

IASC Priority/Task Team Progress Report January 2014-April 2015: IASC Task Team on Revitalizing Principled Humanitarian Action (RPHA)

KEY OBJECTIVES:

To help create an environment in which humanitarian actors can have better access and respond to people in need. The IASC will promote adherence to, and the effective operationalization of humanitarian principles in humanitarian operations and policies.

Since early 2014, the Task Team undertook a series of research, policy and advocacy initiatives with respect to four priority themes: namely **(1)** Civil-military relations and coordination (e.g. use of armed escorts); **(2)** UN integration, (e.g. implementation of the UN Integrated Assessment and Planning Policy); **(3)** Mitigating the impact of counter-terrorism measures (e.g. COTER toolkit); and **(4)** Improving risk analysis and management.

TOP ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE EARLY 2014:

Understanding and enhancing UN Integration

- **Options paper** developed to carry out a review of the impact of UN integration on humanitarian action, as requested by Principals.
- Implementation mapping of UN Integrated Assessment Policy (IAP) and IASC integration paper developed. IAP Handbook disseminated to HC/RCS, UNCTs and HCTs, which will support IAP implementation by engaging HCTs and field colleagues at 'critical situations'.
- A **roundtable** was hosted with field colleagues to reflect on NGO experiences with UN integration in light of stabilization, peacekeeping operations and political missions (focus - Mali, Somalia, the DRC and South Sudan).
- As part of the ongoing **"Review of UN integration"**, undertook a "Survey to review the impact of UN integration on humanitarian action", recording 143 perspectives from humanitarian actors in all 18 settings where UN integration applies. Also, completed a desk review of existing UN integration research.

Assisting IASC organizations in understanding and addressing COTER impacts on PHA

- **Study on the impact of host State COTER measures on PHA** commissioned.
- A **workshop** was held with IASC members on the strategy for developing the US Humanitarian Assistance Facilitation Act ('HAFA') bill. The lessons learned from the process are relevant for IASC organizations engaged with policy process in other capitals.
- Comprehensive independent research commissioned from the Harvard Law School COTER Humanitarian Engagement Project on the risk management and contractual clauses used by donors/UN/NGOs. Studies provide the basis for development of the COTER toolkit.

Supporting and improving understanding of civil-military coordination practices

- **Guidance paper** on relations with national security forces distributed. An annex will be added shortly with good practices based on case studies from Pakistan, the Philippines and Colombia.
- Implementation of the **IASC Armed Escorts Guidelines** was **monitored** over 12 months to evaluate their effectiveness and applicability at the operational level. No substantive concerns with the document received. The Guidelines were **released and translated** into all UN languages.
- **Guidance on Humanitarian Organizations' Participation in Military Events** was released to promote coordinated engagement and consistent humanitarian messaging with military organizations. A dedicated page is being set up to facilitate information sharing in this regard.

Enhancing understanding and strengthened approaches to risk management

- **Risk management survey** conducted to determine what mechanisms exist among IASC organizations for managing risks relating to specific aspects of PHA. This was done in order to identify areas for possible harmonization of risk management practices and joint risk management initiatives/structures across IASC organizations.
- **Civ-mil decision-making tool** is being developed based on the need for a non-binding, voluntary tool to assist humanitarian actors to identify relevant issues in the context of civ-mil interventions. May be adapted for other uses.

Facilitating inter-agency coordination and operational improvements re counterterrorism

- **CT info note** developed and distributed to IASC organizations updating on work stream and main developments to inform the field/HQ colleagues on COTER impacts, resources and TT activities.
- **Development of a CT risk management and due diligence** toolkit, to facilitate principled humanitarian action, and respond to high levels of demand for guidance from operational actors that can be used at field and HQ levels, as well as with donors concerning dialogue on risk management and due diligence.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES UNTIL THE END OF 2015:

Planned activities for 2015 include:

- **Finalize the COTER toolkit** – estimated finalization August 2015. Based on Harvard Law School research, a consultant is leading toolkit drafting, supported by an Advisory Group of 13 Task Team members. Field consultations completed in Amman, Kabul and Nairobi.
- **Development of IASC Principals' statement on COTER** with a unified message reinforcing the practical relevance of principled humanitarian action; whilst articulating risk management and due diligence approaches of IASC members; and recommending required changes (including exemptions). A Statement is due to be discussed by the Principals at 21 May meeting.
- Finish **review of the impact of UN integration on humanitarian** action by July 2015.
- Identify **common principles and standards** drawn from Enterprise Risk Management, with the aim of developing guidance or a model risk management framework for humanitarian organizations, complementing other RM IASC initiatives.

COMPOSITION:



■ NGO: 14 ■ UN Agencies: 7
■ Red Cross / Red Crescent: 3

Co-Chairs: Maureen Magee, NRC (until July 2015) and Aurelien Buffler, OCHA
WG Sponsor: Brian Tisdall, ICRC
Secretariat Support: Dina Abou Samra, OCHA and Kate McGrane, NRC