Principles and Professionalism: Towards Humanitarian Intelligence

Andrej Zwitter

1 Introduction

Geopolitical challenges not only cause humanitarian crises; they can also be the source of failures in humanitarian action. Recent years have brought unique changes to the humanitarian landscape, from criminal and political threats, proliferation of actors in the international humanitarian sector, to professionalisation and accountability agendas imposed by international organisations and the humanitarian community itself.

This chapter outlines the most important political changes and challenges on the global stage, such as terrorism, the disappearance of humanitarian space, new actors besides traditional humanitarians and international coordination mechanisms.

Due to these changes and challenges, international humanitarian action is today more than ever in need of an advancement in analysis skills and strategic planning techniques in order to improve humanitarian projects and interventions.

At the same time, hesitation to learn from the experience and skills, which traditional intelligence analysis offers, stems in large part from a belief embedded in the culture of humanitarian action that denotes intelligence agencies negatively. However, the fact that intelligence analysis can provide exactly the skills and tools needed in the humanitarian field to improve project development and programming makes a strong case to use this experience for the professionalisation of humanitarian action. At the same time, it remains important that humanitarian actors keep a

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distance from intelligence actors. The concept of humanitarian intelligence is a way to strike the necessary balance in order to create a humanitarian intelligence tradecraft needed for analysis and intervention design that can save lives and improve safety and security of aid workers.

The foremost aim of this chapter is to show that humanitarian analysis needs are in many respects similar to traditional intelligence needs. Comparing both frameworks, this chapter covers the most important elements that constitute operational geopolitical parameters of humanitarian organisations.

Defining humanitarian intelligence means to first explain how the needs of humanitarian aid workers have changed over the last decades in political terms (2). Furthermore, it requires operationalising the humanitarian principles and the concept of 'humanitarian space' (3). The onset of the *global war on terrorism* (GWOT), specifically the effects of terrorism and counterterrorism on humanitarian action (4), and elements of professionalisation that have evolved in response to failures and lessons learned, (5) also need to be explained. Finally, once we understand the processes set in motion by experiences regarding success and failures, we can better grasp how international coordination mechanisms in humanitarian action evolved (6). Only then are we able to properly define humanitarian intelligence (7).

In other words, this chapter provides an intelligence perspective on the key geopolitical parameters that any humanitarian analyst, whether working for a small NGO or for a large international organisation, needs to understand and to a large degree also implement when planning operations.

2 The Changing Nature of Humanitarian Analysis Needs

Humanitarian action is not a new phenomenon. In fact, humanitarian aid in a structural and normatively embedded fashion has been provided to combatants since the onset of international law on the customs of armed conflict and the treatment of prisoners of war and those no longer capable to engage in acts of warfare (persons *hors de combat*).

The year 1864 marked a historical turning point, with Henri Dunant's founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), an organisation dedicated to alleviating suffering of persons *hors de combat*, prisoners of war and the civilian population. Subsequently, a number of international treaties were established to humanise warfare and protect the most vulnerable.

Another major turning point for the field of humanitarian action was the end of the Cold War, which led to a proliferation of humanitarian aid with the inclusion of many new non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and private groups dedicated to delivering aid to vulnerable populations affected by conflict or natural disasters.

The 1990s were marked by major humanitarian crises, in Somalia, Rwanda and Yugoslavia, to name but a few, many of which put humanitarian action to the test. For example, while the humanitarian intervention in Somalia helped in saving an

estimated 100,000 lives, it also cost the lives of many soldiers and United Nations (UN) peacekeepers. Militia leaders used stolen food aid to generate cash and purchase weapons to ensure the loyalty of their followers, which perpetuated the conflict and created an imbalance of power that is shaping the Somali political landscape until today.[1]

While the goal of humanitarian aid workers and UN missions certainly was to alleviate suffering in all of these cases, the planning of many programmes and projects had serious omissions, which led to disastrous consequences for aid beneficiaries, the wider population and, eventually, entire nations. Consequently, researchers and analysts have justifiably criticised the conduct of the international community and humanitarian organisations for unintentionally prolonging conflicts and causing negative consequences for aid beneficiaries.[2] This prompted Hugo Slim to argue that

> [h]umanitarian aid obviously does have a dark side. Misapplied or not, the provision of help may well have negative repercussions beyond its original intention. The challenge for relief agencies is to determine the proper limits of their moral responsibility for this dark side, and then make all efforts to mitigate against it in their programmes.[3]

The international community and humanitarian organisations did take this critique very seriously and agonised over how to ensure that aid delivered would not yield unintended consequences. They set up standards, codes of conducts, as well as monitoring and reporting procedures, part and parcel of what is now known as the professionalisation of aid.

Another change in the field that affected the humanitarian community directly were the increasing attacks on humanitarian aid workers by terrorist organisations, especially in the wake of the post-9/11 conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, which were part of the larger GWOT, initiated by the United States of America (US) and its coalition of the willing. The effects of this change in the humanitarian operational space will be discussed in detail in the next section.[4]

In summary, the field of humanitarian action is under constant influence from a variety of factors that in part also determine analysis needs of rapid needs assessment teams, security experts, project design teams and project managers. The times in which humanitarian actors considered delivering food and makeshift shelters as sufficient means to fulfil their obligations are past. Today, humanitarian action is a major global industry, and States, as well as international organisations, are willing to spend massive amounts of money and in kind aid to help disaster and conflict stricken populations, which in turn attracts "for-and not-for-profit", faith-based and secular organisations alike. Foreign aid spending is also an important part of foreign policy strategies. They can put further pressure on aid organisations, for example in the form of donor interests, particularly when trying to utilise aid to achieve

[1] Clarke and Herbst (1996), pp. 70ff.

[2] Anderson (1999).

[3] Slim (1997), p. 256.

[4] Zwitter (2008), http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/223; Macrae and Harmer (2003).

political goals. At the same time, humanitarians increasingly face safety and security risks, are required to provide better aid standards and have to comply with counterterrorism legislation.[5] Among the most important factors affecting humanitarian space and analysis needs are as follows:

- humanitarian principles and humanitarian space;
- effects of local-organised crime, terrorism and counterterrorism;
- professionalisation of humanitarian aid (standards of accountability); and
- coordination challenges among humanitarian stakeholders.

3 Humanitarian Space and Humanitarian Principles

Humanitarian space can be defined and understood in several ways. It may refer to the following:

- the operational space of humanitarian agencies necessary to meet humanitarian needs in accordance with the humanitarian principles;
- the space within which beneficiaries are able to uphold their rights to relief and protection;
- a sphere in which international humanitarian law is respected, allowing for unhampered aid relief; or
- humanitarian space as *a product of the dynamic and complex interplay of political, military and legal actors, interests, institutions and processes*.[6]

Most commonly, it simply denotes the 'humanitarian operating environment'.

There are several ways to achieve this operational space, generally either relying on military protection of aid workers or on the concept of humanitarian legitimacy (also called 'acceptance'). The latter depends, according to the ICRC, on the upholding of the humanitarian principles. Accordingly, Thürer explains that

> [t]he first issue is the subjective impartiality of the people who represent the organizations, the second being that of the structural characteristics of the organizations themselves – they must have room for manoeuvre with respect to the government and/or the parties to the conflict; independence and impartiality must be integral characteristics of the organization, and these characteristics must be guaranteed. Furthermore, their impartiality and independence must not only exist objectively, but must also be experienced and perceived by the outside world.[7]

Since their establishment in international humanitarian law, the humanitarian principles have become somewhat of a sacred vow to humanitarian aid agencies,

[5]For a detailed legal review of EU and US counterterrorism legislation concerning humanitarian and development aid see: Zwitter (2014), pp. 315–332.

[6]Collinson and Elhawary (2012), p. 1, http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/7643.pdf.

[7]Thürer (2007), p. 60.

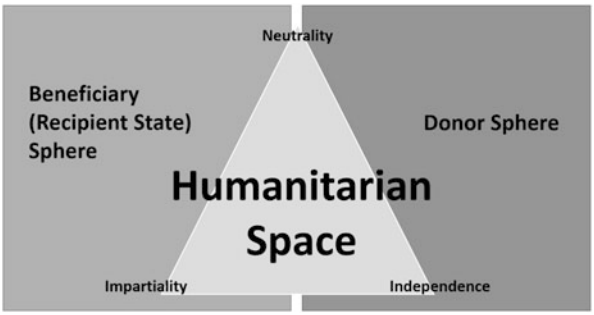

Fig. 1 Humanitarian space as consisting of humanitarian principles. Developed by the author, Andrej Zwitter. Reproduced by kind permission of the publisher from Andrej Zwitter, Humanitarian Intelligence: A Practitioner's Guide to Crisis Analysis and Project Design, Chapter 1, pp. 11–28 (Rowman and Littlefield, New York, London, 2016)

the UN humanitarian system and other stakeholders. To these actors, these principles are the all-encompassing norms that are or should be present in all humanitarian operations, although it has to be mentioned that not all actors always adhere to the principles or interpret them equally. Out of seven principles established at the XXth International Conference of the Vienna Red Cross in 1965, four are universally applicable[8]:

- *humanity*: to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found;
- *impartiality*: to not discriminate on the basis of nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions; to relieve suffering, giving priority to the most urgent cases of distress;
- *neutrality*: to not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature;
- *independence*: to act autonomously from States, international organisations and other authorities.

All four principles together form the *humanitarian space* (see Fig. 1).

Humanity is the overall objective, the reason underpinning all humanitarian work. It also guides actors to what should always be the prime directive where they face situations that require difficult decisions (so-called hard cases). The principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence guide the modus operandi of humanitarian operations. They determine the way humanity is to be achieved in external relations towards beneficiaries, donors and warring factions. This means that it requires humanitarian actors to set deliberate actions towards beneficiaries, donors and other stakeholders in order to be perceived as legitimate actors, which in turn is thought to achieve what is referred to as 'humanitarian space'.

[8]Pictet (1979), http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/misc/fundamental-principles-commentary-010179.htm.

Neutrality is the operational instrument in the field ensuring that nobody is being discriminated against. It is a principle that bridges the donor and the beneficiary sphere and prohibits an organisation's ideology from interfering with the principle of humanity, which posits the need of people as the sole determinant measure of aid distribution.

Impartiality refers to not taking sides between the opposing goals of parties in a conflict (this includes the international community and donor perspectives). As a principle located in the beneficiary or local sphere, it ensures that conflict parties do not oppose the delivery of aid to each other because both can benefit from the same advantage.

Independence serves to create an image of detachment from political goals, which are often present in the donor sphere. In order to ensure that aid agencies are perceived as truly impartial, they must be independent from donor and State interests (including democratisation and regime change agendas of States).

A violation of either of the principles can lead to stakeholders perceiving the humanitarian organisations as less neutral and may provide the former with cause to attacks, denial of access and other hindrances prone to limiting humanitarians' operational space. It is (sometimes wrongly) assumed that the principles and the *humanitarian space* they create to protect humanitarian aid workers also keep criminal entities in check.

However, coping with the threat of criminal actors, who simply aim to profit from aid and relief organisations, for example through kidnapping, carjacking, theft or sexual assault, often requires more than acceptance creating measures. Kidnapping in particular, the average global rate of which has risen by 28% in the 3 years before 2014,[9] increases the call for military protection or security details. *The challenge with a more protection-based approach, however, is that such measures must be carefully designed so as not to limit contact, and alienate the host community*.[10]

With regard to these criminal security issues, humanitarian organisations might have to resort to means of protection beyond acceptance-based security, which require a much more in-depth analysis of the local context and its stakeholders. The challenge is to continue to operate on the basis of the humanitarian principles while ensuring staff security and continuing to work closely together with the local population.

4 The Effects of Terrorism and Counterterrorism

The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 had a profound effect on world politics, eventually leading to the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. The consequences of the politics of the GWOT did also not

[9] Aid Worker Security Report 2013 (2013), p. 4, http://aidworkersecurity.org/sites/default/files/AidWorkerSecurityReport_2013_web.pdf.

[10] *Id*., p. 7.

halt before the humanitarian principles and the misuse of 'hearts and minds' practices by the invading forces. Intelligence agencies on the ground further blurred the lines between humanitarian organisations and enemy combatants.

Initially, after the first terrorist attacks struck the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Baghdad in August 2003 and killed 22 people, including UN envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello, the humanitarian community hardly responded. Only a year later, when NGOs themselves became targets, starting with the kidnapping of two Italian aid workers (the 'two Simonas incident' as it was referred to in the NGO community), that the humanitarian community became aware of its own vulnerability and decided to respond by either keeping a low-profile or leaving the country altogether.[11] To illustrate the seriousness of the situation in numbers, during the year 2008, then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon reported (UN staff, numbers in brackets: NGO staff) 25 (63) deaths from attacks, 490 (236) attacks, 160 (70) cases of detention by State authorities, 39 (103) incidents of unlawful detention by non-State actors, 263 (41) cases of assault, 546 (132) incidents of harassment, 578 (113) armed robberies, 119 (50) incidents of vehicle hijackings, etc.[12]

Consequently, the effects of terrorism and counterterrorism on humanitarian action cannot be underestimated. The US as one of the biggest humanitarian donors is particularly concerned that funds dedicated for aid could reach and unwillingly bankroll terrorist groups. International and regional organisations have their own concerns when it comes to the dual role they play with regard to the political nature of development aid, which conflicts with the neutral and impartial nature of humanitarian aid. These concerns and strategies to resolve them often do not match the NGOs' perception of the situation and their concerns for safety and security in the field. Local beneficiaries, in the meantime, are addressees of terrorist and counterterrorist operations and hearts-and-minds tactics and are recipients of humanitarian aid. In the years after 9/11, the impact of donor policies on humanitarian actors, encouraging the militarisation of aid, increasingly affected the image of humanitarian actors, questioning their impartiality and neutrality. There are, however, also important arguments in favour of the use of military support in humanitarian action, for example concerning the provision of humanitarians with the necessary transport and logistics or protecting civilians and aid workers from violence by State and non-State actors. In this regard, the military can often also be seen as a humanitarian actor itself, present in civil and military cooperation (CIMIC), together with other stakeholders such as UN agencies.

The two most common arguments for and against military protection of humanitarian aid workers are either diametrically opposed or constitute a vicious cycle: (1) humanitarian assistance requires military protection/involvement because of likely attacks, whereas (2) military involvement is a cause of the attacks against humanitarian aid workers. Advocates of the second argument usually demand a strict separation of military and humanitarian organisations. As an alternative

[11]Zwitter (2008).

[12]Ki-Moon (2008).

strategy to hardening targets by military protection, they commonly propose the creation of humanitarian space through acceptance.

The GWOT, even though the term has largely disappeared from public discourse, continues to affect the operation of humanitarian organisations in various ways. As regards funding of humanitarian actors, NGOs increasingly try to keep the origins of their funds secret and try to steer clear of implicit or explicit political agendas of donor States. This relates strongly to how NGOs position themselves vis-à-vis beneficiaries and the wider public. The GWOT also had an impact on programmes and projects: it led to the reduction of proximity of international NGOs to the field by the increasing use of implementing partners and steering of projects from secure locations (*remote controlling*); furthermore, NGOs tend to reduce their visibility in areas with hostile stakeholders.

The US has introduced the Partner Vetting System (PVS) for all organisations that apply for funding from USAID, which screens data on staff and implementing partners through CIA, FBI and NSA channels. This system has raised concern as being at best a big administrative burden to NGOs and at worst an infringement of privacy or even a potential security risk.[13] The PVS, together with terror lists of intergovernmental organisations and States, might help to monitor suspect entities, but in the perception of many humanitarian organisations it has also reduced humanitarian operational space and put humanitarians at risk of legal prosecution if they happen to be viewed as cooperating in any way with terrorist organisations, be it through direct assistance of people in need or in cases of negotiation for access to certain regions.

5 The Professionalisation of Humanitarian Aid

The trend towards professionalisation of aid can be attributed to the increasing awareness of the humanitarian community and other stakeholders that aid is not intrinsically beneficial because of the well-intentioned motivation underlying it, that when conducted unprofessionally it may result in negative (albeit unintended) consequences. Humanitarian organisations are increasingly under pressure to perform better, uphold standards and be accountable towards different stakeholders for local projects, funding, mandates and their overall mission.

For one, governmental and private donors expect their implementing partners to provide results for investment (*Has the organisation done what it promised to do to obtain funding*?)—this is in most cases a question of accounting. Beyond this point, the academic community has an important role in assessing and evaluating the successes and failures of aid organisations in disaster situations. Such assessment most often goes beyond mere accounting and asks questions of add-on *collateral damage* (unintended consequences of humanitarian action such as destruction of local markets), long-time impacts (such as aid dependency) or questions about

[13]Zwitter (2014).

cultural appropriateness, gender equality, beneficiary participation and ethics. The peer group of established humanitarian agencies, such as newcomers, and commercial relief contractors, such as DHL or Development Alternatives Inc., as well as the military, further increases the pressure on humanitarian organisations to professionalise their actions. Most importantly, however, a push originating from academics and donors for greater accountability towards the inclusion of beneficiaries at all stages of a relief project (planning, implementation, evaluation) raised the bar even higher. All these stakeholders put pressure on aid organisations to improve their performance, to be transparent in and to almost volunteer accountability to all interested parties.[14]

In the early 1990s, almost no common standards for humanitarian action besides international humanitarian law existed. The failure of many humanitarian projects during that time was in part attributed to the lack of standards of performance and accountability. Today, prompted by initiatives of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent and OCHA, several important standards and codes exist. These are important as they set the parameters of operations. Some of the important codes and standards to be mentioned are as follows:

- *The Code of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief*: this voluntary code of conduct was set up in 1994 and is a yardstick for self-governance of humanitarian organisations. It is assumed to be a minimum standard of professional conduct containing, among other elements, the humanitarian principles.[15]
- *The Sphere Standards (Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response)* comprise widely recognised sets of common principles and universal minimum standards for disaster relief. The minimum standards are performance benchmarks in the following areas: water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WaSH), food security, nutrition and food aid; shelter, settlements and non-food items; health services.[16]
- *The Core Humanitarian Standards (CHS)*, launched in December 2014 to replace the HAP 2010 Standards, the People in Aid Code of Good Practice and the Core Standards section of the Sphere Handbook,[17] covers the commitments shown in Table 1.
- The *Quality COMPAS reference framework* is a method of quality assurance developed on the basis of a six-year research project. It uses its own set of tools, offers training modules and consultancy services.[18] The COMPAS criteria and key processes (Table 2) are worth mentioning as they can be considered minimum quality criteria similar to the Core Standards[19]:

[14]Lancaster (1998); Stoddard (2009), pp. 246–266.

[15]http://www.ifrc.org/en/publications-and-reports/code-of-conduct/#sthash.M46QiRp2.dpuf.

[16]http://www.sphereproject.org.

[17]http://www.corehumanitarianstandard.org.

[18]http://www.compasqualite.org.

[19]Groupe URD (2009), p. 8, http://www.compasqualite.org/Setup/en/V9.06-EN_Quality_COMPAS_companion_book.pdf.

Table 1 Core Humanitarian Standards

1. 'Communities and people affected by crisis receive assistance appropriate and relevant to their needs.
2. Communities and people affected by crisis have access to the humanitarian assistance they need at the right time.
3. Communities and people affected by crisis are not negatively affected and are more prepared, resilient and less at-risk as a result of humanitarian action.
4. Communities and people affected by crisis know their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them.
5. Communities and people affected by crisis have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints.
6. Communities and people affected by crisis receive coordinated, complementary assistance.
7. Communities and people affected by crisis can expect delivery of improved assistance as organisations learn from experience and reflection.
8. Communities and people affected by crisis receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers.
9. Communities and people affected by crisis can expect that the organisations assisting them are managing resources effectively, efficiently and ethically.'

Developed by the author, Andrej Zwitter, citing CHS Alliance, Groupe URD and the Sphere Project: Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability, p. 9 (2014), http://corehumanitarianstandard.org/files/files/Core%20Humanitarian%20Standard%20-%20English.pdf (accessed on 14 April 2017)

Table 2 COMPAS criteria and key processes

A. 'The project responds to a demonstrated need	B. The project achieves its objectives
C. The project removes or reduces the risk of negative impacts	D. The project aims for positive impacts beyond implementation
E. The project is consistent with the agency's mandate and principles	F. The project respects the population
G. The project is flexible	H. The project is integrated into its institutional context in an optimal manner
I. The agency has the necessary resources and expertise	J. The agency has the appropriate management capacity
K. The agency makes optimal use of resources	L. The agency uses lessons drawn from experience.'

Developed by the author, Andrej Zwitter, citing the COMPAS Criteria and Key Processes, http://www.compasqualite.org/en/compas-method/presentation-compas-method.php (accessed on 14 April 2017)

6 Coordination Challenges Among Humanitarian Stakeholders

Humanitarian action on the UN level dates back to the inception of the UN itself. In November 1943, a UN predecessor, the UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), was established. It was set up to provide aid to freed areas and to refugees. After the end of World War II, out of this organisation grew the two first UN aid agencies, today's UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). During the Cold War, several others followed, including the World Food Programme (WFP, 1961) or the UN Development Programme (UNDP, 1965) to cater to humanitarian needs.[20] The proliferation of UN agencies with mandates relating to relief aid led to the need to coordinate and restructure the UN's humanitarian system in organisational and operational terms.

In 1991, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) responded to this need with its landmark Resolution 46/182,[21] which aimed at a consolidation of the UN system of humanitarian aid.

First, it established the operational principles, which from now on would be binding on all UN agencies delivering humanitarian aid: humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

Second, it established in accordance with general principles of international law (specifically the sovereignty of States) that primary responsibility for the initiation, organisation, coordination and implementation of humanitarian assistance lies with the States concerned. In terms of operational principles, the UNGA further added that linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD) should be implemented as a fundamental principle within the UN humanitarian system as a whole. In structural terms, the resolution established coordination mechanisms for the organisation of actors, the consolidation of appeal processes for funding and overall strategy development:

- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC),
- Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) as Under-Secretary General,
- Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF),
- Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP),
- Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA).

In 1998, the DHA was restructured by the Secretary General into OCHA, with an expanded mandate to include the coordination of all humanitarian responses on the UN level, policy development and humanitarian advocacy.[22]

[20] Zwitter (2011), pp. 53–55.

[21] UN General Assembly, Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations, 19 December 1991, UN Doc. A/RES/46/182.

[22] OCHA, History of OCHA, http://www.unocha.org/about-us/who-we-are/history.

The failure to respond to the 2004 Darfur Crisis prompted the ERC to launch the Inter-Agency Real-Time Evaluation of the Humanitarian Response to the Darfur Crisis to develop lessons learned. It concluded that the humanitarian response to the Darfur Crisis was 'delayed and inadequate, primarily due to the inability of agencies to mobilize capacity and resources'.[23]

Frustration mounted with the response to the 2004/5 Indian Ocean tsunami, which eventually led the ERC to commission the Humanitarian Response Review (HRR). This report concluded that the overall system of humanitarian action (including the UN, Red Cross Movements, ICRC and NGOs) was in need of stronger humanitarian leadership to develop an overall strategy and a clustering of agencies into a sectoral coordination system in order to improve strategies on this level as well.[24]

This reform process led the IASC to develop a cluster approach with the following aims:

> At the global level, the aim of the cluster approach is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by ensuring that there is predictable leadership and accountability in all the main sectors or areas of humanitarian response. Similarly, at the country level the aim is to strengthen humanitarian response by demanding high standards of predictability, accountability and partnership in all sectors or areas of activity.[25]

The cluster approach assigns leadership in different sectors of humanitarian aid to different organisations, which are particularly well versed in the specific area. These cluster leads coordinate the overall cluster strategy, develop preparedness and eventually become providers of last resort aid in case implementing partners fail to perform (with the exception of the ICRC). On a local level, these responsibilities contain more specifically the following[26]:

- establishment and maintenance of appropriate humanitarian coordination mechanisms;
- coordination with national/local authorities, State institutions, local civil society and other relevant actors;
- participatory and community-based approaches;
- needs assessment and analysis;
- emergency preparedness;
- planning and strategy development;
- application of standards;
- monitoring and reporting, etc.

Figure 2 illustrates the cluster approach as it is presently implemented.

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[23]Humphries (2013), http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/1976.

[24]Adinolfi et al. (2005), pp. 9–12.

[25]Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response (2006), p. 2, http://interagencystandingcommittee.org/working-group/documents-public/guidance-note-using-cluster-approach-strengthen-humanitarian-respon-0.

[26]*Id*., p. 7.

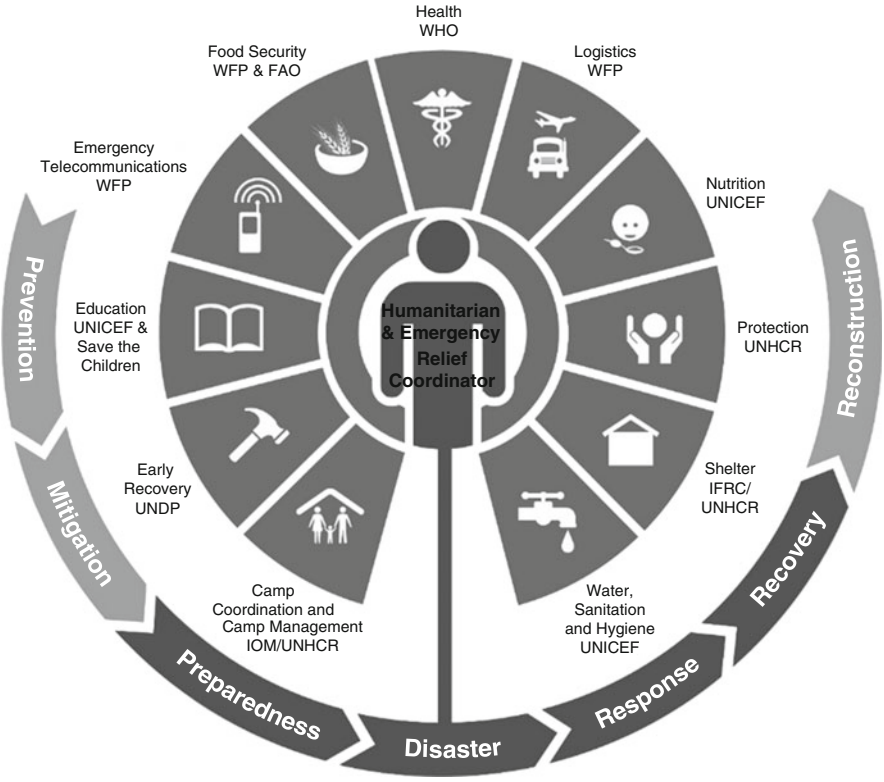

Fig. 2 Cluster approach. Reproduced by kind permission of the United Nations from UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)/Humanitarian Response, What Is the Cluster Approach, http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/coordination/clusters/what-cluster-approach (accessed on 14 April 2017)

As has been shown, the humanitarian community has invested much time to improve relief efforts and aid provision over the last decades. In this sense, standards and coordination mechanisms represent important elements that guide operation planning and need to be taken into account by humanitarian agencies.

7 Defining Humanitarian Intelligence

Helmuth von Moltke famously stated, 'In war you will generally find that the enemy has at any time three courses of action open to him. Of those three, he will invariably choose the fourth'. As in other areas of intelligence analysis, humanitarian intelligence also aims to reduce uncertainty and risk by providing a basis for informed decision-making.

In general, intelligence analysis employs research methods similar to those used in market research or academic research. However, we can make three key distinctions between academic/market research and humanitarian and security intelligence.

First, in intelligence, accurate information is not readily available, and a wide range of methods and techniques must be deployed for data collection to compensate for that fact.

Second, concealment, deception and denial are routinely encountered during intelligence work. Actors are often suspicious of new third parties with potentially diametrically opposed agendas, which are met with secrecy or even hostility.

Third, intelligence bias with regard to anticipated deception and negative expectations regarding adversary actors tend to affect analytic interpretation. The fear that no information can be fully trusted (as it might be fed by counter-intelligence) can lead even to a point where analytical assessments have to yield to ad hoc intuitive decisions.

These three elements are common to humanitarian as well as traditional intelligence analysis. However, in many other respects, the tools and methods are quite different from traditional intelligence tradecraft. On the one hand, this has to do with limited capacities of humanitarian actors regarding signal intelligence; on the other hand, it is due to normative and operational standards specific to humanitarian action (for example, humanitarian principles). This is particularly true when it comes to accepted tools of recruiting informants and acquiring information. In terms of a general classification of intelligence, the following taxonomy of Hank Prunkun is very useful for humanitarian intelligence purposes[27]:

Tactical Intelligence

- is short-range or time limited;
- consists of patterns or operational mode activities.

Strategic Intelligence

- is considered to be a higher form of intelligence;
- provides a comprehensive view of a target or an activity;
- comments on future possibilities or identifies potential issues;
- provides advice on threats, risks and vulnerabilities;
- provides options for planning and policy development;
- assists in allocating resources; and
- requires extensive knowledge of the target or the area of activity.

Operational Intelligence

- provides immediate insight that supports an operation; and
- is oriented towards a specific target or an activity.

[27]Prunckun (2010), pp. 7–8.

To define 'humanitarian intelligence' is a matter of capturing the varieties of practices of humanitarian actors, trying to assess the status quo in a humanitarian crisis, the impact of humanitarian projects and programmes, as well as the underlying causes of persistent and complex emergencies. Humanitarian intelligence is then defined as 'the use of investigative and analytical techniques in service of rapid and continuous assessment, project and programme development, impact evaluation and learning'.

In terms of the above taxonomy, the intelligence needs regarding policy making and programme development are best comparable with strategic intelligence; project development requires skills in tactical intelligence, and the skills and information necessary for the daily work of the security officer in the context of the humanitarian operation would broadly fall into the area of operational intelligence.

In order to achieve consistency and inter-organisational compatibility of intelligence, coordinating bodies, such OCHA, have devised a variety of assessment tools and standards. This demand for mainstreaming of intelligence gathering and analysis is a consequence of the strong needs for coordination among different international, regional and local governmental and non-governmental organisations, and to some extent their common financing through centralised donor organisations such as the European Commission's European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG-ECHO) and USAID. Mainstreaming, however, remains difficult, in part due to the diversity of specialisations (food, health, shelter, WaSH, etc.), the different needs (project, programme, rapid-needs or impact assessment), the different standards applied (rights vs. needs-based approaches) and many other factors.

Distinct from other analytical techniques, humanitarian intelligence operates on specific key assumptions on security and safety:

- *increased risks*: routinely operating in volatile or hostile environments;
- *higher threat acceptance threshold*: negotiating access with potentially hostile parties;
- *operational security*: providing humanitarian space, including threats to physical and mental health of staff;
- establishing different tools and reporting formats for different clients (ECHO, diplomats, aid agencies, etc.);
- *target centric*: considering staff safety and security as of an equal concern as the livelihood of beneficiaries;
- *socio-cultural intelligence needs* for stakeholder interaction.

Humanitarian intelligence therefore focuses just as much on how to use humanitarian early warning indicators to assess risks, evaluate trends and provide early warning analyses as it does provide guidance on the operational design of humanitarian relief efforts. Another important aspect of humanitarian intelligence is that operational security depends on the intelligence analysis. This operational security is not simply an augmentation of an operation by adding a security feature but in fact means that operations needs to be designed in a way that ensures operational

security intrinsically through every aspect of the project design. Humanitarian intelligence then goes beyond just giving advice on decision-making but requires the analyst to bridge analysis and project design through informing every single project design decision with the necessary piece of intelligence.

Since NGO's resources, unlike those of governments, are very limited, the same group of people is usually in charge of both humanitarian intelligence analysis and operations planning. This means that the intelligence analyst often also acts as project designer. Organisational capacities are in most cases a plus; however, they can also lead to bias concerning the evaluation of data and the needs for operations to succeed. Humanitarian intelligence analysis, therefore, is specifically under pressure to link all analytical steps as closely as possible to the project design process within the LogFrame. Humanitarian intelligence in the end has to tie neatly into the project cycle management as intertwining with the intelligence cycle.

Tactical humanitarian intelligence consists of rapid needs assessment (RNA) and field awareness intelligence for rapid relief aid (i.e., in military terms referred to as battlefield awareness, concerning, for example, accessibility of roads, mobility of beneficiaries or presence of criminal entities). Operational humanitarian intelligence, necessary in full-fledged projects, goes further. Most importantly, it includes, among other information, a stakeholder analysis that informs about the intentions of actors. Strategic humanitarian intelligence is mostly a policy tool and relevant for aid projects and programmes with a longer time frame than a two-week quick impact operation. The latter interacts with operational humanitarian intelligence due to the ongoing trend towards linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD).

8 Conclusion

Humanitarian intelligence is closely related to traditional intelligence analysis. Like intelligence agencies, also humanitarian actors increasingly rely on Big Data, satellite imagery and automated analytics. However, while it shares common characteristics with military and security intelligence, it differs very much from both when it comes to humanitarian principles, operational parameters and the need to create a positive local perception, as well as the potential to engage with beneficiaries in a long-lasting collaboration. Humanitarian intelligence then must be particularly wary of the clandestine element that often accompanies the field of intelligence since trust by all stakeholders involved is one of the foremost elements that contribute to success and future collaboration. This element of trust is particularly expressed in the concept of accountability and the humanitarian principles that together form the backbone of professional humanitarian conduct.

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