

Safety and Security for National Humanitarian Workers

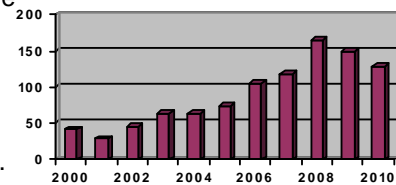
Survey-based annex to: *To Stay and Deliver – Good practice for humanitarian in complex security environments*

Key facts and figures

Updated November 2011

- National humanitarian workers, constituting upwards 90 % of humanitarian workers in the field, bear the **brunt of attacks**, due to the **nature of their jobs at the frontlines**.
- **International** staff face a **higher incident rate per capita** than national staff, especially in high-risk internationalized contexts.
- In 2010, there were 26 % fewer major attacks against aid workers than in 2008, in which year over 100 assaults occurred.
- Attacks have primarily **decreased in high-risk environments**, such as Somalia and Darfur, Sudan. Less violence is primarily due to **fewer humanitarians on the ground** and **restricted access** granted by host governments to people in need.

Number of incidents of major violence against aid workers (2000-2010)



Note: Includes killings, kidnappings, and armed attacks resulting in serious injury.

Source: *Aid Worker Security Database*

Why this survey and study?

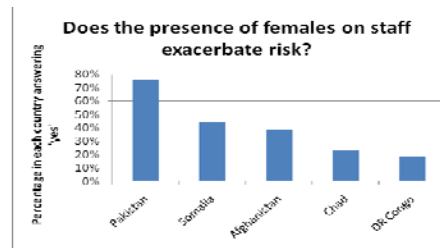
- Declining international access (remote management) creates **increased reliance on national staff** and local partners, whose lower risk must not be assumed.
- National aid workers may be exposed to an **additional security risk** due to association to ethnic/religious groups, clan affiliation or economic privilege.
- National staff continue to experience **inequitable security support** in comparison to international counterparts, despite overall improvements in their security risk management.
- Organizations are reminded of their **legal obligation and moral responsibility** to attend to the security needs of **national staff and national partner NGOs**, respectively.

Who are the national humanitarian workers?

- *Paid personnel working for a humanitarian organization in their home countries* (hailing from the local area or other parts of the country), including:
 - i) national staff of international aid organizations and
 - ii) personnel of local or national aid organizations.

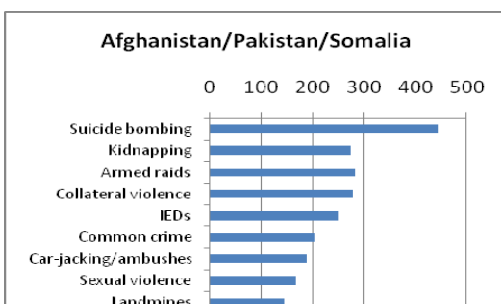
Gender and Security

- Overall, **gender has little to no direct effect on security**.
- In volatile environments, **females face a slightly greater risk** than males.



- A quarter of respondents of the national perception survey believed the **presence of female staff added to aid worker insecurity** due to local cultural norms that disapprove of women working or being in close proximity to unrelated men (especially in Pakistan, Somalia and Afghanistan).

Differing Perceptions of Risk



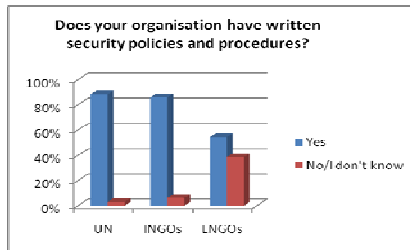
- Internationals tend to **overestimate security risks**, given their lesser knowledge of local culture and time spent in-country.
- Risk of skewed national perceptions as continued exposure to insecurity could result in national aid workers becoming **inured to chronic violence**.
- **Kidnapping for profit-making** is a top security threat.
- Nationals at risk due to greater exposure (e.g. land travel, fewer housing security), whereas internationals are targeted due to Western origins.

METHODOLOGY: OCHA commissioned this study to analyze in greater detail the data of 1,181 responses received for a web-based survey on the security risk perceptions of national humanitarian workers. The survey was conducted as part of the OCHA study *To Stay and Deliver*. It consisted of 27 mostly closed-ended questions. The survey was disseminated globally but with an emphasis on the high-risk countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, and Sudan.

Good practices

Duty of care

- **Prioritizing function over staff type** (e.g. senior national staff having 24-hour access to vehicles and communication equipment)
- **National 'R&R' entitlements** (incl. periodic home leave, emergency transport to area of origin; bonuses mirroring internationals' hardship or hazard allowances; agencies' provision of medical insurance).
- **Internal 'evacuation'**: No agency under review grants evacuation for national staff due to "refugee creation" concerns. However, good practice consists of national relocation to point of hire, in-country relocation, and advance salary.

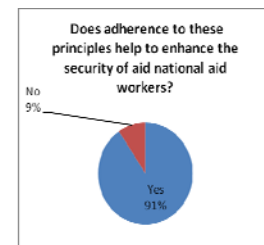


Inclusive decision-making processes

- **Reliance on national staff consultations** for sound security management. Good practices include appointing national staff as security coordinators; consulting them as equals in security information-sharing, analysis and thorough complaints mechanisms.
- **Moral obligation towards local partners' security needs** includes exploring locally appropriate assets (e.g. rented local vehicles, rather than 4-wheel drives; local mobile phones rather than radio equipments); collective security resource mobilization (e.g. through CERF).
- **Saving Lives Together (SLT) with local NGOs**: Rather than insisting on indirect benefits to implementing partners, explore channeling direct benefits of security coordination mechanisms to local partners.

Key messages

- **Continued bias towards international staff**: Attention to national aid workers' security needs has improved with new training, security policies and procedures. However, resources continue to be biased towards internationals' rather than nationals' security risk, stress and trauma mitigation (as entitlements are linked to lower salaries).
- **Balance inclusiveness with nationals' security risks**: Field managers need to carefully weigh the benefits of greater information-sharing against associated risks, as access to sensitive information may make national staff a target, especially in operating contexts characterized by assertive governments.
- **Humanitarian principles matter**: Lack of compliance with humanitarian principles ranked third out of seven as contributing factor to insecurity.



Recommendations for humanitarian organizations

- **Audit security resources and capacity development policies** for national staff and local partners (incl. insurance, medical care, stress & trauma counseling, as well as skills development).
 - **Explicit reference to security support in agreements with local partners** to include specific provisions on security plans and associated funding, such as for training.
 - **Agencies and UNDSS to integrate security needs for local partners in Consolidated Appeal Processes (CAP) and Flash Appeals**, especially in 'remote management' contexts.
 - **National participation in field-based security platforms and security coordination** (both UN and NGO, such as ANSO in Afghanistan and GANSO in Gaza) to include cooperation guidelines, joint field training exercises, translation or holding of meetings in national language, two-way information flow.
 - **Ongoing dialogue** with staff on risk perceptions and **humanitarian principles**.
 - **Enhanced donor support for national aid worker security** to ensure that funding agreements require established security plans and resources for subcontractors or implementing partners.
- **Balancing inequities in support for national staff and local partner organizations requires a shift in humanitarian organizations' mindsets and resources.**

Contact

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