An ICRC perspective

Presentation of the Humanitarian Negotiation Exchange Platform (HNx) and Strategic Partnership in Humanitarian Negotiations and Mediations

by

Claude Bruderlein
Head of the Humanitarian Negotiation Exchange (HNx)
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

IASC, Geneva, 8 July 2016
Purpose of frontline negotiations

- Establishing a **presence** in a new/ hostile environment
- Negotiating **access** in contested territory/ frontlines
- Development of a **new protection**/ **assistance programs** in a situation of violence
- Increasing **safety and security** measures surrounding operations
- Negotiation for the **release of hostage(s)**
Some examples of frontline negotiations

- Negotiation to **airlift medicine** into Yemen

- Negotiation to **evacuate civilians** under siege in Syria

- Negotiation of **access to displaced populations** in Northern Mali
Project Premises

- **Specific nature** of humanitarian negotiations
  - Transactional versus relationships management

- Un-tapped **informal knowledge**

- Isolation of negotiators – **lack of shared experiences**

- Insufficient in-house **capacity building**

- Need to support **expanding community of practice**
Humanitarian Negotiation Exchange Platform (HNx)

- A community-based initiative launched in 2014
- Provide an informal space for ICRC negotiators to share their experiences and reflections
- Study of recurring practical dilemmas and challenges
- An experiential learning platform that moves beyond negotiation concepts and theory
- A hub to facilitate networking among negotiators
Challenges and dilemmas of humanitarian negotiation practice

- **Paradoxical issue**: Promoting respect of international norms while seeking the consent of parties to operate;

- **Increasingly peripheral**, contextual, political activity;

- **Limited analysis or discussion** at a policy level;

- **Minimal understanding of challenges, dilemmas and strategies** across regions and themes, as well as organizations.
Multifaceted nature of humanitarian negotiations: At the crossroads of legal and political environments

**Political environment**
- Parties’ interests
- Values and norms
- Power and networks
- Media
- Culture

**Law & Policy environment**
- IHL
- IHRL
- Hum. Principles
- National laws
- UNSC/UNGA res.
- Counterterror. reg.
- Prof. standards
- Other sources

**Mission**

**Consent of the parties**

**Assistance and protection needs**

*Feeds negotiations*

*Regulates negotiations*
Results of the Research so far

Capture and analysis

- Over 60 interviews of current and former ICRC negotiators completed
- Creation of an analytical database of the interviews
- Elaboration of two reviews of literature on humanitarian negotiation
- Set-up a scientific committee

Peer-to-peer exchanges

- Field workshops and annual meeting
Main challenges for Humanitarian Negotiators
Enablers of Humanitarian Negotiations

- Long term presence
- Reputation of organization
- Personal qualities and skills
- Networking capabilities in country
- Influence over third parties

- Conducive political environment
- ICRC only org. present
- Demand for services
Recurring dilemmas

- Principled versus pragmatic approach
- Short term results versus long term relationships
- Neutrality versus Political agility
- Confidentiality versus transparency
Analytical Tools: “Naivasha” Grid

- Strategic Objectives
- Tactical Objectives
- Network of Influence
- Negotiation Scenarios
- Negotiation Pathway
- Counterpart Objectives

- Context Analysis
- Tactical Plan
- Final Terms
From ICRC HNx to

Strategic Partnership on Humanitarian Negotiations and Mediations
Mission of the Centre of Competence in Humanitarian Negotiations

- **Promote** critical reflections, learning and informal exchanges on frontline negotiation and mediation activities among humanitarian professionals;
- **Support** the development of a stronger analytical framework and greater capacity for effective humanitarian negotiation and mediation practice,
- **Foster** a community of practice among humanitarian professionals engaged in frontline negotiations and mediations.
Main Objectives for 2016:
- Connect professionals to negotiation tools & methods
- Identify priority areas for further development
- Network with academic and policy circles

2016 Planned Activities of the Centre of Competence

- Medical protection
- Working groups
- Integrated mission
- Gender
- NSAG
- Mediation
- Field Workshops
- Byblos
- Bangkok
- Dakar
- Geneva
- Nairobi

Review of literature/ Policy Brief

Policy questions for further inquiries with negotiators

Panels for Annual Meeting 25 – 26 October
- First Annual Meeting of Frontline Negotiators: 25 – 26 October 2016 at La Pastorale
- Official Launch of the Centre of Competence: 25 October 18h00 at the Humanitarium

For more information and registration: http://www.frontline-negotiations.org