a certain extent in security incident statistics. According to the Aid Worker Security Report 2014 (Stoddard, Harmer and Ryou, 2014, p.3), the lowest number of aid worker victims are among ICRC members reflected by only 3 per cent, followed by UN agencies with 24 per cent. The least legally protected show the highest numbers of victims among aid worker, including International NGOs with 28 per cent and national NGOs and national Red Cross/ Red Crescent with 43 per cent. However, this correlation has to be treated with caution, as there is no clear distinction between national NGOs and national Red Cross/ Red Crescent members, and there is a generally lower number of ICRC and UN staff working in the field.

Concerning the second aspect, Fast mentions that “legal instruments put responsibility for the protection of aid workers in the hands of states, which in many contexts is inadequate. State compliance in relation to prosecuting perpetrators or even in complying

¹³ “With the exception of the cases mentioned in the following paragraphs of the present Article, the emblem of the Red Cross on a white ground and the words “Red Cross”, or “Geneva Cross” may not be employed, either in time of peace or in time of war, except to indicate or to protect the medical units and establishments, the personnel and material protected by the present Convention and other Conventions dealing with similar matters.”

¹⁴ “For the purpose of this Statute, ‘war crimes’ means: Other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict, within the established framework of international law, namely, any of the following acts: Intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as long as they are entitled to the protection given to civilians or civilian objects under the international law of armed conflict;”

¹⁵ “Intentionally directing attacks against buildings, material, medical units and transport, and personnel using the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions in conformity with international law;”

¹⁶ “For the purpose of this Statute, ‘war crimes’ means: Other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in armed conflicts not of an international character, within the established framework of international law, namely, any of the following acts: Intentionally directing attacks against buildings, material, medical units and transport, and personnel using the distinctive emblems of the Geneva Conventions in conformity with international law;”

¹⁷ “Intentionally directing attacks against personnel, installations, material, units or vehicles involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, as long as they are entitled to the protection given to civilians or civilian objects under the international law of armed conflict; [...]”

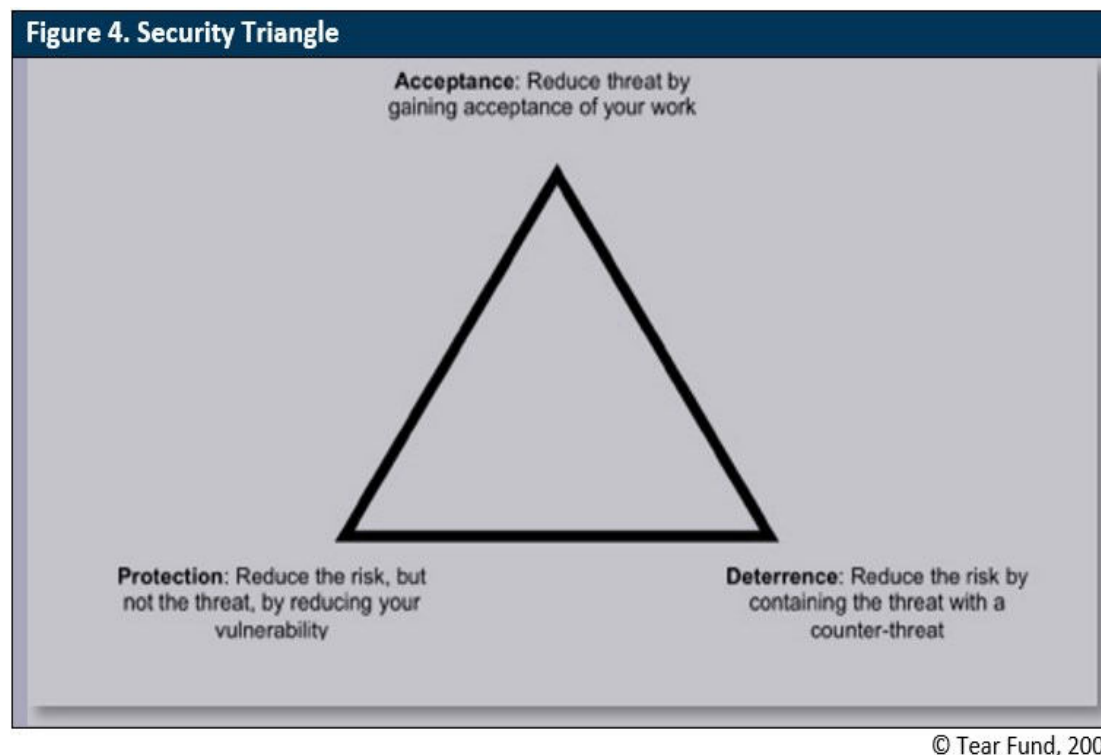
with responsibility under the various conventions can break down, especially in violent contexts” (Fast, 2014, p.198). Indeed, many high-risk countries are characterized by state fragility, armed conflicts, armed insurgencies and so forth. Thus, the respective government is not providing the necessary protection. The change in warfare and the increase in civil wars with different actors fighting against each other have led to a decrease in the adherence and respect to IHL. Addressing violations from militias is more difficult than from governments (Respondent 1 MSF). For example in Afghanistan, child soldiers, sometimes under the influence of drugs, who can hardly read or write, do not even know about the existence of IHL (Steiger, 2012). In Darfur, numerous fragmented criminal bands and militias operate with impunity beyond the reach of any official (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.15). Pauline Chetcuti, humanitarian advocacy manager of Action Contre la Faim (ACF) outlines that the judicial system of high-risk countries is often not well functioning and a lack of prosecution of perpetrators can be identified (HPCR, 2015).

Concerning impunity, according to IHL, deliberate attacks against humanitarian aid workers could be qualified as a war crime and as such the concept of universal jurisdiction applies. However, few prosecutions against kidnappers have been recorded. Historically, there was little notice of the legal responsibility of organizations. Consequently, aid workers were not claiming any sort of responsibility of duty of care from their organizations. Only recently, lawsuits have been brought against organizations on the basis of failed responsibility, provision of poor information and briefings as well as negligence of duty of care. Aid organizations are increasingly facing legal challenges if they have failed to inform their staff about risks and threats or if they have not taken all necessary steps to limit those risks (HPN, 2010, p.7). Some aid workers are seeking legal redresses against their former employers on the grounds of negligence of their duty of care (HPN, 2010, p.11). Michael Neuman, the director of studies of MSF-Crash, adds that the judicial system of unstable countries is virtually absent and does not have the capacity to ensure legal protection, neither to its population nor to aid workers (HPCR, 2015). He sees the effort to ask for additional legal frameworks and to address legal gaps as “a waste of time”. A position shared by some practitioners on the ground, which makes an evaluation of possible improvement of legal protection in chapter 5.1 all the more important.

4.2. Security Triangle

As already mentioned in the literature review, three security approaches, namely acceptance, protection and deterrence, shape an agency’s security management strategy (HPN, 2010, p.55). Major challenges appear from the debate between each of the three approaches of the so-called “security triangle” as well as their combination. The 2010 Good Practice Review 8 outlines that the security triangle model has created some confusion about its actual meaning and application, as the triangle shape is not meant to indicate that organizations can simply choose one of the three corners. In reality, any security approach and its procedures can only be effective if they are adjusted to its associated environment and if the respective organization has the competence and capacity to

implement the approach. Additionally, the effectiveness depends on the approach of other agencies in the same area (HPN, 2010, p.55).



Acceptance is considered the foundation for operational security and the “essential cornerstone of effective security risk management” (Armstrong, 2013, p.10). Nevertheless, the acceptance approach shows several shortcomings. On the one hand, overall acceptance does not necessarily guarantee security and on the other hand, acceptance can change over time or not be genuine. Acceptance alone does not ensure the prevention from kidnapping based on economic or political reasons. Even though, the government, the communities, belligerents and other actors involved might accept the organization, profit-driven kidnapping reveals the limitations to the acceptance-based approach. Additionally, risks remain concerning the individual perpetrator (Armstrong, 2013, p.24). Furthermore, new militant groups can appear or take over which are unknown to the communities or aid workers (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes). The deteriorating global security environment based on militants, who seek to gain power through chaos and intimidation, often render the acceptance-based security approach inoperative (Van Brabant, 2010, p.8). Communities are only able to provide security if they are themselves safe (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.83f). Especially in urban contexts with many people involved and few agency staff, it becomes difficult to get into contact with everyone and to strengthen acceptance (Respondent MdM). Perceptions of agencies’ affiliation with military or political actors and agendas have eroded acceptance of aid workers as neutral, impartial and independent actors. In particular, in Afghanistan, where US troops and allies utilise counter-insurgency tactics for their military-led stabilisation campaigns, humanitarians face the challenge of maintaining a perception as impartial, independent and neutral actors (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.13).

Yet, the humanitarian sector is not only facing threats from external actors to its acceptance, but also from aid agencies’ own decisions and nature. Weaknesses inherent

in humanitarian action or so called “self-generated risks” play an important role (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.15). Many organizations mingle with development, human rights or peace building agencies and compete for money and beneficiaries. Additionally, they are founded on different motivations and beliefs and receive funding from governments, which can undermine their independence and acceptance (Van Brabant, 2010, p.10). The respondent of Caritas International Belgium sees a reason for the increase in kidnappings in the global war on terrorism, which started in Afghanistan in 2001, and the blurring of mandates. The respondent mentions that humanitarian organizations “became perceived as being part of the big war machine that the West unleashed on Afghanistan and Pakistan.” This is reassured by Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard (2011, p.16), who mention that the government in Darfur conceives humanitarian aid as a tool of Western political power and a construct being imposed upon the region. Furthermore, it is difficult for one security officer to ensure acceptance from all parties involved (Van Brabant, 2010, p.14). The respondent from IRC mentioned that a problematic issue is also the distribution of t-shirts, emblems or logos of the organization for identification purposes, which are still used after the employment. If those former employees were to engage in activity not endorsed by the organization while wearing the emblem, it can compromise the perception of the organization as a neutral actor. Respect for the emblem has also continuously decreased (Respondent 1 MSF).

The protection approach also has its drawbacks as it focuses on the organization as a potential target and not on those actors who might pose a threat (HPN, 2010, p.56). When attention is not paid to the threat itself, the root causes, political or socio-economic factors or motives behind the kidnappings are often overlooked (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.81f). Some organizations have drawn on low-profile approaches, but those can distance an organization from its sources of information, trigger suspicion and further erode acceptance (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.16). Some humanitarians have become mere service providers in some contexts and have lost the link to the communities. This may lead to “bunkerisation”, the social and physical detachment from those who receive assistance (Collinson and Duffield, 2013, p.iii). “Bunkerisation” makes it even more difficult to get information about potential threats or to lower suspicion and resentment. “Bunkerisation” and situations of total travel restrictions, mainly implemented by UN agencies or government donor agencies, raise the question if it makes sense to be there in the first round (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes). The respondent from MdM describes the situation of how the humanitarian space evolves based on the implementation of security management as reaching “slowly but steadily a bottle neck.” The respondent mentions that “bunkerisation” is not solving any problems.

While the use of deterrence measures and armed protection has become a reality in many unsafe contexts as a “quick and tangible path to security through protection and deterrence is undoubtedly seductive” (Kingston and Behn, 2009, p.2), it undeniably carries many risks. The humanitarian system is increasingly based on military expertise, which can undermine its neutral and independent perception (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.81f). Becoming dependent on armed protection, regardless of the providers’ origins or affiliation, influences an agency’s independence, the perception of its neutrality and impartiality by others as well as how other organizations are perceived (Armstrong, 2013, p.16). Affiliation with armed guards or escorts can compromise acceptance. In some

unstable countries, like Somalia, aid organizations had to experience that armed guards have control over a de facto security market and are difficult to get rid of once hired (HPN, 2010, p.56). Containing a threat with a counter-threat is not necessarily useful as most armed groups can easily overrun outnumbered armed guards (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.81f). Some organizations have threatened kidnappers with the suspension of their programmes, but in reality did not follow that threat, which has consequently undermined their credibility (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.39).

In highly insecure environments, organizations often have to implement a combination of approaches (HPN, 2010, p.55). Due to different mandates, profiles and missions, NGOs still tend to adopt softer security approaches, whereas the UN draws more often on deterrence and protection measures (Armstrong, 2013, p.20). These three are not always compatible and can lead to an increase in security threats due to the “blurring of mandates” (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.66). Especially the UN, as a promoter of human rights and protection of vulnerable populations, is often perceived as biased, politically motivated as well as a promoter of Western values. These blurred boundaries have affected security and have contributed to difficulty in maintaining operational space for humanitarian organizations. This is due to several factors. On the one hand, human rights, development and reconstruction organizations increasingly label their programs as humanitarian. Therefore, the distinction between those two groups becomes invisible for outside actors. On the other hand, some humanitarian organizations are themselves undermining their humanitarian principles. Interaction between armed forces and the humanitarian community have blurred the lines between political, military and humanitarian action (Bolletino, 2006, p.8). On an exceptional basis, humanitarian organizations hired private security providers or used escorted movements in highly insecure environments like Somalia (Respondent 1 MSF). Furthermore, upon donor governments’ request some organizations had to broaden their traditional relief engagement to rights-based programming (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.69). The tension between adherence to the humanitarian principles and detachment of traditional values, has led according to some scholars to an “identity crisis” (Bolletino, 2006, p.7). Sean Healy from MSF outlines that the humanitarian principles are at the core and have the function to guide the actions and decisions, but he also admits that they are coming into friction with each other and that some environment pose a dilemma to the maintenance of the principles. The situation in Somalia has led to a phase where MSF could not maintain operations on the ground based on a principled approach (HPCR, 2014).

4.3. Security Risk Management

Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard (2011, p.9f.) mention that the Security Risk Management (SRM) framework “remains represented better in theory than in practice.” Since the mid-1990s, operational security management has seen impressive progress and growth. Yet, global data indicates that security risk management is not adequate to keep humanitarians secure in the most hostile environments (HPCR, 2014). Academics, field workers and policy experts have also identified several obstacles to improved security management. Bolletino (2006, p.7) mentions four major obstacles to efficient SRM. Although his research is almost ten years old, current reports still present the same results.

First of all, Bolletino (2006, p.7) outlines a lack of strategic thinking about security, because organizations tend to focus more on operational readiness. Lisa Reilly, executive coordinator of the EISF, mentions that organizational awareness about security threats is still not sufficient. She adds that SRM is rather an afterthought than integrated in the design of programmes and projects from the beginning. She also mentions that most organizations do not have a coacher of SRM, which makes it difficult to bring in mitigating measures, because they often miss tackling the risk as a whole or to look at how their organization is facing the threat (HPCR, 2014). The need for fast operational readiness is highly connected to competition over donor funding. Donors tend to target fragile high-risk contexts, which are often highly politicised. In order to receive funds and to maintain a reputation and market share, organizations start programmes in highly dangerous places. Even if aid by donor governments is clearly linked to foreign political objectives of the respective government, it undermines the independence principle and organizations are not able to deal with the risks (Van Brabant, 2010, p.10). Therefore, organizations are lowering their risk thresholds and adjusting their risk assessments (Armstrong, 2013, p.8).

A further challenge appears with the “transfer of risks” as a type of security strategy, which has become fairly normalized among aid agencies during the last years (Van Brabant, 2010, p.5). As aid agencies simply need to be officially present to maintain cash flows, “remote management” has often been acknowledged as a result. Formerly a last operational alternative, it is nowadays a common programming adaptation in order to prevent kidnappings and other security incidents as well as to ensure further provision of aid (Armstrong, 2013, p.10). The concomitant withdrawal especially concerns international staff, as humanitarian agencies often consider their national staff to be less vulnerable towards risks (Haver, 2007, p.10). Organizations use remote management to circumvent their own security rules and restrictions by outsourcing responsibilities and activities to their local staff, other local NGOs or for-profit subcontractors (Collinson and Duffield, 2013, p.iii). Larger NGOs and the UN circumvent compliance with donor funds as well as their own security regulations by outsourcing their activities to local NGOs or other non-profit local subcontractors. Reflections and evaluations on remote management focus on the programme side rather than on the security side (Van Brabant, 2010, p.6). There are no common frameworks or guidelines on remote management and decision-making and the majority of the organizations have not initiated plans and rules for remote management or the moral dilemmas (Collinson and Duffield, 2013, p.3).

Secondly, Bolletino (2006, p.10) names inadequate development of tools for risk assessment, as some organizations still struggle with outdated security guidelines and plans which make an assessment of daily changing threats impossible. In 2003, the Independent Panel on the Safety and Security of UN Personnel in Iraq (p.24) concluded that a general lack of adequate threat assessment at both the field level and strategic level at the headquarters exists. In their 2006 analysis, Bruderlein and Gassmann (2006, p.74) criticize that the UN has not developed an adequate strategic security approach and proper risk assessment methods. Bruderlein and Gassmann (2006, p.67) mention that “there is an apparent incongruity between the operational experience accumulated within each agency and the lack of systemic and standardized approaches to security management.” Van Brabant (2010, p.5) underlines the lack of a “genuine security culture” which integrates security in all aspects of humanitarian work. Furthermore, Van Brabant (2010,

p.5) adds the lack of focused research exists on cases where improved operational security and risk management have facilitated access to a country, which was not possible before. According to research by Armstrong done in 2013 (p.3), most employees within the humanitarian sector still feel that the issue of security risk management in high-risk contexts is not given enough attention and resources. There is a lack of adequate considerations of long-term implications. He mentions in his report for the EISF that in the past security budgets allowed for protective measures, trainings and communication equipment, whereas today a great part is spent for new services like armed escorts and private security providers, which are not available for every staff member (2013, p.26).

Thirdly, Bolletino (2006, p.7) mentions the inability to institutionalize staff expertise due to a high rate of personnel turnover. He adds a shortage of scientifically trained security managers and professionals, as most of the UN and NGO security professionals have a military or police background and lack knowledge in social science (Ibid., p.10). Following the 2004 ECHO report (p.2), the most remarkable blind spot in humanitarian security management is staff competence. The Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) Policy Brief 34 from 2009 (Stoddard, Harmer and DiDomenico, 2009, p.6), mentions a human resource challenge, including high humanitarian staff turnover. In addition, counter-surveillance as a risk reduction technique is difficult to implement with high staff turnover, as it requires skills, knowledge about the surrounding and the people as well as constant attention (Van Brabant, 2000, p.183). The 2011 OCHA report remarks that international staff remain in an insecure environment for a maximum of two years (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.41). The 2013 EISF report reinforces the military background of the majority of security staff, which can be a hindrance due to different principles, and indicates that dedicated security personnel are the first ones which have to leave when budgets are tightened (Armstrong, 2013, p.35). Organizations vary in their approach hiring security advisors. Some organizations employ global security advisors, others rely on regional security advisors and yet others do not have a special security advisor, but rely solely on senior representatives, who deal part-time with security (HPN, 2010, p.11). In low-risk countries, it might not be of further concern, if the security focal point has also other responsibilities, yet, in insecure countries, it might be problematic. This is also indicated by an increase in former aid workers seeking legal redresses against humanitarian organizations on the grounds of negligence of their duty of care as well as against field-level security advisors or senior managers, which can be recognized in recent years (HPN, 2010, p.11). However, as the majority of the cases have been settled out of court, no strong judicial precedents have been set (Van Brabant, 2010, p.6).

Fourthly, Bolletino (2006, p.11) adds the danger of a too stringent reliance on security plans. Many agencies express the fear that an overemphasis on stringent security measures might restrain operational choices (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.78). This is in line with interviews contained in the Aid Worker Security Report 2013 as well as some interviews conducted for this paper. Some aid workers confirmed that kidnappings in general happen to humanitarians who ignore the standard operating procedures (SOPs). In particular, humanitarians, who are working for a longer time in the same location, tend to “have grown complacent” (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.7). Harmer’s analysis showed that there is a need to increase staff compliance with basic SOPs (HPCR, 2014). SOPs are ignored, if they are either considered too stringent and

strict (Respondent MdM) or if they are considered too general and not context-specific enough (Respondent Crisis Consulting). The second respondent of MSF mentions that the quality of the SRA is very important, as expatriates sometimes break the rules if they are too strict and therewith not only put themselves at risk, but also their colleagues. The respondent from MdM hints to the paradox that “too much security management implies too much risk”, when security management becomes too rigorous and therefore increases insecurity. Another respondent adds “we also want to avoid that our personnel relies on a strict security management that would give them the impression that they are protected in all circumstances. We want to provoke that security remains a constant preoccupation for everybody” (Respondent Caritas International Belgium). Phil Candy from RedR UK underlines this by mentioning that a disadvantage of advanced security management can be seen in the behaviour of some aid workers, who feel less responsible for their security as they think that the security manager is responsible (HPCR, 2014). Furthermore, every security management manual urges aid agencies to state publicly that no ransom payments will be made. This is certainly a basic and necessary policy, but not every kidnapping has economic reasons and sometimes kidnappers are still willing to try their chances if a ransom has been paid for other people like businesspersons working in the same area (Van Brabant, 2000, p.184). Furthermore, it is an open secret that ransoms have been paid for previous kidnappings.

4.4. Security Training

In 2006, Bruderlein and Gassmann (p.77) identified two major shortcomings with regard to security training of humanitarian personnel. First, security training remains on a rather introductory level and lacks managerial oversight, including the methodology for crisis management or risk assessment. Phil Candy remarks that the promotion of the importance of security training is sometimes difficult, as aid workers think they have to accept certain risks based on the inherent nature of humanitarian assistance (HPCR, 2014). Another challenge concerns funding as professional security training is very expensive (HPCR, 2014). Time and money are often the restrictive factors, which do not make briefings, theoretical and practical trainings and debriefings always possible (Respondent Crisis Consulting).

Secondly, Bruderlein and Gassmann (2006, p.77) mention that security training is often not available for national staff even though their responsibility for the security of entire missions has increased. Even though progress has been made since 2006, gaps can still be identified. The Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) Policy Brief 34 underlines inadequate training, especially for national staff (Stoddard, Harmer and DiDomenico, 2009, p.6). Security training is mostly provided for staff that are in charge of security and is not obligatory for every humanitarian going on a mission. Some organizations only provide security training to security managers, who will then brief the rest of the staff (Respondent 1 MSF). A study by Fast and Wiest (2007, p.15) revealed that only 38 per cent of the female staff received security training as opposed to 58.3 per cent of their male colleagues in high-risk countries. Additionally, gender-specific security trainings are often limited to restrictions on women’s movement or clothing, as reflected by local gender roles.

Debate exists about the usefulness of special security training sessions on the prevention of kidnap threats and especially on mock kidnapping sessions. Proponents underline the importance of those trainings. They underline that the provision of special sessions on kidnapping should be included in the security training, as kidnappings can be seen as an “emerging and developing market”, (Respondent Crisis Consulting). Providers of these trainings argue that it is better to find out for each aid worker whether he or she is able to handle such a situation beforehand than recognizing that he or she is not able to deal with it when actually being kidnapped. Due to these trainings, humanitarians are facing these risks in a more realistic way. The participants are forced to think about their own ability to deal with threats and consequently recognize if they are either willing to take these risks connected to their employment or not (Respondent Crisis Consulting). Opponents to those trainings underline the traumatizing effect and bad experiences of kidnapping training, as “it can be sometimes hard for staff to accept that as well” and the fact that “you can be prepared as much as you want, but you never know how you will react in the field” (Respondent 1 MSF). Some organizations are reluctant to provide these relatively expensive special kidnapping sessions to their staff due to the costs, but also due to the fear that staff would drop out afterwards (Respondent Crisis Consulting).

4.5. Staff

As part of a systematic process of assessing remaining risks, an assessment of risks for staff in general as well as different staffers and their vulnerabilities is necessary. Even though the field of humanitarian security has professionalized during recent years, insufficient attention has been paid to different risks and disparities of certain groups based on nationality, gender or organizational affiliation (HPCR, 2015).

Working in conflict zones, organizations constantly have to make decisions about the security of their staff, calculate the risks of their missions and address human suffering, based on the humanity principle. An underlying factor of this decision is the ontological inequality between those that are endangered by voluntarily working in that setting and those people that could be saved. This decision revolves around the question whether the lives of humanitarian aid workers should be put at risk in order to save the lives of local communities. A further feature of this ontological inequality can be identified in the distinction between the more “valued lives of expatriate volunteers from the devalued lives of local staff” (Fassin, 2012, pp.226-7). The 2011 OCHA study revealed that national humanitarians see an improvement in addressing and handling of disparities, yet, they still feel a greater exposure to risk and burden of insecurity (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.3). National humanitarian workers constitute the higher absolute number, with more than 80 per cent of the kidnap victims in the five high-risk countries between 2000 and 2015. Whereas, international humanitarian workers face higher kidnapping rates per capita in these contexts (OCHA, 2011, p.1). On average, national staffers are held captive for 12 days as compared to international staffers’ average duration of captivity of 53 days (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.5).

In general, international staff are considered more vulnerable as their kidnapping yields higher ransom payments and receives greater political or media attention (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.5). However, depending on the area and context, both national

and international staff can be vulnerable to kidnapping. On the one hand, local staff can be less vulnerable as they are either not seen as valuable targets in economic terms or as their kidnapping would mobilize clans, extended families or social groups into retaliation. Local aid workers can be more vulnerable due to religious, ethnic or economic conflicts (Armstrong, 2013, p.21). In some situations, organizations prefer to hire nationals, as they are presumed to have easier access, and to be more familiar with the local context and networks of influence. Thereby, organizations sometimes underestimate the security threats for national staffers as religious, ethnic and clan rivalries or economic status may increase risks (Brooks, 2015, p.4). On the other hand, international staff can be less at risk when considered as impartial or put under local protection. Alternatively, they can be more at risk when their kidnapping is seen as economically profitable or increasing political pressure and visibility (Van Brabant, 2000, p.183). The latter might increase the risks for local staff when they have to accompany their international colleagues. In some environments, the UN Field Security Service had to recommend temporary restrictions on profiles that were deemed more prone to kidnapping (Respondent 2 UNHCR).

Constraints remain concerning unequal prioritization of nationals and expatriates as many nationals accused organizations of valuing international staffers over nationals (Brooks, 2015, p.5). A grey area seems to exist with regard to international agencies' responsibility towards the security of their national employees (Van Brabant, 2010, p.6). Even though organizations have a duty of care for both national and international staff, some iniquities still exist. Insufficient attention has been paid to disparities between local and international staff, as organizations' staffing policies rarely take the distinct threats faced by national or international staff into consideration (Collinson and Duffield, 2013, p.v). International staff seem to receive greater awareness concerning the importance of security training, operational and media decision-making and involvement in security measures and briefings (Brooks, 2015, p.4). A differential status can be analysed in terms of pay scales, possibility of emergency evacuation, living standards (Brooks, 2015, p.4), rest and recuperation leave and additional hazards payments (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.40). Contracts of national staff usually include less protection in terms of insurances, health benefits and security entitlements like evacuation eligibility or access to transportation (Collinson and Duffield, 2013, p.1). The majority of insurance providers ask for specific certificates, which prove the participation in security trainings. However, that is often connected to high costs for the organizations (Respondent Crisis Consulting). Some providers cover nationals only during working hours and national tends to have less access to off-hours telecommunications (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.40). The disparity is even higher for aid workers employed by subcontracted entities or by local partner organizations (Collinson and Duffield, 2013, p.v).

A further set of problems arose out of remote management, which is often based on restricted access for international staff, increased kidnappings of international humanitarians and on humanitarian agencies' assumptions that national staff is less vulnerable to risk and can replace international staff if the latter has to be withdrawn. This is justified with the idea that locals enjoy greater community acceptance. Therefore, they are sent to the frontlines (Respondent MdM). Many incidents refute the main assumption behind remote management, as risks are transferred to national staff of the same organization or local contractors. Haver (2007, p.10) criticises that organizations have

failed to take into consideration the ethics of transferring security risks from their international to their local staff. She mentions that many organizations failed to include national staff in their security policies and did not identify the specific risks that nationals face. Van Brabant notes that in some cases, NGOs did not pass on adequate amounts of funds to local partners to cover risk mitigation measures, which they would themselves consider a basic requirement (Armstrong, 2013, p.18). In certain environments, local staff can be even more vulnerable to security threats based on their religious or ethnic affiliation or the fact that they have less access to security resources, agency assets, equipment and cash as well as less extensive trainings. There is a lack of physical protection if they live in their former homes, which makes them softer targets (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes). Furthermore, nationals do not have specific security protection personnel and regular access to information (Respondent 1 UNHCR). In Somalia for example, remote management has led to an increase of threats against national staff, as they were perceived as resource handlers and decision-makers after a while (Stoddard, Harmer and DiDomenico, 2009, p.9). A constant evaluation of the threshold of acceptable risk is particularly complicated when security advisors are no longer present (HPN, 2010, p.22).

For one interviewee, the rising number of security incidents for national staff and the decrease for international staff, is a clear indication that the NGO community is bringing much more responsibility and attention to the consequences of the security management towards expatriates and more precaution to send expatriates to sensitive contexts (Respondent MdM). Drivers are the most vulnerable and as nationals are usually hired as drivers, they consequently become the main target (Respondent 1 MSF). There is considerable debate on the inadequacies of the international humanitarian system as well as donor practice as those two do not seem to favour local actors and national NGOs (McGoldrick, 2011, p.980). There seems to be a general recognition of this issue, but no real efforts to find solutions.

According to Brooks (2015, p.5) little research has been done on gender-related disparities in security of humanitarian aid workers, including the different vulnerabilities as well as resiliencies of female and male relief workers. This is also indicated by statistics of the Security in Number Database (SiND), which report that among the people kidnapped in the five countries between 2000 and 2015, 39.1 per cent are men and 5.2 per cent are woman. However, the database does not include information on gender for the remaining 65.7 per cent– see Table 3. In each of the five countries, more male staff than female staff has been kidnapped. A misleading assumption could be drawn that men are more vulnerable to kidnapping than women are. Whereas, the results could also be based on the fact that a higher number of men are employed in risky environments and occupations. Therefore, Wille and Fast (2011, p.3) analysed the different proportion of kidnapped female and male victims in relation to the proportion of all reported female and

male victims and came to the conclusion that men are only to a minimal percentage (0.9%) more vulnerable to kidnapping.

Table 3. Kidnappings plus Kidnap- killings per Gender between 2000 and 2015 in the five high-risk countries				
Country	Gender	Male Staff	Female Staff	Gender Unknown
Afghanistan		152	16	230
Sudan		41	7	80
Somalia		25	9	57
Pakistan		31	4	30
Syrian Arab Republic		36	2	11
Total		285	38	480

Concerning environment and location, data indicates that men experience proportionally more security incidents in rural areas and travel routes on streets or water, opposed to women who are more frequently victimized in urban areas and at their work place or residence (Wille and Fast, 2011, p.4). Security events that lead to remote management, withdrawal or the termination of missions are five percent more common after security events that have affected men (Ibid., p.6). This finding could be based on several explanations, as it could hint at an attitude of considering women in general more vulnerable and therefore their victimization as a weak indicator of a serious risk as opposed to men. Or it could again just indicate that men experience rather serious life threatening security incidents which make the closure of a program more likely (Ibid.). Additional risks might arise during a kidnap situation, as kidnappers may threaten to rape their female victims (Respondent UNFPA, 2015). A further aspect concerns the different dynamics related to kidnap threats when dealing with a group of men, group of women or a mixed group. Men might react different when seeing women facing additional risks like rape (Respondent Crisis Consulting, 2015). Anyhow, this rather concerns the actual dealing with a kidnapping than the prevention side.

4.6. Context and Location

Analysing remaining risks concerning the location, two locations can be identified as providing more insecurity as well as some general remarks about insecure contexts can be made. The first category of insecure location consists of kidnapping threats while travelling on roads. According to the Aid Worker Security Report 2014 (Stoddard, Harmer and Ryou, 2014, p.4), an annual increase in roadside attacks, ambushes and kidnappings can be identified. During movement on roads, aid workers are most vulnerable to risks, as they are further away from help and cannot dodge the threat. Constant travel by road is an essential part of humanitarians' work, as they have to commute between their residence, headquarters and project sites, meet local communities and other actors and undertake needs assessments. Staying outside of protected sites, walls and gates creates

vulnerability and increases exposure to attacks. Data indicates that NGOs and ICRC have experienced higher exposure to road incidents than UN staff (Wille and Fast, 2013, p.6). The most vulnerable are thereby national drivers (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes, 2015). Research by Stoddard, Harmer and Ryou for Humanitarian Outcomes (2014, p.8) highlights that the risks connected to road movement have not adequately been addressed by the security management of organizations, as most organizations rather focused on the security of project sites and offices. Many risk reduction strategies mention that routines while travelling should be avoided. This however might be difficult to implement if options are limited and decisions have to be made fast (Van Brabant, 2000, p.184).

The second insecure location are remote areas. In some remote areas, humanitarians represent the easiest and sometime only target (Stoddard, Harmer and DiDomenico, 2009, p.6). The respondent from the IRC underlined the security concern of working in remote areas, especially providing services along a frontline of aggression. In these areas, movement is often restricted due to “non-existent” infrastructure and the impact of natural hazards like flooding. Accessible roads are usually used by militant opposition groups and are therefore dangerous for any kind of passage. Respondent two from MSF adds the danger of exploratory missions in unknown remote territories. Competition over donor funds or the desire to take a leading role or gain presence in the media can create a strong incentive for organizations to operate in high-risk environments, notwithstanding that some of those organizations are not prepared to work in those environments (Armstrong, 2013, p.23). Nonetheless, every organization remains responsible for the safety of its staff. Therefore, if individual aid workers wish to leave a high-risk area that demand should be respected under all circumstances (Van Brabant, 2000, p.199).

The importance of the context becomes visible when dealing with insecurity. Attacks in high-risk environments like Somalia and Sudan have decreased due to fewer humanitarian staff, especially international workers, on the ground as well as restricted access granted by the respective host governments (OCHA, 2011, p.1). The authorities in Sudan expelled many aid organisations (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.15). Eckroth's (2010, p.92) research about security situations of aid workers in Darfur mentions that “there is a culture of competition between humanitarian NGOs which enhances the pressure to get to a conflict zone first and work closer to the lines of confrontation.” A recent research done by Armstrong (2013, p.12) for the EISF underlines that some organizations put priority on the identification of their programmes, projects and the context as a first step and only after they have secured external and internal agreements and funding, they are considering risks and security as a second step. This might lead to operations of organizations in contexts which they know little about and do not have adopted adequate risk management measures.

Furthermore, the research by EISF shows that some respondents felt that in some insecure locations with high presence of militants little if anything can be done to mitigate those risks, particularly concerning kidnapping risks (Armstrong, 2013, p.21). Especially in countries with active global insurgent elements, like Al Qaeda or the Islamic State (IS), who are more ideologically motivated and see all “Western” organizations as the enemy, negotiations about access and security are almost impossible (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.13). The respondent of Caritas International Belgium explains that organizations are often “perceived as representatives of the economical supremacy of the

West.” The interviewee adds that “poor people are fed up with their situation where nothing advances, and a way to make a quick progress is by kidnapping western humanitarian workers of which they know that they are financially covered by their organizations or countries.” In addition, even though, faith-based agencies do not encounter higher rates of attacks than other organizations (Stoddard, Harmer and DiDomenico, 2009, p.4), in certain contexts faith-based organizations are not tolerated and therefore have to expect higher risks. In Somalia, al-Shabaab expelled several faith-based organizations from the country and the Taliban in Afghanistan attacked faith-based agencies by accusing them of Christian propaganda (Fast, 2014, p.168). The respondent from Caritas International Belgium mentions that when an organization works with church partners, who form part of the social fabric of a community, “this can be an advantage or a disadvantage for the security depending on the context.”

4.7. Communication and Coordination

The community-based security approach is built on cornerstones like communication and transparency (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.83). Academic and policy studies have shown that improved staff security requires better coordination practices at each level of every organization as well as closer coordination between the different organizations (Bolletino, 2006, p.5). In the 2006 HPCR Policy Brief, Bolletino (p.3) argues that “staff security requires a common professional approach based on sound security expertise adapted to meet the operational needs of humanitarian organizations.” Despite the given fact, that one organization’s behaviour might seriously affect the perception towards and security of all organizations operating on site, information exchange and inter-agency coordination show certain limitations (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.78). In particular, with more complex threats, it takes time to get the right information due to the filtering of news (Respondent 1 UNHCR). Many humanitarian actors acknowledged that they need to optimize the security coordination with other organizations, but they often remain reluctant about actual coordination measures, as they fear a loss of their autonomy.

Obstacles are also based on different missions and mistrust, especially between NGOs and the UN. NGOs are not willing to further strengthen security collaboration as they prefer to keep aid delivery and political processes separated. They are concerned over the perception of their humanitarian principles and acceptance by the host communities. Until today, some NGOs prefer the adaptation of “NGO-only security coordination mechanisms” and refrain from collaboration with the UN (Armstrong, 2013, p.20). Furthermore, the desire to be in the spotlight and competition over donor funds impedes cooperation (Bolletino, 2006, p.7). Despite the attempts to institutionalize coordination, through bodies like the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), there is little evidence that these efforts have improved security coordination (Ibid., p.8). NGOs representation at the UN remains limited. Even though the IASC officially makes no distinction between its UN members and the standing invitees, the number of NGOs and their influence is still limited, as the majority cannot participate directly. Progress in adequate inter-agency security on a global level as well as with regard to ad hoc approaches on the field level remains slow (Stoddard, Harmer and DiDomenico, 2009 p.1).

Country-specific NGO security coordination offices, like those established in Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia, have facilitated the collection of incident data. However, they do not necessarily process the information beyond simple summaries of basic patterns, as these coordinating bodies often lack the mandate or time (Fast, 2010, p.372). Context-specific security forums, which facilitate the coordination of security management, can also create over-reliance. Additionally, reluctance of agencies to share security-related data and information can hinder the effectiveness of those forums. Armstrong mentions that “where independence nominally remains a core principle for many, broad coordination remains, and will in all likelihood remain, elusive” (2013, p.33). Coordination is further challenged by the emergence of new actors from the private sector, who might lead to new risks and compromises of traditional values (Armstrong, 2013, p.33). Many challenges arise out of the cooperation with the private sector when trying to maintain a principled approach. Overall, mistrust, competition, different mandates and a fear of loss of autonomy lead to limited coordination.

4.8. Humanitarian Innovation and Technologies

Tackling the analysis of challenges and constraints in terms of technology and innovation is a challenge in itself, as technology is constantly changing. Its relevance might already become out of date with the publication of this paper. However, some general remarks can be made and several risks can be analysed. Humanitarian technology refers generally to web-based and digital humanitarian information and communication technology (HICT). HICT as well as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), artificial intelligence, geo-localisation, nanotechnology, 3D printing and many more definitely present a range of possibilities that can transform the humanitarian sector. Yet this transformation as well as political, social and socio-economic consequences also entail uncertainty and threats, which can potentially hinder the security of humanitarians and the maintenance of the humanitarian principles (Armstrong, 2013, p.27).

Many scholars and practitioners embrace new technologies on the assumption that information can be spread more efficiently, misinformation can be corrected easier and also non-technical barriers can be removed (Armstrong, 2013, p.28-29). However, some general risks can be identified in the employment of humanitarian technologies. A lot of technology has been developed with regard to natural disasters and in terms of resilience-building, local action, early warning, mapping projects and social media campaigns, but rather few fit the purpose of providing security, especially from kidnapping threats. Additionally, due to their rather commercial or military application background, not all tools fit the purpose and delivery of humanitarian aid. It takes several years for devices to make it from the military to the civil market (Respondent Crisis Consulting). Several scholars see the development of modern technologies critical as they argue that just as easy as humanitarians, also opponents can make use of communication technologies and technologies tracking activities of humanitarians. Technologies can also increase the vulnerability and exposure to threats of aid workers. Some organizations report that kidnappers would threaten organizations to kill staff if there are tracking devices in vehicles. Therefore, they would drive around to see if they find a tracking device or locator in the vehicle and if someone would follow them (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes). The ICRC underlined the security risk of using mobile phones for the collection of privacy-

related information as militants are searching for foreign numbers (ICRC, 2013, p.94). Other scholars fear overreliance and over-dependence on technologies (Armstrong, 2013, p.28). The broad availability of communication technology like mobile phones does not necessarily enhance interaction with locals, but it can also have the opposite outcome (Armstrong, 2013, p.29). Furthermore, research by Oxford Policy Management, the Partnership for Research in International Affairs and Development or Concern Worldwide has shown that aid organizations often perceive new technology as difficult to use as they are expensive and detailed knowledge is often required (Cahill, 2013, p.52).

Many humanitarian aid workers rely on the radio when working in the field, however, radios do not provide total coverage (Respondent Crisis Consulting). Besides, all too frequent, radio stations submitted biased messages or even false information (Cahill, 2013, p.41). Additionally, radio communications between the radio operator and the staff might be overheard (Van Brabant, 2000, p.183). As a low-profile approach precludes Codan radios on travels due to their long antennas, which raise awareness, some organizations rely on Thuraya satellite phones, which use auto adapter docking stations. However, satellite phones and GPS applications have also raised suspicion (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.28). Research by EISF achieved varying results, as some respondents showed reluctance towards the replacement of communication technologies like radios on the assumption that transparency and security would suffer and discretion could be violated. Social media, like WhatsApp groups are used for sharing information, yet, they also bear the risk of geotagging (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes). One respondent interviewed by Armstrong (2013, p.30) mentioned that publications of sensitive and discrete information via social media have recently led to the kidnapping of humanitarian workers.

The second respondent from MSF outlined the application of panic buttons. However, they reveal their limitations in a number of ways. Firstly, they need to be activated manually, which is impossible if the kidnapped aid worker is unconscious or pinioned and blindfolded and not able to reach the button. Additionally, it puts a further risk on the respective person who tries to activate the button, as it could result in retaliation if detected. Secondly, panic buttons provide only a “one-shot solution” without any follow-up option. They do not provide any feedback, neither for the aid workers on the reception or response of its organization nor on the well-being of the humanitarian to its organization after the activation (Respondent ICRC). Due to the drawbacks of manual alarm systems and their costs, some organizations refrain from their use.

Many innovations are coming from the private sector. Yet, the collaboration between the private sector and the humanitarian community can create several shortcomings. This is primarily due to a lack of unity of the humanitarian principles (McGoldrick, 2011, p.976). Valerie Amos (Cahill, 2013, p.51), the former UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, mentions that the private sector has way more to offer than the humanitarian sector is equipped to ask for at the moment and that some companies are still struggling to adapt to the humanitarian system. Some humanitarian workers outline that collaboration with the military should be rather avoided. The respondent of Caritas International Belgium makes this clear by asking: “What is the use of giving your GPS coordinates to the US Army if you are bombed anyway

by them?” Guidelines for cooperation with the private or military sector are being implemented recently, but need further development.

All in all, by nature, humanitarian action is undertaken in rather insecure environments, which are complex in terms of actors and interests involved and may rapidly change. When examining the threat for humanitarian aid workers of being kidnapped in Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Pakistan or Syria, several remaining risks can be identified. These include the legal protection, the security approach of the organization, security risk management, disparities concerning the staff, context and location, communication and coordination as well as technology and innovation. The next chapter will address those analysed risks by making recommendations on how to improve or revise them in line with the four humanitarian principles.

5. Possible Improvements

Organizations face legal as well as operational challenges and risks in reaching populations, which are in need of humanitarian aid, and at the same time protecting their staff. Facing serious security risks, organizations struggle to ensure their compliance with the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. This chapter deals with the flip sides of risks and vulnerabilities, namely strengths. Strengths are factors that help reducing the exposure to kidnapping threats as well as to mitigate the outcomes (HPN, 2010, p.42).

The purpose of this chapter is to outline mitigation measures, which are defined as follows:

To act upon identified factors of the operational context to produce a favourable change in the situation enabling the effective and efficient conduct of activities while ensuring the security, safety, and well-being of staff as a high priority (SAG, 2010, p.20).

There is a shift towards the “enabling approach” to mitigate those risks that have been identified in chapter four and to enable humanitarians to fulfil their tasks. Like the respondent from Humanitarian Outcomes defines it: “It is a dangerous environment, so what do we need to do in order to enable us to keep working“. The “enabling approach” will address eight categories, which match the analysed risks outlined before, and propose revisions or improvements in legal protection, security approaches, security risk management, security training, staff disparities, context, coordination and humanitarian technology. Even though this chapter is divided into eight categories, all of them remain connected and intertwined. If one of these factors is unstable or not implemented, it might cause serious consequences for the other factors and hence for the security of humanitarians. Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that risk reduction has its own limitations and cannot provide absolute security. In terms of risk reduction and security reinforcement, a lot depends on the individual country, context, organization, actors involved and the root causes of the kidnap threat (Van Brabant, 2000, p.181). Complete security would only be possible by removing everyone, who could be at risk, from the risk environment.

5.1. Legal Protection

Under the legal concept of duty of care, organizations have a responsibility to ensure the well-being of their staff and to mitigate foreseeable risks and threats. IHL should be perceived as an important and essential source and foundation for legitimacy for humanitarian action (Armstrong, 2013, p.15). The four humanitarian principles are grounded in IHL. States are committed to them by ratifying the four 1949 Geneva Conventions.¹⁸ The four humanitarian principles are of crucial importance for humanitarians as they define what humanitarian aid is. Humanitarian organizations mention that adherence to the humanitarian principles facilitates acceptance and access. The four humanitarian principles distinguish humanitarian aid from other non-humanitarian activities. Therefore, the respondent from OCHA mentions that advocacy on IHL compliance and enforcement is crucial. Benjamin Charlier outlines two factors that improve the lack of enforcement of legal protection from an operational perspective. Firstly, awareness about the problem needs to be raised on a general level and secondly, effective measures need to be found to change the behaviour of those violating the law and to remind them of their responsibility (HPCR, 2015). The second respondent from MSF also adds the importance of advocacy, when humanitarians are targeted and that “kidnappers must be stopped in believing that they can get away with that without a trial.” In Darfur, international aid workers are less often killed during their kidnapping than in the other four countries, due to higher repercussions for the kidnappers if the internationals are wounded or killed (Eckroth, 2010, p. 100).

Vincent Cochetel, who has been kidnapped, criticizes that “we have abandoned the search for justice. There seems to be no consequence whatsoever for attacks against humanitarian aid workers. After my release, I was told not to seek any form of justice. It won't do you any good, that's what I was told. Plus, you're going to put in danger the life of other colleagues. [...] There was no justice for any of the humanitarian aid workers killed or abducted in Chechnya between '95 and '99, and it's the same all over the world. This is unacceptable. This is inexcusable. Attacks on humanitarian aid workers are war crimes in international law. Those crimes should not go unpunished. We must end this cycle of impunity. We must consider that those attacks against humanitarian aid workers are attacks against humanity itself” (Cochetel, 2014). The respondent from MdM notes that just recently organizations are sued for failures in the provision of security, negligence and responsibility to provide adequate information. The case of Arjan Erkel, the Dutch MSF head of mission in North Caucasus, created a precedent. For his release, after 20 months of captivity, the Dutch government paid a one million euro ransom. In 2004, the Dutch government announced a lawsuit against MSF to reclaim the money, but lost the case in 2007. This case not only confirmed that ransoms were paid, but also highlighted the value that might be placed on an aid worker (Fassin, 2010, p.238). Currently, Steve Dennis, a humanitarian aid worker from the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), who was kidnapped in Kenya in 2012, is now crowd funding his legal case against his former employer for what he claims is gross negligence in duty of care. Dennis says, “like everyone going into a risky situation for work, I believe there's a minimum level of training

¹⁸ 195 states have ratified the fourth Geneva Convention, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Syria.

and procedures required and when it's not there I believe there should be accountability for it" (Wall, 2015). This well-publicised case may shed a new light on the debate.

Pauline Chetcuti of ACF notices that IHL is politicized and based on the goodwill of states and therefore does not bring sufficient protection. Even nine years after the deliberate execution of 17 ACF members, the perpetrators have not been identified and prosecuted (HPCR, 2015). Neither have been the kidnappers of Arjan Erkel, Vincent Cochetel or Steve Dennis. When host states are either not willing or able to ensure the security of humanitarians, organizations are forced to develop their own security measures and approaches. They need to negotiate or cooperate with local populations, stakeholders, other organizations and armed actors (HPCR, 2014). Chetcuti mentions "there is a culture of impunity" (HPCR, 2015). To fight this impunity, Chetcuti believes that other mechanisms have to be implemented. Therefore, she proposes the creation of a special mandate holder by the UN, a "Special Representative for Strengthening the Protection of Aid Workers." This special representative should have the task of raising concerns, increase accountability for persecution and working with local authorities to explain IHL (Dyke, 2015). Marco Sassoli, the Director of the Department of Public International Law and International Organization of the University of Geneva, supports the idea of a special mandate holder to combat impunity, as it could lead to an improvement of the situation. Yet, he adds that this mandate holder also has to be in dialogue with armed groups and not only states as both are bound by IHL (Ibid.).

Related to the debate about the hierarchical protection for different groups of humanitarian workers, UN staff as well as ICRC staff has a special legal protection under IHL and yet both their national staff and international staff are still targeted. Furthermore, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan and Syria are not participants to the 1994 UN Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel. The respondent of OCHA does not agree that there is a hierarchy of legal protection as all humanitarian aid workers are protected by IHL, which provides the "higher degree of protection" and a strong framework. Sassoli, mentions that humanitarian aid workers are already protected from war crimes under civil protection and therefore he believes that it would not add further value to create additional legal protection categories for certain groups (HPCR, 2015). In sum, a sufficient legal framework to ensure security of humanitarians is in place, what remains are efficient prosecution measures for the perpetrators.

5.2. Adapted Security Triangle

How challenging the debate about the appropriate security approach can be, is outlined in the 2013 EISF report by Armstrong (2013, p.36). He mentions that, on the one hand, "acceptance should be considered essential" and, on the other hand, in contexts characterized by high insecurity, humanitarian actors might increasingly have to accept that the traditional community-based or acceptance-based security approach will not be sufficient, especially when belligerents or militants have no interest in the well-being of local communities. As Armstrong (2013, p.35) mentions: "It is a hard pill to swallow when it illustrates the limitations of their humanitarian model."

Based on their values, mandates and missions, the majority of the humanitarian aid organizations see acceptance as the foundation of their security strategies (HPN, 2010,

p.56). Additionally, the acceptance approach and the humanitarian principles are very compatible (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes). However, the majority of the humanitarians also recognize that acceptance cannot provide security against all kind of threats. Some organizations are already following a rather pro-active acceptance strategy, which is rather based on actions instead of principles (Armstrong, 2013, p.32). Acceptance from respective actors cannot simply be presumed, but needs consistent and extensive investment and revision of contacting, negotiating, informing, evaluating, explaining, listening and reaffirming (Van Brabant, 2010, p.14). The interviewees confirmed that organizations need to work constantly on their acceptance (Respondent Caritas International Belgium), to reach at least a certain level of tolerance, if not acceptance (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes, 2015). Newer organizations in the humanitarian field often believe that there is automatic acceptance based on their goals. However, the approach has to be more proactive. In his 2014 TED Talk, after describing a situation in which he had to face an expression of thanks from one of his kidnappers for his organization's provision of assistance to the kidnapper's family, Cochetel mentions that "he [the kidnapper] made me think also how they see us. Until then, I had assumed that they know why we are there and what we are doing. One cannot assume this. Well, explaining why we do this is not that easy, even to our closest relatives. We are not perfect, we are not superior, we are not the world's fire brigade, we are not superheroes, we don't stop wars, we know that humanitarian response is not a substitute for political solution. Yet we do this because one life matters. Sometimes that's the only difference you make - one individual, one family, a small group of individuals - and it matters." Acceptance has to be approached as a process rather than an event, which needs presence as well as constant and sustained engagement with all relevant parties. A study by UN OCHA has shown that security and access are more likely to be achieved, if the capacity of the organization to negotiate and communicate with all actors involved is higher and acceptance is approached in a more diligent and active way. Active acceptance measures vary depending on the operational setting as well as the aid actor. Interaction with all actors has to be proactive and continually refreshed (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes).

Pascal Porchet, Deputy Head of the ICRC Delegation in Iraq, mentions that ICRC's security approach is built around two main principles, namely acceptance and identification. Firstly, acceptance has to be built over time as a long-time investment. All actors involved and addressed have to understand that ICRC's work is based on the humanitarian principles. He adds that the type of "track record" plays a crucial role, including what behaviour the organization has shown and how reliable it has been in providing aid. Secondly, identification means a clear distinction from other non-humanitarian actors and the emphasis on the organizations humanitarian values. Furthermore, Porchet underlines transparency, predictability, clarity and open dialogue as important factors (HPCR, 2014). By relying on the four humanitarian principles, the ICRC is often the only actor who gets access to insecure and crisis-prone areas (McGoldrick, 2011, p.974). For the ICRC, the experience has been to stick to the humanitarian principles in order to get access to people and reach security for its staff. Of importance is also a strong partnership at the local level, including the National Societies, to expand its outreach (Ibid., p.975). In Afghanistan, the ICRC has been relatively successful in gaining acceptance by setting up 500 separate meetings over the course of

one year. No ICRC members have been kidnapped in Somalia according to the AWSD (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2015). Additionally, Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard mention the importance of measuring acceptance via surveys – as done in Pakistan and Afghanistan – to monitor shortfalls, misperceptions as well as success (2011, p.19). The ICRC has demonstrated the greatest capacity to achieve sustained and effective acceptance and secure access by “talking to everyone with a gun” as one interviewee of the 2011 OCHA report mentions (Ibid., p.22).

One fundamental prerequisite for acceptance is the capacity to fulfil commitments and the delivery of assistance. The respondent of the WFP mentions that “meeting the real needs of the served population is the best protection for the humanitarian workers.” If beneficiaries receive aid and see their needs fulfilled, acceptance becomes more likely. Recommended measures to increase acceptance include outreach teams with the task to “travel and talk”, bilateral conversations, regular meetings, getting feedback, communication of key messages via radio and television as well as distribution of flyers, comic strips and photos (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, pp.19-21). Few organizations, like MSK and ICRC, have staff members who are solely dealing with approaching and developing a humanitarian dialogue with certain militant actors (Respondent MdM). Some organizations rely on UN access teams, whereas most of the NGOs prefer to have their own dialogues. One NGO in Afghanistan has developed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), which it signs with Afghan communities as a precondition of its programmes in exchange for warnings of threats and dangers (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.20).

The 2010 Good Practice Review 8 outlines that “in practice, a good security strategy needs a flexible combination of approaches” (HPN, 2010, p.56). In insecure environments, many organizations use a combination of acceptance and protection security approach. Thereby, it has to be kept in mind that a shift to a protection approach and the hardening of the target does not mean that acceptance and the outreach is less important (Ibid., p.55). Organizations’ evaluations have shown that an acceptance approach is not always sufficient in high-risk settings and therefore has to be supplemented with protection measures, which are designed to reduce an organization’s vulnerability. Some NGOs use protection measures, like technical tools, unarmed guards, barbed wire and so forth, which do not question the humanitarian principles (Respondent Caritas International Belgium). For UN agencies, due to the dual nature of the UN as a humanitarian and political actor, a neutral perception is more difficult to achieve (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.16). According to the AWSD, UN staff has experienced a dramatic increase in kidnappings since 2001, reaching a peak in 2013 and 2014 (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2015). Therefore, UN agencies tend to rely more regularly on protection measures than most NGOs.

For a long time, the humanitarian sector’s strategy was being risk-averse with high protection measures and low acceptance approach. Risk aversion and withdrawal of staff is still an issue. However, according to Sean Healy from MSF UK, risk is part of what it means being a member of a humanitarian organization operating in a conflict zone. Hence, he thinks that operations should continue even though risks increase. “Bunkerisation” often prevents the delivery of humanitarian aid and therefore makes the presence of humanitarian actors somehow unnecessary (HPCR, 2014). “Bunkerisation”

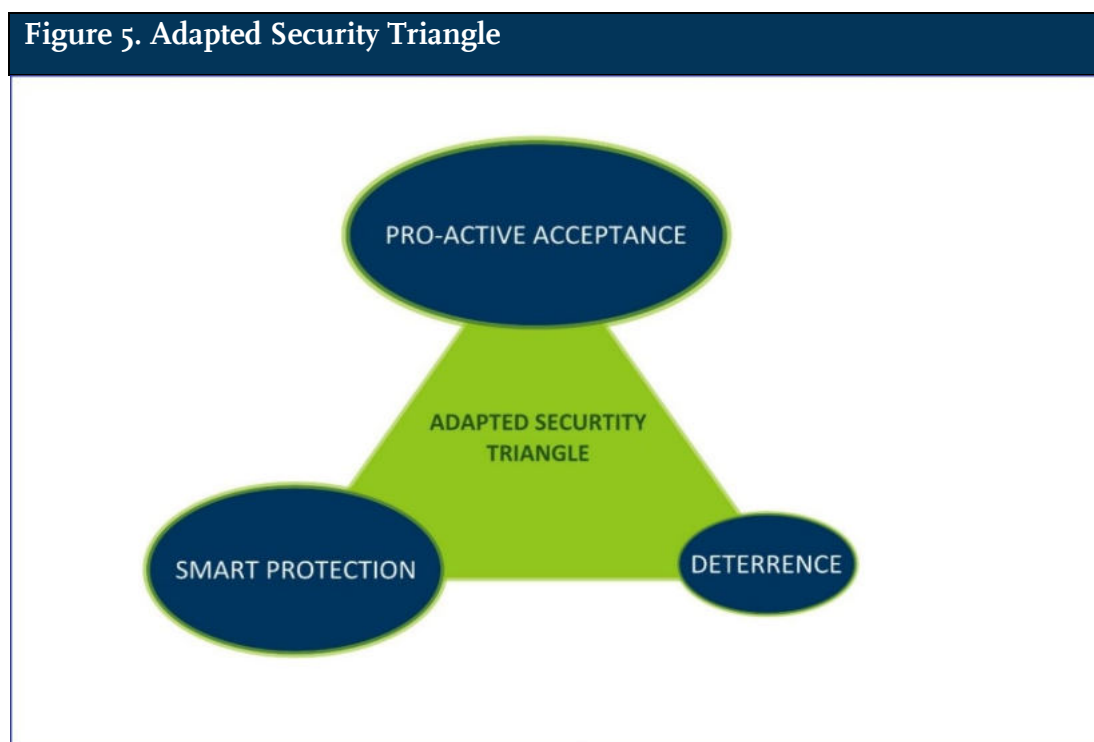
is not solving any of the issues and is even contrary to the very basic missions (Respondent MdM). The respondent from OCHA mentions that the shift in culture – from being risk-averse towards a “to stay and deliver” approach – is connected to a shift in mentality, as the idea of “to stay and deliver” takes time to be internalized and implemented. It is a long process from the stage where the decision is taken at the headquarter level to be implemented on the ground and followed up by every employee. The 2011 UN OCHA report speaks about “smart protection”, in order to add a layer of protection and to avoid “bunkerisation” (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.28). Unfortunately, the report gives very few examples and instructions on smart protection, which is understandable given the sensitivity of the topic. It is anticipated that a follow up study to the 2011 report will soon be conducted, which might give new insights based on the rich experiences of the last years (Respondent OCHA).

Whereas the humanitarian principles underpin acceptance, the deterrence approach undermines and questions the four humanitarian principles (Respondent Caritas International Belgium). Therefore, most humanitarian organizations refrain from this approach. The use of deterrence measures and armed protection should be seen as measures of very last resort, as they doubtlessly carry many risks (Armstrong, 2013, p.19). In Somalia, the deterrence approach has reinforced the power of those who were not meant to be reinforced (Respondent MdM). Yet in Pakistan, humanitarian agencies were able to convert a deterrent measure into a protection measure by using “low-profile armed escorts” and in the meantime satisfy local authorities. These organizations were able to agree with national police to sit in their unmarked vehicles while accompanied by the agencies’ own unmarked vehicles (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.23). As mentioned, low-profile approaches have drawbacks, but they are often used in highly insecure environments. Organizations in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan have been quite successful in gradually increasing their visibility throughout their operations and activities (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.28).

Swisscross Foundation, a private humanitarian foundation, is based on the humanitarian principles and does not depend on a UN mandate, according to its founder Enrique Steiger. It has been established to provide protection to medical aid workers through lightly armed civilian security forces. Swisscross is the first security force, which is explicitly trained and supported for humanitarian purpose (Steiger, 2012). If the deterrence approach is nonetheless used, organizations need to have a clear position and explicit guidelines on their counter-threats, which they have to maintain and follow. One organization in Darfur threatened to suspend its programme after the kidnapping of one of its members. It only ended its suspension in response to the release of its staffer after 147 days (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.30). Whereas suspensions or cessations of programmes after a kidnap incident were rather frequent until a couple of years ago, a shift is now taking place with organizations reacting more professionally and being increasingly reluctant towards a total withdrawal of the country. They might instead only leave the specific province (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes).

Figure 5 indicates how the original security triangle model could be revised and how the combination of the three security approaches could be understood. The most relevant approach is the pro-active acceptance approach. Acceptance has to be enhanced and underlined constantly. Thereby, the fundamental prerequisites for acceptance are

dialogues with all actors involved and the reliable delivery of assistance. Depending on the level of insecurity, acceptance can be added by a layer of protection, preferable smart protection measures, as outlined by the 2011 UN OCHA report. Deterrence measures should be seen as a very last resort.



5.3. Security Risk Management

Generally, the investment in security management and the supply of security assets have increased over the last years. According to Van Brabant (2010, p.5), security management should be an enabling factor, as it should allow an organization to stay or enter a certain environment, which it could not do without security management. Good security management is composed of three basic elements. First of all, you need to “know who you are”, meaning that you need to develop a detailed understanding of your agency, including its values, principles, roles, mandates and, missions as well as the agency’s capabilities and capacities to manage security risks (Van Brabant, 2000, p.17). As the respondent from MdM puts it, “the very nature of who you are makes a difference.” The respective organization needs to have the capacities, policies, procedures for action and security plans to be prepared to work in hostile environments. If the organization does not possess these capabilities or cannot recruit it quickly enough, it has to withdraw from the operating environment. Phil Candy, security manager at RedR UK, mentions that an effective humanitarian security programme should be all-encompassing in terms that it has to include headquarter and field level staff and it has to fit the culture of the organization. It has to mainstream security through the whole organization and not just being a “sticking plaster” (HPCR, 2014). Like Van Brabant (2010, p.5) characterizes it: A “genuine security culture”, which integrates security in all aspects of humanitarian work.

As a second component of good security management, you need to “know where you are”, which includes three main assessment areas (Van Brabant, 2000, p.17). First, actors need

to gain a solid knowledge of the regional, political and cultural context. Security management procedures will only be effective when they are applied to the respective context. There are only very few global “recipes” that fit all locations (Casey, 2014). What may be good practice in one of the five high-risk countries may not be suitable in another. The process of developing inside knowledge of the context is essential in gaining the respect and acceptance from locals. It is an ongoing process, which should not be jeopardised by staff turnover, time limitations or poor documentation. Secondly, actors need to conduct a general situational analysis to get an overview of the “bigger picture” of the current situation. This includes an analysis of political and institutional structures, cultural factors, and social struggles. Reasons for the conflict, infrastructure, external players and the economy also need to be considered (Ibid.). Organizations should have a back office in place, which constantly reviews the security situation (Respondent Crisis Consulting). Thirdly, a detailed contextual analysis of the actors, political and military developments, political economy of armed groups, as well as the nature of crime and violence in the area beforehand is vital (Respondent Crisis Consulting). In order to anticipate possible scenarios, it is important to consider all actors involved. This includes factors on how they are organized, who are their leaders, what type of communication takes place between the different actors, which language they use and so forth. Getting an understanding of the political and military developments enable an agency to monitor the dynamics of the environment. It is essential to assess the political economy of armed groups to figure out how an organization’s presence may be threatened or manipulated. Therefore, an organizations needs to assess whether its presence is contributing to, undermining or threatening the resource base of armed groups and whether the organization is facilitating the war economy by buying goods which are turned into arms. Furthermore, mapping of areas that are prone to threats and violence can be helpful in directing good practice. Triangulation in collecting information, which is a “method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data” can be useful (O’Donoghue and Punch, 2003, p.78). Finally yet importantly, organizations have to assess their threshold of acceptable risk, as for example the UN in its “Guidelines for Acceptable Risk” as part of its SRM (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.8).

As a third component of security management, a set of risk mitigation measures have to be developed and adhered to, which include standard operating procedures (SOPs) and more country specific security guidelines and rules. Problems arise out of the non-adherence of staff to those procedures (Respondent Crisis Consulting). Therefore, SOPs should be guided by best practice and recognized through lessons learnt, based on years of experience. All of the interviewees underlined the importance of SOPs to assess the risks and develop mitigating measures as well as the importance of adherence to the SOPs. “While the background for them is generally generic, they are context specific and tailored to reflect the particulars of an operation set-up and adapted to the environment and security level” (Respondent 2 UNHCR). These measures are planned to allow organizations to continue to operate effectively for the benefit of persons of concern while at the same time reducing the security risk for staff members. Organizations have a set of SOPs and contingency plans aimed at reducing the likelihood and impact of a threat occurring. Some examples of SOPs include curfews, vehicle and convoy movements (Respondent 2 UNHCR), radio checking (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes), no

traveling during night-time, monitoring of whereabouts of staff (Respondent Caritas International Belgium), avoidance of travel routines and local pubs (Respondent Crisis Consulting) as well as communication gadgets and warden systems (Respondent UNFPA). SOPs need to be realistic rather than being an obstacle for staff (Respondent 1 UNHCR). While there is common agreement on the usefulness of SOPs, some respondents added that they “are never enough” and need to be complemented by special preparation and trainings (Respondent Crisis Consulting). MSF and many other organizations have developed security levels, with different mitigation rules (Respondent 1 MSF). The outcome of the interviews shows that most of the organizations interviewed have SOPs in place and that they are regularly reviewed. Some organizations also have Minimum Operating Security Standards in place, which outline a set of common security standards and are designed to further reduce risks by mandating that organizations, programmes and funds comply with them. They are usually more “hardware heavy and less procedural” as they relate more to vehicles, communications, offices and so forth (Respondent 2 UNHCR). It should be taken for granted and also phrased as a public policy that no ransom payments will be made (Van Brabant, 2000, p.184). Security officers would partly explain the appearance of kidnappings due to the ignorance of SOPs. So far, no reliable quantitative data exists on the question whether kidnappings took place when employees adhered to the SOPs or not (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes).

Research for the UN OCHA 2011 “To Stay and Deliver” report has shown that most effective security management was done by organizations that have decentralised their decision-making with regard to SRM. Thereby security decisions are made at the most proximate level, which are supported and advised at a higher level (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.9). Furthermore, the research findings indicate that a combination of two practices is mostly used by aid organizations in high-risk countries. Firstly, organizations rely on localised or devolved security management. Kidnapping, in order to be successful, normally needs surveillance and sophisticated planning by the perpetrators. To a certain extent, counter-surveillance might be a useful strategy to control risks. Therefore, humanitarian aid workers should pay attention for anything unusual. A strong local network of informants and supporters can further contribute to security management (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.6). Secondly, agencies use low-profile approaches.¹⁹ The low-profile approach does not always necessarily relate to security reasons, but sometimes more to operational reasons, for example when conducting cross-border activities (Respondent 1 MSF). The respondent from Crisis Consulting recommends to “be a grey mouse within other grey mice”, to make sure not to stick out in some situations. The last low-profile approach might negatively influence acceptance of the host community. An exception to this approach is the ICRC, which puts an emphasis on capacity building and negotiations and the maintenance of visibility. Some NGOs have increased visibility, for example by painting their vehicles in a distinguishable

¹⁹ The 2011 ‘To Stay and Deliver’ report by OCHA outlines three different low-profile approaches. Firstly, low visibility approaches, which include simple de-branding measures like the removal of agencies’ logos. A second option includes more comprehensive blending strategies like the hiring of local vehicles with no visible radio antennas or minibuses in Darfur rather than white 4x4 vehicles. Thirdly, extreme low visibility or no visibility approaches, including a concealment of the organisation’s presence and local staff working from their homes, which have been performed by UNHCR in Afghanistan (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.27).

colour from the white UN peacekeeping cars, to increase distinction (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.18). One respondent also mentions that some NGOs do not want to be seen too close to the UN because of its peacekeeping mandate (Respondent Caritas International Belgium).

Security is a cross-cutting issue, which needs to be mainstreamed (Respondent OCHA). SRM needs to become an integral part of programming and must not be treated in isolation (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.49). The interconnection between security and logistics can be seen with organizations, like MSF, that do not have special security officers at the field level, but either the project manager at project level or the head of mission at country level is responsible (Respondent 1 MSF). Many organizations have changed their approach from treating security as an additional factor of responsibility, which can be carried out by logisticians (Respondent 1 MSF), towards the hiring of special security personal, including security officers, risk managers and security advisors (Van Brabant, 2010, p.5). Particularly in high-risk environments a full-time security advisor, who does not have other responsibilities, is strongly recommended (HPN, 2010, p.11). For many organizations, full-time security managers have become a standard (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes). Best-case scenario includes full-time security personnel, who actively gather up-to-date information, identify risks, exchange information with other organizations and implement coping measures. Asked about expected competence and skills of security advisors, the interviewees named strong leadership, strategic approach (Respondent 2 UNHCR), good communications skills as well as being analytical and calm (Respondent 2 MSF). Furthermore, it was added that security managers need the right mindset (Respondent OCHA), knowledge of security situation, training in risk assessment and military and security background (Respondent WFP). Someone who is experienced and familiar with the context mission, effective in communication, informative, able to liaise with other agencies security focal points and update staff on a timely manners, always active and responsive rather than reactive and accessible and receptive when needed (Respondent 1 UNHCR). As most of the security professionals have a military or police background, a shortage of scientifically trained security managers exist (Bolletino, 2006, p.10). This shortage could be overcome when those security professionals would either receive additional trainings or would be grouped with policy experts and social scientists.

The blurring of lines between civilian humanitarian and military activities and the connected loss of impartiality and neutrality are often the result of decisions from external actors and therefore feel like they are beyond the control of humanitarians. This makes humanitarian actors appear as passive as they cannot command a different behaviour of military actors. Pascal Porchet from the ICRC delegation in Iraq mentions that the blurred mandates make the upholding of the humanitarian principles more important than ever (HPCR, 2014). In the American context, advocacy efforts have resulted in the “Guidelines for Relations Between US Armed Forces and NGOs in Hostile or Potentially Hostile Environments,” which have been negotiated between the US Department of Defense and InterAction (Fast, 2010, p.380). Furthermore, the responsibility of donors to fund security-related costs and to ask for explicit security plans in project proposals should be highlighted (Armstrong, 2013, p.26).

Collinson and Duffield (2013, p.v) mention that remote management and “bunkerisation” are “an unstoppable trend”. Organizations tend to show more precaution to send international staff to insecure environments (Respondent MdM). Therefore, organizations have to strategically plan and outline in advance when, where and which form of outsourcing to implement as opposed to ad hoc reactions. Some good practices are emerging with regard to the investment in highly localised course of actions, including recruitment of national staff members in consultation with their respective community or locals from the diaspora as international staff (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.2). Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard (2011, p.26) outline the possibility of “soft remote management” to enhance accountability and to avoid quality deficits through absence. Several methods of soft remote management” have been partially successful in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Sudan so far. One NGO in Afghanistan has employed quality assurance teams, which are composed of national independent staff. UNHCR and WFP in Afghanistan and Somalia have drawn on third party monitoring. In areas which are too dangerous for both national and international staff, organizations have started using triangulated local monitoring, which draw on a combination of community members, vendors and local government officials (Ibid., pp.26-28). However, it has to be kept in mind that national staff on site do not feel that its work is valued less.

Security management needs to be adaptive and flexible to change in the operational environment. The study by UN OCHA in 2011 (p.1) reveals that international humanitarian workers tend to overestimate security risks. Security guidelines and rules have to be reasonable. A balance needs to be found, as they should not be too loose and not too stringent (Respondent 2 MSF). In some occasions, SRM has become too strict and invasive (Respondent MdM). Armstrong (2013, p. 11) indicates that some organizations have tightened SRM out of fear of legal consequences. Humanitarians have to watch out that they do not create more insecurity themselves than they try to manage by losing the links to the communities and disconnect themselves (Respondent MdM). Security measures cannot manage every risk and cannot cover every eventuality. Therefore, staff will have to rely on their own skills, situational interpretations and judgments. Security plans and guidelines have to be kept updated and constantly assess dynamic changes on a daily basis. The first respondent from MSF made it very clear that security guidelines have to be respected, otherwise people cannot work for the organization.

5.4. Security Training

The availability of security trainings has increased constantly. Many security management manual recommend trainings and simulations of kidnap scenarios (Van Brabant, 2000, p.205). Security trainings are important to help avoid kidnappings in the first round, but also to gain better knowledge for surviving or better handling of a kidnapping as well as to avoid putting those at risk who are held captive as well (Ibid., p.188).

The outcome of the interview evaluation shows that organizations differ in their approach to the provision of security training. For some organizations, security training is an obligation, whereas others just provide it to some of their staffers. According to the OCHA respondent, in most insecure contexts, OCHA employees would not get a travel clearance, if they have not done the online security training plus the additional Safe and Secure

Approaches in Field Environments (SSAFE) training for four days. The training includes also a session on kidnapping. Furthermore, staff is obliged to repeat the training every two or three years. The respondent from OCHA as well as from UNFPA consider the training as useful for preparation. The respondent of UNFPA mentions that the mandatory four days training, which was up-to-date and included a special session on kidnapping threats, was useful as it led to more awareness of security precautions. The two UNHCR respondents outline that generic security training is mandatory for UNHCR staff, either before going on a mission or on site. The training also includes a basic information session on kidnapping. Depending on the actual level of risk of kidnapping, the generic mandatory training is complemented with a more tailored country or region-specific training that includes modules related to kidnapping, incident management and actions to consider as potential victims of such an incident. The respondents add that most of these training lessons also include simulation exercises of incidents that may occur in the respective country. Additionally, UNHCR staffers, which are considered for emergency missions have to participate in a workshop on emergency management, where a core module with classroom teaching and simulation exercises is provided on kidnapping. The two respondents from UNHCR considered the training as useful, as it clarifies vague issues about security situations (Respondent 1 UNHCR) and raises awareness as well as the level of preparedness and responsiveness of all staff members (Respondent 2 UNHCR). The respondent adds that organizations should initiate more periodic trainings for aid workers (Respondent 1 UNHCR) and that UNHCR's implementing and operating partners should also receive the same trainings for increased effectiveness (Respondent 2 UNHCR). The first respondent from UNHCR only recommends that the trainings should be scheduled earlier after recruitment. The respondent from WFP also found the four-days training with a special session on kidnap threats useful, but adds that security trainings should be longer and more frequent. All interviewees from UN agencies received security training and underlined its usefulness.

Whereas, the second respondent from MSF expressed that security training do not have to be mandatory for every worker, but can be covered in a general training for pre-mission. The Caritas International Belgium respondent remarks that security training includes an imperative security briefing in the headquarters by the security focal point and in the field by the representative of the organization. Another respondent from the IRC remarks that IRC hosts a one-day-long training for all field coordinators, which is delivered by RedR. The respondent from Humanitarian Outcomes adds that trainings are definitely necessary and useful, but is not sure about the usefulness of mock kidnapping sessions. Asked about it, the respondent from Crisis Consulting mentions that the organization has not received any negative feedback about the kidnap sessions so far. However, the respondent advises that the training sessions should include a technical and psychological briefing session, which are personalized to each groups. On the one hand, the training should be an opportunity to get prepared and on the other hand, it should be a possibility to figure out if people are willing to take those risks later on in their engagement (Respondent Crisis Consulting). 12 out of the 13 respondents confirmed that trainings should be made mandatory and that they should be adapted to the specific country context.

A survey of security trainings done by RedR UK and funded by the Office of U.S Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) has shown, that national and international staff differ in what

they consider as useful. Whereas national staff appreciated learning more about the risk matrix and tools for analysis, international staff valued learning more about different acceptance strategies. (RedR UK, 2007, p.6). Access and availability for field staff is improved by online trainings. The second respondent of UNHCR mentions that “the organization may potentially leverage IT developments to use 3D simulations to better prepare staff members prior to their deployments in challenging security environments.” Online trainings are particularly useful concerning theoretical briefings, but more for prior information to the practical training. As the respondent from Crisis Consulting puts it with reference to the example of a driving licence, “no one would say you did your online training and now you are able to drive”.

Phil Candy from RedR UK mentions that organizations have to define their “risk appetite” or “their threshold of acceptable risk” and the extent to which they are willing to take these risks to deliver their programmes. The basic questions, which have to be tackled primarily concern the culture and operations of the organization. Security training needs to be tailored to the specific organization and work environment. That is why a learning needs analysis is important in advance in order to make sure that the training matches the needs of the respective staff member (HPCR, 2014). After an initial assessment of the current operating environment in the country, the assessment of the needs followed. Therefore, the training material has to be adapted to the country context and has to be translated into the respective language (RedR UK, 2007, p.6). The key components of the security management training are the identification of the context, analysis of the risks and mitigation of these risks at a first step. The decision whether to proceed with the operation if the risk mitigation is not sufficient follows at a second step (HPCR, 2014). The respondent from Crisis Consulting confirms that a general training or briefing before the mission about the cultural, political, religious and financial background as well as threats is highly recommended. The respondent adds that it is crucial to give aid workers a second level of training on site when starting their missions, which is more specialized in order to get used to the environment and acclimatise themselves. This should ideally take another two or three weeks. Due to the need for quick response most of the time, this is not always possible. It outlines the optimal solution, however, it should be done if possible.

5.5. Staff

Security remains a vital responsibility of all humanitarian staff involved (SAG, 2010, p.5). The individual is the first element of its security, but organizations need to ensure their capacity to provide security (Respondent OCHA). Humanitarian organizations have a duty of care towards their employees, including a legal requirement of duty of care, which is increasingly important (HPN, 2010, p.7). As much as organizations have a duty of care obligation towards their staff, every humanitarian has a “duty of responsibility” towards the compliance of security guidelines and procedures.

Aid workers are informed about the risks they might face while carrying out their work, when they officially join their organization. Some humanitarians have signed a document wherein they agreed to take those risks (Respondent 1 MSF). The outcome of the interviews showed that organizations differ in their approach of having documents that their staff has to sign wherein they agree to be prepared to take possible risks. MSF staff

has to sign specific documents, wherein they agree to be prepared to take risks and they even have to sign the Proof of Life, a document solely dealing with the threat of kidnapping (Respondent 1 and 2 MSF). Médecins du Monde and Caritas International staff also have to sign the Proof of Life (Respondent Caritas International Belgium). UNFPA and UNHCR staff is officially not required to sign any documents stating that they are prepared to take risks or accept a high level of risk, as the security situation is implicitly made clear due to regular communication at country and regional level (Respondent 1 and 2 UNHCR). The outcome of the interviews showed that organizations have a similar approach in providing information about risks to their staff. Most organisations inform their staff about the security situation in the respective country during the interview process (Respondent IRC). Most staff also have mandatory security briefings prior to deployments and during their deployment as well as security clearances required for all staff members who go to high-risk countries (Respondent 2 UNHCR). Therefore, it can be assumed that humanitarian aid workers are willing to take a certain amount of risk, when agreeing for a position.

The typical aid project of an UN agency or international NGO in a high-risk country comprises a few international staffers on international contracts, who monopolise security advisor positions, and a vast majority of national or local aid workers on national contracts (Collinson and Duffield, 2013, p.3). Not least because of that, a focus on the security of national staff is crucial. International humanitarian organizations have to improve and further strengthen their duty of care for national staff and also for local partner organizations (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.3). Remote management, the removal of international workers and transferal of responsibilities from international to national staff, has become a common approach in insecure environments. Therefore, NGOs and other humanitarian actors need to re-evaluate their approaches in terms of collaboration with national partners and organizations (Armstrong, 2013, p.18). Vulnerability also depends on the context. In some countries, like Syria, international staff are at greater risk of being kidnapped because of politicized contexts and ransom payments (Respondent WFP). In other contexts, national staff is more vulnerable due to internal conflicts between groups or ethnicities (Respondent IRC). Pascal Porchet underlines the importance of the combination of national and international staff to reach diversity, widen expertise and local understanding (HPCR, 2014). Some organizations have embarked on a nationalisation policy in an attempt to increase the representation of national staff managing security and aid efforts. The 2011 OCHA study reveals that the majority of national humanitarians underline the effectiveness of the humanitarian principles to enhance their security (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.3). In order to maintain the principles of neutrality and impartiality, one NGO in Darfur outlined the importance of the nationalisation agenda and one NGO in Somalia referred to its success of operation by hiring expatriate Somalis instead of international staff (Ibid., p.21).

Concerning gender questions, the study by UN OCHA (2011, p.1) indicates that gender has very little direct effect on security. With men being 0.9 per cent more vulnerable to kidnapping than women, the difference in vulnerability is very small (Wille and Fast, 2011, p.3). However, the outcome of a national perception survey showed that a quarter of the respondents believe that the presence of female workers adds to aid worker insecurity, especially in Pakistan, Somalia and Afghanistan due to local cultural norms that do not

approve women possessing a job or being in close proximity to unrelated men (OCHA, 2011, p.1). Therefore, agencies need to take measures that demonstrate respect for local norms like separate project facilities for women and men in those countries. In order to ensure security for female and male workers in the same manner, more data has to be collected and all gender aspects have to be recorded in incident reports.

In the end, everyone is responsible for their own security, but also that of their colleagues and team as well as the overall programme (Casey, 2014). Aid workers have to make sure that they are mentally and physically fit before going on a mission, at least to the extent possible, and that they do not become a burden for the organization and their colleagues (Respondent Crisis Consulting). Therefore, everyone has to be proactive in his or her own personal security.

5.6. Context and Location

Organizations need to adapt their security procedures to each specific context (Respondent 2 MSF). The security awareness of the organization's country team has to match the level of hostility and threats of the environment. It is crucial to monitor high-risk areas on a constant basis (Van Brabant, 2000, p.206). Guidelines have been developed on a general level and on a country specific level, or even at project level (Respondent 1 MSF).

In order to reach further amendments of security measures related to road threats, intersectional discussions among security experts and humanitarians should be strengthened (Stoddard, Harmer and Ryou, 2014, p.8). It is crucial that staff has in-depth knowledge and greater understanding of the country and context it is working in (Armstrong, 2013, p.3). In some contexts, it is safer to travel in marked vehicles, whereas in other locations the opposite holds (Respondent OCHA). In high-risk environments, it might be helpful to reduce the visibility of the organizations and its staff. Particularly when travelling it might be better to use a bona fide taxi than a vehicle with the agency's emblem (Van Brabant, 2000, p.183). Larry Hollingworth (Cahill, 2013, p.41), who has worked in many high-risk countries, mentions that in some situations it is better to avoid moving and instead to stay at home. Furthermore, he stresses that humanitarians should never travel alone, but rather in a mini convoy, avoid routine, maintain radio contact and travel with a translator. Some organizations choose armoured or more robust vehicles. Pre-screening of the routes to know checkpoints is crucial (Respondent OCHA). The respondent from the IRC refers to the possibility of airlifts or air assets, like planes and helicopters provided by UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) or WFP Aviation, in order to avoid insecurity provided by remote areas or roads. Nonetheless, the respondent also mentions that organizations need to have a large transportation budget for these activities, as they are extremely expensive and the availability of charter companies with helicopters is often restricted. Furthermore, if possible, routines should be avoided, which certainly does not offer absolute protection, but makes targeting more difficult (Van Brabant, 2000, p.184).

The importance of the context becomes especially visible in the debate of the right security approach. In some contexts, high acceptance and local protection can reduce the risks of international staff being kidnapped, as protection by local hosts or elders might threaten potential kidnappers (Van Brabant, 2000, p.183). In countries like Afghanistan and

Somalia, elders play an influential role (Ibid., p.202). Paradoxically, in some instances in Somalia or Afghanistan, when local opposition forces gain ground, those groups are more oriented towards the needs of the population to embed their rule, as opposed to their ideologically motivated counterparts. This makes negotiations about access more likely for humanitarians. The more locally oriented the group is, the more likely it is that the group is interested in ensuring services to the population (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.13). Aid workers in Afghanistan experience a large number of short-term kidnappings, which take place if a militant group, like the Taliban, takes over control of an area. As a reaction to certain humanitarian organizations failing to negotiate access, the kidnappers keep aid workers for “an informal registration” for a couple of days. As these “informal registrations” take longer than 24 hours, they count as kidnappings. Often the intervention of elders in the community leads to the release of the aid worker (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes). However, assistance by elders is only possible if there is high overall acceptance for humanitarians. Some NGOs in Darfur were able to extend area security measures from the village into the whole community (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.23). Therefore, the proactive acceptance approach is of great importance in highly insecure locations.

5.7. Communication and Coordination

Security management tends to be agency centred. Yet, with many different organizations, both international and national with various capabilities and capacities operating in the same context, consistent communication, collaboration and coordination between the agencies is an essential factor. This holds for relatively safe environments, but especially for periods and settings of high insecurity. Consistent communication and constant dialogue with all actors involved is crucial as security conditions can change very fast (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.23).

On the side of interagency collaboration, in recent years, several new security-related institutions, inter-agency platforms and networks have been created with the task of strengthening the security system, interagency security mechanisms and coordination of organizations. Within the humanitarian community, umbrella organizations have been implemented in order to develop common standards and to provide room for discussion forums (Bolletino, 2006, p.8). Cooperative security arrangements have emerged on different levels, beginning with localised developments and cooperation between 2002 and 2010 and establishing global cooperation and coordination platforms from 2011 onwards. For a detailed overview of country-specific security forums, UN, ICRC and NGO mechanisms as well as inter-agency cooperation – see Annex IV.

At the country or field level, no standard model for interagency security mechanisms exists (HPN, 2010, p.19). Yet, NGOs have combined efforts to facilitate the collection and dissemination of their findings, especially when operating in environments characterised by high security risks. NGO security coordination offices in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Pakistan remain rare examples of several organizations pooling their knowledge and resources in order to reduce the risks they are facing. Some of them remain reliant on project-based funding and a willing host agency. However, overall, they turn out to be

highly useful concerning the sharing and crosschecking of security trends, alerts, reports or trainings (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.32).

Context-specific security forums, who coordinate security management by providing trainings, analysis and support, are particularly useful for smaller NGOs, who lack the experience, capacity, expertise or financial means (Armstrong, 2013, p.33). In order to improve security and accomplish a kind of early warning approach to security threats and an identification of their developments, a first necessary step is the expansion of data collection and reporting (Bolletino, 2006, p.10). Due to inter-agency collaboration, the exchange of data and the implementation of incident databases have evolved significantly (Van Brabant, 2010, p.5). More collaboration between organizations is taking place on the basis of implementing security information databases, sharing information and introducing collective alerts. Collective alerts refer to joint agency responsibilities. If one organization suffers a kidnap incident, it has to be assumed that other organizations are also at risk. Therefore, a responsibility to alert rapidly other organizations exists. Country-specific NGO security coordination offices have already facilitated the collection of security incidents and dissemination of security warnings (Fast, 2010, p.372), but have to further improve the analysis of the information. Therefore, their mandates have to be extended. In case they lack time to analyse the data themselves, it should be made available through collaboration. The respondent from WFP underlines the importance of receiving information related to security from all cooperating partners on the ground and to avoid relying solely on one source of information. However, all the organizations need to have the capacity to work in these high-risk countries and not rely on others and their collective obligations (Respondent OCHA).

In the case of the UN, in December 2004, the General Assembly approved the establishment of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). Its tasks include the coordination of security threats' responses, evaluations, review of security plans, maintenance of databases and the distribution of information. Information about security threats is received and shared very fast through the United Nations Security Managers Information Network (UNSMIN), an online platform used to centralize such information (Respondent 2 UNHCR). According to the respondent from OCHA, its approach needs to be further strengthened, developed and reinforced.

With regard to inter-agency-coordination, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the main coordinating forum between the heads of UN operational agencies and non-UN partners with standing invitations. In 2004, the "Saving Lives Together" (SLT) framework, with the aim to strengthen security collaboration between the UN and NGOs by sharing resources and information in security management based on best practises, has been developed (UNDSS, 2006, p.1). Its usefulness remains limited until today. SLT is only one element among others and often needs to be complemented with other mechanisms and sources (Respondent Caritas International Belgium). Some success can be noticed in Darfur, where the SLT framework has led to inter-agency collaboration, security advice and the sharing of information (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.32).

At the headquarter level, two regional inter-NGO platforms have been established. The London-based European Interagency Security Forum (EISF) and the Washington D.C.-

based InterAction Security Advisory Group (SAG) serve as training, advocacy and almost real-time information-sharing platforms (HPN, 2010, p.18). From 2011 onwards, NGOs started combining their efforts to pool their security expertise with the result of significant cross-platform coordination on the international level. In January 2011 the International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) was formed, a British charity with the mission to ensure aid workers' safety by publishing analytical reports, providing real-time incident tracking and a reporting service called World Alert. Additionally, INSO develops standardised global mechanisms for establishing further security coordination platforms in high-risk contexts (INSO, 2015).

On the side of coordination between organizations and other actors, security challenges arise based on great numbers of actors who operate in the humanitarian space and advertise themselves and their missions as humanitarian. Although, they are not humanitarian actors by definition (HPCR, 2014). They have different priorities and objectives of operating in those highly insecure areas. Coordination and communication among humanitarian actors themselves as well as new actors, like the private sector, is likely to remain challenging. However, NGOs and the UN cannot completely isolate themselves from the private sector. Cooperation with the private sector can lead to more innovations, efficiency and reduction in costs (Armstrong, 2013, p.32f.). The need for the implementation of regulatory rules for these partnerships has been recognized and some guidelines have been implemented. Lisa Reilly from EISF mentions that organizations have to increase recognition of other non-humanitarian actors, in the sense that they have to recognize the impact and effect of those agencies on the perception of the target groups. An erosion of the perception of neutrality and impartiality can be recognized already. Therefore, Reilly underlines the need to make those non-humanitarian actors aware of the impact they are having (HPCR, 2014). Differentiation toward other non-humanitarian actors in the same environment is as important as the coordination with other humanitarian actors (Armstrong, 2013, p.16).

Vincent Cochetel (2014) mentions that “criminal groups and some political groups have cross-fertilized over the last 20 years, and they have created these sort of hybrids with whom we have no way of communicating. Humanitarian principles are tested, questioned, and often ignored.” When dealing with assertive or confrontational host governments towards humanitarian actors, the latter have to take other factors into consideration, which might counter the potential negative and dangerous consequences for their operational security. A moderating effect can be achieved through communication with communities and the empowerment of the local population through their own advancement or communication technologies (Armstrong, 2013, p.16). It is important to make sure that the missions of the organizations are known among the local population and that staff act transparently, communicate with the beneficiaries and show respect towards them (Van Brabant, 2000, p.181). Next to all of the above mentioned coordination initiatives, informal exchange of information also remains crucial (Respondent Caritas International Belgium). Official communication forums as well as informal exchange meetings on all levels and with all actors involved are crucial for acceptance and security.

5.8. Humanitarian Innovation and Technology

Over the last ten years, humanitarian technologies and innovations have become an increasingly important part in the effort to make humanitarian work more effective and efficient. Their deployment and development is likely to grow. According to Armstrong (2013, p.30), if used appropriately, new humanitarian technologies and innovations have the potential to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and security of humanitarian action. Due to communication technologies, security-related information can be shared between agencies across contexts as well as across organisational boundaries (Armstrong, 2013, p.32). Smith mentions, “if technology could help provide a fast, user-friendly way of allowing improved communication among different agencies, it could literally mean the difference between life and death.” (Cahill, 2013, p.41).

Some organizations use panic button systems to be administered with GPRS connections to trace staff as well as headsets with an emergency button to signal last location or cameras with geotagging capabilities (Respondent 1 UNHCR). As outlined in chapter 4.8, panic buttons put the onus of the risk on the aid worker, who has to activate it. Therefore, some organizations refrain from their use, as the information provided does not outweigh the risk and danger of activation (Respondent ICRC). Implanted microchips in order to track a person would be the only solution to make sure that the tracking device stays with the person. However, those devices have not been used so far and their usage is not very likely in the future, as most humanitarian aid workers probably do not want to be tracked 24/7. Due to high costs and increased value of the target, humanitarian organizations tend to refrain from personal items, but rather look into items that can be applied on a massive scale (Respondent ICRC). According to the second respondent of UNHCR, the residual risk for the kidnapping of humanitarians can be reduced using context-specific additional measures like tracking devices. The respondent from Humanitarian Outcomes also confirmed, that organizations tend to use tracking devices with GPS on vehicles instead of persons. Due to the high vulnerability of humanitarians when being on the move, their organizations are increasingly looking into options made available through GPS systems. Real-time monitoring of vehicles through GPS positioning is often carried out with a crosscheck with standard radio contact in order to verify data and information. Access to GPS systems has previously been restricted to logistical personnel and senior management staff, but more and more often access is extended to all radio operators, based on the fact that operational advantages outweigh unproven privacy concerns (Respondent ICRC). The European Commission launched the eCall initiative. In the event of a car accident or crash, an alarm is triggered and the system immediately transmit the GPS coordinates of the vehicle and other information to the nearest emergency centre (European Commission, 2015). If there is no alternative to radio communication when travelling and overhearing cannot be avoided, it might be best to avoid international staff communicating, but instead focus on national staff speaking in their native language (Van Brabant, 2000, p.183). However, only satellites provide 100 per cent coverage as opposed to radios (Respondent Crisis Consulting).

As remote management stands to lose a certain degree of performance due to a lack of monitoring, measures of “soft management” become more popular. These measures include web-based remote project monitoring, used by UNHCR with the Project Tracking

Database, where national partners upload pictures with GPS information (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.26f.). Technologies like remote sensing, advances in imaging and social media, might offer opportunities to reverse detachment from local populations, increase transparency and provide some form of presence, although limited to a virtual form (Armstrong, 2013, p.28). As part of risk management measures, new humanitarian technologies can be used for tracking humanitarian staff (Armstrong, 2013, p.28). One option is provided by crowdsourcing. Due to mobile platforms like Crowdmap, everyone is allowed to create a collective mapping project on the Ushahidi platform. Ushahidi, a non-profit software company, applies the concept of crowdsourcing for public accountability and social activism. The technology has been used in several contexts, among others, in Syria in order to track unrest (Cahill, 2013, p.45). A further option is the KoBo Toolbox, developed by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and made more sophisticated in coordination with the IRC and the UN. It is a free and open source suite of tools for field data collection, quick-response (QR) codes and remote monitoring methods (ICRC, 2013, p.122). Recently, UNHCR, WFP, ICRC, MSF and Welthungerhilfe started using HumaNav in high-risk settings like in the DRC. HumaNav is a vehicle tracking solution (VTS), which has been created by Novacom in collaboration with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) and the centre national d'études spatiales (CNES). Based on HumaNav, organizations are able to track their assets. Vehicles equipped with HumaNav hybrid terminals and on-board screens transmit their field data directly to Novacom's web platform, which can be monitored by operation centres (Novacom, 2015).

Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), who can monitor staff and their movements, provide another option (Armstrong, 2013, p.28). Next to UAVs, some companies like the Sweden-based CybAero, also provide remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS), which consist of remotely piloted helicopters. The systems have the advantage that they do not only include the aircraft and the sensor, but also various ground stations, transport systems, link equipment, and training. Humanitarians can order the whole package with personnel being able to control the helicopters. Remotely piloted helicopters or unmanned helicopters can be used for surveillance and search as well as for defence applications. However, the use of UAVs and RPAS for humanitarian actors is a controversial topic. They pose challenges to the maintenance of the perception as a principled actor. In particular, when UAVs are also used by other actors for surveillance and defence purposes in the same area. Especially in Pakistan, where the American CIA's UAV programme was implemented in the name of war on terror and has become a preferable tool of warfare. UAVs could potentially be beneficial for humanitarian purposes, like the identification of perpetrators. Yet, a clear separation from other actors' missions will be almost impossible, as would the avoidance of a negative perception (Respondent OCHA).

Security technologies, innovations and products are not necessarily publicised due to the sensitivity of the topic and their consequent risks to loose efficiency (Respondent OCHA). The exchange of information with the private sector about innovations or the deployment of people could be further examined (Respondent Crisis Consulting). In order to advance humanitarian technology as it relates to the security of aid workers, several humanitarian actors could team up and award funding to an aid organization or private sector partner to develop such a technology. All in all, mostly used for the prevention of kidnappings are

real time satellite monitoring, which is still expensive, but more and more freely available for organizations, GPS crosschecking with radio contacts and the use of manual alarm systems, although some emergency buttons have been recently removed. As the respondent from ICRC mentions “to make a long story short: everything you add to a person or a vehicle, makes it a more desirable target. The only way to increase security is to externalize most items and functions, to make them difficult to steal or neutralize.” Innovations provide immense potential to enhance security and so far, progress has been made concerning the deployment of new technologies, but there is still some room for improvement.

6. Conclusion

This paper starts from the hypothesis that international humanitarian organizations are not fully able to keep a balance between ensuring the security of their humanitarian staff, especially from kidnapping threats, and at the same time adhering to the humanitarian principles. Kidnap incidents of humanitarian aid workers have steadily increased over the last 15 years. Particularly, in the investigated five most insecure countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Republic of the Sudan, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic – humanitarians face constant kidnapping threats. An increase in absolute numbers as well as an increase in the average kidnapping rates of aid workers can be observed. One NGO leader referred to kidnappings as “the new normal” by observing that every organization working in an insecure environment can reasonably expect a kidnap incident at some point (Harmer, Stoddard and Toth, 2013, p.8). Kidnappings tend to be “the worst case scenario for organizations” (Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes). However, not only for the organization, but also for the victims, their families and colleagues these incidents are draining and traumatic. As opposed to most violent attacks, kidnap incidents by their very nature are drawn-out and intended to create the maximum amount of stress for all parties, leading to uncertainties, difficult negotiations and decisions. When faced with kidnappings or kidnap threats, organizations struggle to maintain their presence and their ability to maintain operational capacity in line with the humanitarian principles. Due to their relatively low costs and high economic or political impact, kidnappings are not likely to abate in the near future. This makes preventive measures all the more important.

Despite the complex and challenging operational security environment and the increase in kidnap attacks against aid workers, humanitarian organizations refrain progressively from risk aversion. This shift from being risk-averse and pulling out of countries towards an approach of “to stay and deliver” has been particularly outlined by the 2011 OCHA report. Given the fact that humanitarian organizations have a duty of care, a responsibility to ensure security for their employees, many agencies have made tremendous improvements over the last decade. However, further improvements are necessary in order “to deliver and stay secure”. Humanitarians need to strike a good balance between their mandates and the humanitarian principles as well as their duty of care and security risk management.

In order to reach this balance and to provide an answer to the main research question²⁰, remaining security challenges and risks have to be analysed as a first part. The second part of the paper draws on those analysed risks by outlining mitigation measures, which should enable humanitarians to perform their actions. This "enabling approach" suggests ways on how to strengthen security with regard to the prevention of kidnapping in line with the four humanitarian principles. After an extensive literature review around the opposing key concepts, security and insecurity regarding kidnapping, eight categories became apparent. The following findings concern kidnapping threats in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Republic of Sudan, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic with regard to the eight categories.

- (1) Regarding the legal protection, the last decade has seen a change in warfare and type of conflict with an ensuing decrease in the acceptance and respect for IHL. Shrinking humanitarian space and blurred mandates make the upholding of the humanitarian principles and IHL more important than ever. The provision of assistance is not a monopoly-like remit of humanitarians. Under IHL the national government and the military has the primary responsibility for the material well-being of the respective civilian population. Host governments are not only responsible for their population, but also for the security of humanitarian personnel. Some governments fail to meet this obligation in insecure environments. As the military cannot be excluded from an area, a clear distinction between humanitarian and military actors is crucial. Distinctions of roles and activities between humanitarian actors and other actors, who do not have a humanitarian mandate, need to be outlined. Furthermore, it is imperative to re-state the moral and legal duty of care of organizations. Instead of creating a new protected legal status under IHL solely for humanitarian aid workers, as advocated by Brooks (2015, p.16), states have to fight impunity and try to improve respect for IHL. A special mandate holder by the UN or special rapporteur could be created to raise concerns, combat impunity and ensure accountability.
- (2) Traditionally, humanitarian organizations have located security within the principles of humanitarian action. With regard to the security triangle, agencies mainly draw on the acceptance approach, as it does not contradict the principles. However, operations in high-risk settings have shown that aid workers are not protected only by sticking to the principles. Therefore, organizations have to follow a rather pro-active acceptance approach. Additionally, organizations can supplement the acceptance approach with protective measures like reduction of visibility, unarmed guards or barbed wire. As outlined by the 2011 OCHA report, smart protection could add a layer of protection in combination with acceptance. Research showed that organizations should refrain from deterrence measures, like armed guard who pose a counter-threat, as they undermine and question the four humanitarian principles.
- (3) The undermining of the four humanitarian principles creates not only legal and theoretical dilemmas, but notably practical impediments to security risk management. Risk aversion and withdrawal of staff are still an issue. Yet, progress and a change in

²⁰ To what extent do security measures taken by international organizations, including the UN, ICRC and NGOs, have to be revised or improved in order to reduce the vulnerability of their staff to kidnapping threats in the five highest risk countries in line with the four humanitarian principles?

mindset towards a focus on “how to stay” do constantly evolve. According to Sean Healy from MSF UK, risk is part of what it means being a member of a humanitarian organization operating in a conflict zone (HPCR, 2014). Security should not be considered as an add-on, but rather a crosscutting issue, which needs to be mainstreamed throughout the whole organization. It is crucial to reach a recognition of the risks and identify ways of how to manage them in order to make sure that the risks are at an acceptable level. Security risk management needs to be appropriate and reasonable. It should not be too loose nor too stringent. Good security management is composed of three basic elements. First of all, you need to “know who you are”, secondly, you need to “know where you are”, and finally, a set of risk mitigation measures, including standard operating procedures and more country specific security guidelines, have to be in place.

- (4) Insufficient security training, especially for national staff, is a recurring topic in the literature as well as the interviews. Security training should be mandatory for every aid worker. Furthermore, security training needs to be tailored to the specific group, organization and work environment. It should consist of theoretical and practical sessions for national as well as international staff. Training is essential for psychological and physical preparation. Whereas the interviewees agreed on the importance of general security training, they differed in their evaluation of the simulation exercises on kidnapping. If executed by specialised organisations, those simulation sessions can certainly be helpful in getting a more realistic picture about potential threats. Aid workers can figure out if they are able to handle these tense situations.
- (5) Even though progress has been made in terms of addressing disparities of humanitarian staff, vast gaps remain. National employees still receive less attention with regard to insurances, trainings, access to off-hours telecommunications, emergency evacuations, salaries, living standards and many more. In particular, risks for national drivers need to be addressed further. Remote management has put nationals even further at the forefront. Thereby, risks are often transferred from internationals to nationals without additional protection measures. Special guidelines and regulations for remote management have to be implemented. Research indicates that gender has little influence on the risk of being kidnapped. Whereat organizations have a duty of care, employees also have a “duty of responsibility” towards the compliance of security guidelines and procedures.
- (6) Concerning high-risk locations, especially roads and rural areas increase vulnerability, even though urban security events are increasing. Travel in convoy, avoidance of routine, maintenance of radio contact, pre-screening of routes and in some cases more robust vehicles can reduce this vulnerability. Furthermore, it is vital for an organization to get a solid understanding of the context. All five countries provide different security challenges and make certain groups more vulnerable. Only few regulations provide all-encompassing security solutions. In the end, a lot depends on the situation and environment. Therefore, security procedures need to be adapted to each specific context.

- (7) Great progress has been made regarding country-level security networks, information-sharing platforms and interagency collaboration during recent years. Information about security threats and alerts should be shared immediately via a kind of hot line between the headquarters and the field offices as well as different organizations. Improved coordination has the potential to analyse similarities and differences in security approaches and to trace patterns and dynamics of security threats. Consistent communication, collaboration and coordination between the agencies is an essential factor in the provision of security. It is particularly essential for smaller NGOs, who lack the experience, expertise or financial means. Furthermore, non-humanitarian actors operating in the same area need to be made aware of the impact they are having on the perception of humanitarians.
- (8) Humanitarian technologies and innovations provide a range of possibilities that can transform the humanitarian sector. They present new options to improve communication, reporting, security risk assessment and the identification of kidnappers. Personalized security items are rather expensive and sometimes expose the staff to even higher risks, like emergency buttons. Additional gadgets can make potential targets more valuable and desirable. Therefore, organizations are increasingly looking into application on the massive scale, which can be operated externally. Real-time satellite imagery, GPS and remote mapping can increase the availability of information on road access and have the potential to enhance the security during travels. GPS cross-checking with radio contacts is also considered useful.

All in all, humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence provide the foundation for humanitarian action. Even though there is a general consensus among aid organizations about the importance of the humanitarian principles, they vary in their application of these principles. Adherence to these four principals is important for the provision of assistance, the maintenance of acceptance and the distinction to other non-humanitarian actors, like political and military actors or the private profit-oriented sector. Many aid workers mention that the humanitarian impact often justifies the risks. The vast majority in the humanitarian sector acknowledges that risks cannot entirely be eliminated and therefore kidnappings can never totally be predicted and prevented. Some risks are inherent to humanitarian actions and security measures cannot cover or prevent every eventuality. Therefore, appropriate responses can only partially be prescribed, but depend a lot on the country, the organization, the actors involved as well as the individual aid worker. Ultimately, it is the individual humanitarian aid worker, who is responsible for his or her own security. A combination of adequate context-specific guidelines and common sense is fundamental.

7. Outlook and Recommendations

The sensitivity of the topic make research very delicate and difficult. Understandably, reports from kidnaping victims, investigations by the respective organization or new measures and technologies to increase security are not made public. Additionally, any kind of publication could increase risks for staff still operating in the environments. The specific prevention of kidnaping threats, not security incidents in general, is an under-

researched topic. Although kidnappings steadily increase and have a high impact, some organizations still consider them as lower-probability threats for the organizations themselves. Other acts of violence are omnipresent. Only in recent years, organizations became more aware of the kidnapping threat and its impact. More and more aid workers make their case publicly known, probably reaching a peak with Vincent Cochetel talking about his experience on the TEDxPlaceDesNations in 2014 as well as Steve Dennis crowd funding his legal case against the Norwegian Refugee Council. The outcome of ongoing lawsuits of humanitarian aid workers against their former employers, on the basis of the negligence of duty of care, will probably raise the attention of this issue to an even higher level. These legal cases will further shed light on the question of the extent and reach of responsibility and duty of care of organizations. Furthermore, an increasing number of aid workers denounce that the majority of kidnappers get away unpunished. Organizations increasingly recognize the need to combat impunity for attacks against humanitarians. Action Against Hunger has been one of the pioneers in calling on the UN Secretary-General to create a new position of a “Special Representative for Strengthening the Protection of Aid Workers”. Further discussion on the usefulness and appropriateness has to take place and if such a proposal can become reality. This includes the questions whether humanitarian aid workers can be considered a vulnerable group who needs their own special representative and if the holder should be bound to the UN and so forth.

Furthermore, a more in-depth case-to-case research – which would go beyond the scope of this paper – would be necessary to figure out if all the organizations operating in highly insecure environments actually have the capacity to do so. Research should assess whether they have the appropriate structures in place and experience. In particular, in cases where more experienced organizations pull out of regions or countries and rather inexperienced organizations try to fill those gaps. Additionally, the role of donors and the private sector should be further examined. Donors could put pressure on humanitarian organizations by insisting on equal insurances and training for all staffers.

Organizations have come a long way in implementing security manuals, security plans, security risk assessments, good practice reviews, initiatives, security trainings, guidelines, frameworks and technologies. Questions remain whether too much has been already implemented in some cases. Is security risk management still adequate or has it become too stringent? Are organizations implementing very strict security guidelines out of fear of legal consequences? Is the humanitarian community breaking into a direction, which is too much focused on their own security than on the protection of local communities? Therefore, further research should investigate if humanitarians are creating more insecurity by making security such a central topic. It should be examined whether the humanitarian community is creating more insecurity as it is important for humanitarian organisations to consciously balance the need to ensure a safe work environment for workers without creating a burdensome “security blanket” that will impact their ability to serve their humanitarian purpose.

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Annex I – Humanitarian Situation and Needs

Afghanistan

Over three decades of conflict in the country have led to displacement and insecurity. Following the 9/11 attacks, the Taliban regime was overthrown by a US-led coalition, but fighting persists between government forces and armed opposition groups. The continual withdrawal of international forces throughout last years has further deteriorated the situation. Therefore, in October 2015, Obama announced that U.S. soldiers will stay in the country until 2017 (Rosenberg and Shear, 2015). In 2014, over 3500 civilians were killed and 140000 newly displaced. Additionally, the ongoing military activities in neighbouring Pakistan's North Waziristan region and FATA have led to thousands of Pakistani families crossing the border (ECHO, 2015a, p.2). Several parts of the country are inaccessible for humanitarian aid organizations (ECHO, 2015a, p.1). The country accounts for nearly one fourth of all attacks with twice as many attacks as the next highest country (IRIN, 2015).

Pakistan

The ongoing complex emergency is classified as a “forgotten crisis” by the European Commission (ECHO, 2015b, p.1). Especially, the north-western part of Pakistan, along the Afghan border, is affected by large-scale displacement due to insurgencies. Pakistan is facing immense humanitarian challenges due to over 1.6 million IDPs and an additional 1.6 million registered and 1.2 million unregistered Afghan refugees (ECHO, 2015b, p.1). As one of world's most prone countries to natural disasters, including consecutive floods, Pakistan faces multiple challenges (ECHO, 2015b, p.2). Since October 2015, access of humanitarian agencies to populations in need is further aggravated after a regulation issued by the Minister of Interior which requests organizations to re-apply for registration (ECHO, 2015b, p.3). ECHO calls for “respect for the independence of humanitarian action must be insured, including on needs assessments and response, which need to be carried out in a neutral and impartial way, delinked from military or security considerations and with vulnerability as the main criteria” in Pakistan (ECHO, 2015c, p.3).

Republic of the Sudan

In February 2003, fighting broke out in Sudan's Darfur region, when an armed rebellion of two militia groups against the government started. Since then, the conflict as well as one-sided violence from the government side continued unabated in Darfur as well as South Kordofan and Blue Nile states. Next to the intrastate conflicts, an interstate conflict broke out after South Sudan's independence in 2011 over the common disputed border (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2015). In its 2014/15 report, Amnesty International (2015, p.347) mentions violations of IHL and human rights by government forces as well as pro-government militias and outlines that since 2009 Sudan continues to restrict humanitarian access to areas of these three states. According to estimations, every fifth person of the Sudanese population, 6.6 million altogether, is in need of humanitarian assistance. Additionally, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugee numbers are continuously increasing with 2.55 million IDPs in Darfur and 378000 IDPs in South Kordofan and Blue Nile and almost 200000 refugees from South Sudan at the moment (ECHO, 2015c, p.1). Sudan appears in the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO)'s Forgotten Crisis Index (ECHO, 2015c, p.1).

Somalia

Since 1946, Somalia has experienced a combination of intra-state, non-state, one-sided and inter-state conflicts with Ethiopia leading to a collapse of the state in 1991 (Uppsala Conflict Data Program, 2015). Rise of the Al Shabaab extremist group has been a particular challenge. Somalia's ongoing conflict and consecutive emergencies have resulted in 3.2 million Somalis in need of humanitarian assistance for their survival. The already challenging humanitarian situation in the country has deteriorated further during 2015 with currently 1.1 million IDPs and almost 1 million Somali refugees in the region (ECHO, 2015d). Further constraints are due to the conflict in Yemen and the El Niño phenomenon which is expected to be stronger this year than ever before.

Syrian Arab Republic

The Arab Spring uprising in 2011 quickly erupted into civil war, which has continuously led to a deterioration of the humanitarian situation, and has triggered "the world's largest humanitarian crisis since World War II" (ECHO, 2015e, p.1). After almost five years of fighting, 13.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria, of whom approximately 4.6 million are located in hardly reachable besieged areas and 6.5 million are internally displaced. This is the largest number of IDPs worldwide (ECHO, 2015e, p.1). Additionally, according to UNHCR (2015), more than 4 million people are registered or awaiting registration as refugees. A tremendous increase of attacks against aid workers can be noticed. Despite three UN Security Council Resolutions in 2014 (2139, 2165 and 2191) to ensure cross-border activities, humanitarian access is constantly decreasing (ECHO, 2015e, p.2). A report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of three UN Security Council Resolutions on Syria notes that all parties to the conflict completely disregard IHL and that "serious violations have become the norm in many parts" (United Nations Security Council, 2015, p.13) and that the delivery of assistance remains extremely challenging due to the active conflict and insecurity and leads to temporary closures of delivery (United Nations Security Council, 2015, p.8). According to a report of the UN Secretary-General, 15 international NGOs are authorized to operate in Syria. Yet, these organizations are continuously facing administrative restrictions and hurdles, which impede their abilities to conduct their missions, open sub-offices, partner with national aid organizations, undertake independent needs assessments and join inter-agency convoys (United Nations Security Council, 2015, p.10). The UN Secretary-General calls for an end of "the practice of using the denial of key services as a weapon of war" (United Nations Security Council, 2015, p.13).

Annex II – List of Organizations Consulted

Organisation	Country	Reference
Caritas International Belgium	Belgium	Respondent Caritas International Belgium
Crisis Consulting	Germany	Respondent Crisis Consulting
Humanitarian Outcomes	United Kingdom	Respondent Humanitarian Outcomes
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	USA	Respondent ICRC
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	South Sudan	Respondent IRC
Médecins du Monde (Mdm),	Belgium	Respondent Mdm
Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)	France	Respondent 1 MSF
Médecins sans Frontières (MSF)	USA	Respondent 2 MSF
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Somalia	Respondent 1 UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Switzerland	Respondent 2 UNHCR
United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA)	USA	Respondent OCHA
United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)	Somalia	Respondent UNFPA
UN World Food Programme (WFP)	Syria	Respondent WFP

Annex III – Questionnaire

1) When you officially joined your organization, were you informed about risks you might face while carrying out your work?

- yes
- no

Did you sign any document wherein you agreed to be prepared to take those risks?

- yes
- no

Did you sign a special document solely dealing with the risk of being kidnapped?

- yes
- no

2) Does your organization have country specific security guidelines and rules?

- yes
- no

If yes, are they regularly reviewed?

- a) yes
- b) no

To what extent are they helpful in your everyday work life? Please be specific and cite examples.

3) Does your organization have:

- a) Security Focal Points?
- b) A Safety and Security Coordinator?
- c) A regional office Security Advisor?
- d) A fulltime security manager

If d) of the above does not apply, do you see the need for a fulltime security manager?

Which competences and skills do you expect from your security manager?

Example: (strong leadership, strategic approach, etc.)

4) What is your experience about the usefulness of standard operating procedures (SOPs)? What would you consider as useful? Please be specific.

5) Does your organization's staff receive a security training before going to a mission or on site?

- a) Is it mandatory for every employee?
- b) Is it generalized among all country offices or applied to the specific country context?
- c) Did the security training include a special session on kidnapping? If yes, what did this session include?
- d) Do you consider it useful for your preparation? If yes, in how far?

Which modifications, improvements or revisions do you think should still be made concerning security trainings?

6) Should cooperation and communication with other organizations be extended – at the HQ as well as field level? If yes, in how far?

- a) With regard to coordination, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) provides a coordinating platform between the heads of UN operational agencies and non-UN partners. Is the Saving Lives Together framework enough to ensure security collaboration between UN and NGOs?
- b) Do you see the need to strengthen dialogue between NGOs concerning security threats?

7) Who do you consider more vulnerable to kidnapping? Why?

- National staff
- International staff

8) Are national and international staff members receiving the same attention in terms of:

- a) Security measure
 yes no
- b) Insurances
 yes no
- c) Trainings
 yes no
- d) Others
 yes no

Please identify others:

If your answer is NO, what do you think are the reasons for the disparities?

9) Who do you think is more vulnerable to kidnapping? Why?

- Men
- Women

10) Which locations and contexts do you consider to be the most dangerous in a mission? Why?

11) In order to reduce the vulnerability of humanitarian aid workers to kidnapping, what further measures do you believe should be taken (for example: adapting new technologies, introducing new rules and laws, etc.)?

- a) Can you think of any innovations or technologies which have been developed or are still in the innovation process with the aim to strengthen security?
- b) How could collaboration between UN agencies and innovative private sector partners be strengthened and made more efficient in order to overcome isolation/barriers to collective action?

12) Are there any important issues concerning the protection from kidnapping you believe should be further looked into, which were not covered in the questions above? Please be specific and elaborate.

Annex IV – Coordination Initiatives and Platforms

At the country or field level, NGOs have combined efforts to facilitate the collection and dissemination of their findings, especially when operating in environments characterised by high security risks. In 2002, following the US-led invasion in Afghanistan, the idea for an NGO safety platform arose. The Afghanistan NGO Security Office (ANSO), first hosted by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and later by Welthungerhilfe, was established with the aim to provide security advice for NGOs operating in Afghanistan through security reports. ANSO relies on national as well as international security advisors (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.76). Similarly, in 2004, the Balochistan INGO Consortium-Security Management Support Project (BINGO) was created by organizations based in the city of Quetta in Pakistan. BINGO closed down a year later due to pressure from Pakistani authorities. In 2010, PAKSAFE, initially chaired by IRC and the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF), has taken up BINGO's role. Localised platforms in Somalia, firstly called SPAS and later on NGO Safety Project (NSP), followed in 2004. NSP is also comprised of national and international security advisors (HPN, 2010, p.20). NGOs operating in Somalia do not receive funding from their home governments to uphold their independence (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.21). The Somalia NGO Consortium developed a position paper "Operating Principles and Red Lines" in 2009 to initiate a collective position, coordinate ground rules and establish red lines (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.24). Thereby, it is vital that all the NGOs accept and adhere to the red lines.

Concerning the UN, in December 2004, the General Assembly approved the establishment of the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS). This UN department integrated the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) and the civilian security component of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Safety and Security Services (SSS) (Bruderlein and Gassmann, 2006, p.75). UNDSS is the principal security advisor to the Secretary-General. Its tasks include the coordination of security threats' responses, evaluations, review of security plans, maintenance of databases and the distribution of information.

With regard to coordination between different types of agencies, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the main coordinating forum between the heads of UN operational agencies and non-UN partners with standing invitations. The IASC has been established in 1992 (Bolletino, 2006, p.8). In 2004, the "Saving Lives Together" (SLT) framework has been developed as a result of IASC consultations. The SLT framework's aims to strengthen security collaboration between the UN and NGOs by sharing resources and information in security management based on best practises (UNDSS, 2006, p.1). Additionally, UNDSS launches an initiative through which an NGO representative supports every UN Security Information and Operation Centres (SIOC) team (Egeland, Harmer and Stoddard, 2011, p.32).

At the headquarter level, two regional inter-NGO platforms have been established. On the one hand, the London-based European Interagency Security Forum (EISF), an independent platform to strengthen dialogue and coordination about current security management between European humanitarian organizations, and on the other hand, the

Interaction Security Advisory Group (SAG), which is based in Washington D.C. These two security forums serve as training, advocacy and almost real-time information-sharing platforms (HPN, 2010, p.18). From 2011 onwards, NGOs started combining their efforts to pool their security expertise with the result of significant cross-platform coordination on the international level. In January 2011 the International NGO Safety Organization (INSO) was formed, a British charity with the mission to ensure aid workers' safety by publishing analytical reports, providing real-time incident tracking, and developing standardised global mechanisms for establishing further security coordination platforms in high-risk contexts (INSO, 2015). Additionally, the international NGO RedR has been established, which runs training for humanitarian workers on individual and institutional security and which provides a free technical support service and an aid worker recruitment service.

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