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UN Integration and Humanitarian Space

An Independent Study Commissioned by the UN Integration Steering Group

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Acronyms

ACBAR	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
ANSO	Afghan NGO Safety Office
ASC	Area Security Coordinator
ASMT	Area Security Management Teams
BONUCA	United Nations Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic
BINUCA	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CAR	Central African Republic
CHAP	Common Humanitarian Action Plan
CHD	Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue
CIMIC	UN Civil-Military Coordination
CNDP	Congrès national pour la défense du peuple
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
DFS	Department of Field Support
DHA	Department for Humanitarian Affairs
DO	Designated Official
DOCO	Development Operations Coordination Office
DPA	Department of Political Affairs
DPKO	Department for Peacekeeping Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSRSG/RC/HC	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator/ Humanitarian Coordinator
ECHA	Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
ERC	Emergency Relief Coordinator
FARDC	Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
FDLR	Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HOC	Humanitarian Operation Centre
HRR	Humanitarian Response Review
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICU	Islamic Courts Union (Somalia)
IDP	Internally displaced person
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross

IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMPP	Integrated Missions Planning Process
IMTF	Integrated Mission Task Force
IO	Integrated Office
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan)
ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework
ISG	United Nations Integration Steering Group
ISSSS	International Security and Stabilisation Support Strategy
JAPU	Joint Analysis and Policy Unit
JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Centre
JOC	Joint Operation Centre
JPU	Joint Planning Unit
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army (Uganda)
MACCA	Mine Action Coordination Center of Afghanistan
MINURCAT	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
MONUC	United Nations Organisation Mission in the DRC
MONUSCO	United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in DRC
MOSS	Minimum Operating Security Standards
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ONUMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador
PRT	Provisional Reconstruction Team
RCO	United Nations Resident Coordinators Office
RR	Resident Representative
RSG	Representative of the Secretary-General
SF	Strategic Framework
SG	Secretary-General of the United Nations
SLA	Sudan Liberation Army
SLS	Security Level System
SMT	Security Management Team
SMG-P	Senior Management Group Protection
SMG-PP	Senior Management Group Protection Provincial
SPG	Senior Policy Group
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
STAREC	Stabilisation and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas
TAM	Technical Assessment Mission
TFG	Transitional Federal Government (Somalia)
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNAMID	African Union/United Nations Mission in Darfur

UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHAS	United Nations Humanitarian Air Service
UNHCR	Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMIH	United Nations Mission in Haiti
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in Sudan
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNPOS	United Nations Political Office for Somalia
UNSOA	United Nations Support Office for AMISOM
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTAG	United Nations Transitions Assistance Group (Namibia)

Executive summary

The benefits and risks of UN integration for humanitarian space have been intensely debated for many years. Some UN humanitarian staff, and many staff in non-UN humanitarian organisations, remain deeply sceptical that UN integration can benefit humanitarian action. Many NGOs are opposed to UN integration on principle, arguing that integration arrangements blur the distinction between humanitarian, military and political action, subordinate humanitarian priorities to political prerogatives and therefore place humanitarian action at significant risk. Conversely, many in the UN political and peacekeeping community stress the need for enhanced coherence and highlight the positive experiences of UN integration and the significant progress made in policy development and practice in recent years.

Against this background, this independent study was commissioned by the UN Integration Steering Group (ISG) to explore the impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space and make recommendations towards the improved management of this impact. This study focused on three main case studies (Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia), complemented by a desk review of the Central African Republic, Darfur (Sudan) and Liberia.

The study found that, despite reforms to the policy of integration over the last decade, the debate remains polarised and stakeholders – including UN departments, funds, agencies and programmes – should redouble their efforts to promote greater awareness and consistent implementation of policy provisions that seek to ensure that UN integration arrangements protect humanitarian space. They should also do much more to build confidence across the political, peacekeeping and humanitarian communities to help ensure that the potential benefits of UN integration for humanitarian operations are maximised, and the risks minimised.

Evolution and implementation of UN integration

The concept of 'integration' is not new in the UN system. Various efforts to achieve greater coherence within the UN predate the formal introduction of the term 'integration' in 1997. The concept has evolved, however, into a formal policy aimed at 'maximiz[ing] the individual and collective impact of the UN's response, concentrating on those activities required to consolidate peace' (UN, 2008). The policy is now applicable to all conflict and post-conflict settings where the UN has a Country Team and a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation or country-specific political mission/office. Current policy provisions also seek to address concerns about the potential impact of UN integration on humanitarian space, specifying that integrated arrangements 'should take full account of recognized humanitarian principles, allow for the protection of humanitarian space, and facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors'. Recent policy decisions not only seek to prevent or mitigate potential negative impacts of integration arrangements on humanitarian space, but also to offer advantages, stating that 'an integrated approach and integration arrangements can yield significant benefits for humanitarian operations' (UN, 2008).

Another change in policy that sought in part to address humanitarian concerns was a greater emphasis on the strategic elements of integration, which include a shared vision of the UN's strategic objectives; closely aligned or integrated planning; a set of agreed results, timelines and responsibility for the delivery of tasks critical to consolidating peace; and agreed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation among UN actors. As outlined in current policy and guidance, the country-level arrangements created to support these strategic elements should be determined by the context.

Despite these developments, the research team found that the concept of UN integration remains poorly understood amongst UN and non-UN staff and has been inconsistently applied in practice, including with respect to the provisions on humanitarian space. These deficiencies stem from a general lack of awareness on the part of some UN and non-UN staff of the content of the policy; limited ownership by some UN agency and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) staff of the policy more broadly; limited understanding amongst some Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Political Affairs (DPA) staff of the operational relevance of humanitarian principles; and a lack of transparency in decision-making processes and of accountability for non-compliance with the policy, including as it relates to humanitarian space. These factors have contributed to a climate of mistrust and negativity, and have entrenched the positions of supporters and detractors of UN integration.

The impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space

Drawing on field and desk research, this study assessed the impact of UN integration arrangements on five areas of humanitarian space as outlined in the terms of reference developed by the ISG: humanitarian worker security, access, engagement with non-state armed actors, perceptions of humanitarian actors and humanitarian advocacy. Whilst the study discusses each of these five areas separately, they are closely inter-connected; impact in one area affects the other areas.

The research findings indicate that UN integration arrangements have had both positive and negative impacts on these five areas. There are also differences in impact, both positive and negative, for UN humanitarian actors (UN agencies and OCHA), and for non-UN humanitarian actors.

Security of humanitarian workers

The contexts reviewed for this study are among the most threatening places in the world for humanitarian workers. Security incidents affect UN agencies and NGOs, international and, especially, national staff. Violence against humanitarian workers has various and often overlapping economic, criminal and political causes. Individual and organisational factors, such as the behaviour and nationality of individual staff, the quality of humanitarian programming and the source of donor funding, are also key factors determining the risk to humanitarian workers.

The research team found no clear evidence of a direct link between UN integration arrangements and attacks on humanitarian workers in the contexts reviewed. Nonetheless, most security analysts interviewed for this study agreed that, in particular environments, the association of humanitarian actors with political actors, including the UN, can be an additional risk factor. This association is particularly problematic in high-risk environments, where the UN mission is implementing a political mandate that is opposed or contested by one or more of the conflict parties, and where those parties are willing and able to distinguish between international actors. In these contexts, highly visible integration arrangements may blur this distinction and therefore pose an additional risk to the security of humanitarian personnel.

At the same time, however, integration arrangements can offer some security benefits. In DRC, certain integrated practices and coordination mechanisms have facilitated the use of mission assets to enhance the protection of UN, and to a degree non-UN, humanitarian staff. There are also some positive examples in the various cases reviewed of technical cooperation on security assessments and analysis that have been facilitated by UN integration arrangements.

Humanitarian access

In each of the three main case studies, humanitarian actors face serious challenges to accessing populations in need. Access is limited for a variety of reasons including bureaucratic impediments imposed by governments and non-state armed groups, logistical and infrastructure limitations, high levels of insecurity and restrictive operational security management measures.

In some cases, UN integration arrangements have supported increased access for UN and some non-UN humanitarian actors by facilitating the use of mission logistical assets, the provision of area security by UN peacekeeping forces and the use of UN military escorts. Humanitarian organisations, however, remain concerned about the use of UN military assets becoming the default option rather than a last resort in conflict contexts. There are also concerns that certain UN integration arrangements are related to a more risk-averse approach in UN operational security management policies and practices, which in turn impacts upon access for UN humanitarian actors and their partners. The extent of this relationship is unclear and requires further exploration.

Engagement with non-state armed actors

Humanitarian engagement by UN actors with non-state armed actors such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Shabaab in Somalia and certain groups in DRC is limited by a number of factors. The principal constraints to humanitarian engagement in these contexts include high levels of violence; the ideology, objectives, tactics and capabilities of non-state armed actors; and legal and bureaucratic restrictions imposed by donor and host governments, including in relation to counter-terrorism strategies. Many humanitarian actors, particularly in Afghanistan and DRC, are at a loss as to how to overcome these challenges.

The research team did not find evidence of official UN 'no contact' policies relating to humanitarian engagement in any of the contexts studied, or of a widespread practice of political interference in humanitarian engagement with non-state armed actors. However, there were some examples where individual UN mission leaders sought to limit such engagement when this was deemed to be detrimental to political objectives at a particular time. In one instance this had an operational impact, as well as undermining the relationship between humanitarian actors and the UN political or peacekeeping mission. There remains confusion within the humanitarian community, including amongst UN humanitarian actors, about the existence of 'no contact' policies in the UN, suggesting a need for greater clarity and leadership from the UN mission and UNCT to reinforce the importance of humanitarian engagement with all conflict parties. The research team did identify instances when UN political or peacekeeping missions shared information and analysis with UN humanitarian actors that helped facilitate engagement with non-state armed actors, but these were relatively limited and more could be done in this regard.

Perceptions of humanitarian actors

The perceptions of humanitarian actors by local stakeholders are extremely dynamic; they vary over time and location and are influenced by a number of factors. These perceptions are important as they determine the extent to which humanitarian actors can gain the acceptance that is necessary to access populations in need. Earning this acceptance is contingent upon acting in a manner that demonstrates that humanitarian organisations are distinct from and do not support political and military actors, and that they will provide assistance only on the basis of need. It also requires investment in good-quality programming,

transparency in identifying beneficiaries and engagement with all appropriate stakeholders.

It was not possible, within the scope of this study, to engage directly with local communities and non-state armed actors; therefore the analysis provided here is informed by the views of national and international respondents interviewed for this study and the secondary information available on this issue. How UN humanitarian actors are perceived is influenced by the manner in which the UN political or peacekeeping component is perceived. Although this is to some extent independent of the existence of UN integration, highly visible integration arrangements in particular contexts may exacerbate the perception that they are associated. It is therefore crucial that UN integration arrangements are determined by an informed understanding of how political, peacekeeping and humanitarian actors are perceived, and what influence UN integration arrangements may have in this regard. Although the issue of perception was a significant concern among both UN and NGO humanitarian staff interviewed for this study, there has been little discussion in UN integration policy fora on how to assess and analyse perceptions for planning and evaluation purposes, or how to otherwise mitigate or overcome tensions between stakeholders on this issue.

Humanitarian advocacy

Advocacy on behalf of populations in need is a key component of any humanitarian response and can be an effective means of achieving positive humanitarian outcomes. In the contexts reviewed for this study, humanitarian advocacy was subject to a range of limitations, including the capacity, ability and willingness of humanitarian and political actors to undertake such efforts, the attitude of host states and non-state armed actors and weaknesses in developing common positions among humanitarian actors.

The research team found that, in a number of contexts, UN integration arrangements have facilitated complementary advocacy efforts amongst UN humanitarian and UN peacekeeping and political actors. In a number of instances, these efforts have been effective in influencing external stakeholders on key issues such as the protection of civilians and humanitarian access. The extent to which the UN mission can be an effective advocate on humanitarian issues is largely determined by its relationship with advocacy targets and its leverage over them. The study also found instances where UN integration arrangements have strengthened the influence of humanitarian considerations in decision-making processes within the UN integrated presence.

There are examples where UN mission leadership or senior staff have sought to limit humanitarian advocacy when it was deemed to have a negative impact on political priorities. There are also instances where the UN mission leaderships' reluctance to augment advocacy by UN humanitarian actors undermined their ability to effectively influence advocacy targets. These cases mainly related to individual UN mission staff, and the research team did not find evidence of widespread practice in this regard.

Contextual factors affecting humanitarian space

This study also explored some of the key contextual factors affecting humanitarian space in the cases reviewed. Although existing guidance indicates that UN integration arrangements should be appropriate to the context in which they are operating, it does not articulate what variables present in the context should be taken into consideration when assessing how UN integration arrangements could positively or negatively impact upon humanitarian space. The research for this study indicates that the conflict and political environment; the historical role and mandate of the UN; and the way the humanitarian system itself operates are key contextual factors that may impact upon the relationship between UN integration arrangements and humanitarian space.

Conflict and the political environment

The nature and intensity of the conflict, and how this is analysed by the UN system and others, has a bearing on the extent to which UN integration arrangements affect humanitarian space. Moreover, the ability of humanitarian actors to provide assistance and protection to affected populations is highly dependent on the strategies and objectives of state and non-state actors, particularly their willingness or capacity to recognise humanitarian concerns and adhere to international humanitarian and human rights law. Finally, the geopolitical context and the agendas of international political actors can also significantly impact upon humanitarian space. Each of these factors should at minimum be assessed to identify whether and how proposed integrated arrangements could be designed and managed to prevent or mitigate any potential negative impact on humanitarian space, and ideally how they could create opportunities to realise potential benefits.

The historical role and mandate of the UN

The way the UN has acted in various contexts in the past is highly relevant to how it is perceived today, and to the impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space. The UN often has a long history of engagement in the contexts in which it intervenes. This legacy can impact upon levels of acceptance and support from different stakeholders.

UN mission and agency mandates and how they are implemented also have a significant impact on how the UN is perceived by national and international stakeholders, and this needs to be factored into any analysis of UN integration arrangements and humanitarian space. In contexts where the UN mission, and at times UN development agencies, are mandated to support the host state, peace agreements or electoral processes which have limited credibility amongst national stakeholders, UN integration arrangements may make

it more difficult for UN humanitarian actors and their partners to maintain perceptions of neutrality and impartiality.

Challenges related to the humanitarian system
Humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality are fundamental principles underpinning humanitarian action. In the contexts studied, however, adherence to humanitarian principles has been inconsistent and investment in acceptance strategies has often been weak. There is also a lack of consensus in this sector on how to manage the fact that some humanitarian organisations have multiple mandates (e.g. humanitarian, development and peacebuilding) in ongoing conflict environments. Too often there has been a failure to achieve consensus within the broader humanitarian community on key issues or standards relating to humanitarian principles in these complex environments. Protecting humanitarian space in UN integrated contexts requires greater consistency among humanitarian actors.

Conclusions and recommendations

The study found evidence that UN integration arrangements have had both positive and negative impact on humanitarian space. In order to prevent or mitigate the negative impact and to increase potential benefits to humanitarian space, more efforts are needed to ensure that the context determines the design of UN integration arrangements. This should be facilitated through a more comprehensive and inclusive assessment of the context and the various risk factors prevalent in it, including in relation to humanitarian space.

In high-risk environments, where the UN political or peacekeeping mandate and activities are challenged or contested, violent conflict is likely or ongoing and actors are able and willing to distinguish between humanitarian and other entities, greater caution in establishing certain integrated structures is required. Particular integration arrangements, such as the integration of OCHA into the mission or the creation of the triple-hat DSRSG/RC/HC function, may not be appropriate in such environments, and a more distinct identity for UN humanitarian programming and coordination may be necessary to ensure more effective operations. Irrespective of the extent of structural arrangements, strategic integration is deemed important in all contexts to ensure a more informed and coherent approach to the UN's objectives and to maximise the collective and individual impact of the UN presence.

The benefits of UN integration arrangements for humanitarian actors are most evident in relation to shared objectives between humanitarian, political and peacekeeping components, such as the protection of civilians and support to durable solutions for displaced populations. These shared objectives provide a common platform on which to build confidence and integration arrangements can assist in identifying the respective contributions that each component of the UN integrated presence can make in realising those objectives. It is important to ensure that the division of labour is based on the respective competencies of the various components of the UN, thereby avoiding duplication of effort and resources.

The benefits of integrated arrangements for humanitarian action in large part depend on effective leadership at all levels of the UN system. Decisions and risks must be informed, shared and supported by all leaders, from the Secretary-General and Under-Secretaries-General and heads of agencies, funds and programmes, down through all levels of management at headquarters and in the field. In particular, senior UN staff operating in UN integrated presences (in missions, in OCHA and in UN agencies) should have the appropriate skills and competencies to lead or support an effective humanitarian response, including the ability to manage and negotiate competing priorities.

Current guidance on UN integration should be amended to clarify how, in practical terms, integration arrangements should take account of humanitarian principles and allow for the protection of humanitarian space. This amended guidance should also specify the need for more consistent and strategic engagement from UN humanitarian actors in the design, implementation, monitoring and review of UN integration arrangements. The ISG should also develop a more streamlined package of policy and guidance and a more comprehensive dissemination strategy for all UN staff. Greater sensitisation of non-humanitarian UN staff on the operational relevance of humanitarian principles may also help mitigate the continuing tensions and disagreements that have arisen in relation to UN integration between UN and non-UN humanitarian staff and those from the UN political and peacekeeping community.

The importance of overcoming the tensions and disagreements related to integration is underscored by the fact that, in Afghanistan, some in the NGO community have begun withdrawing from UN humanitarian coordination mechanisms, and some are threatening to do so in other contexts, most notably Somalia, unless UN integration arrangements are seen to be better protecting humanitarian space. This could have serious operational implications for UN agencies, which rely on NGO partners for delivery in these contexts.

This study sets out more detailed recommendations for managing the relationship between UN integration and humanitarian space in each of the areas analysed in the study. If UN integration is to be successful, UN leadership, and particularly the ISG which commissioned this study, must consider how its members can implement these recommendations in practice and build confidence and trust among the humanitarian (UN and non-UN) and political/peacekeeping communities, both at the HQ level and in the field.

Chapter 1
Introduction

In June 2008, the United Nations Secretary-General (SG) reaffirmed that 'integration' is the guiding policy for all conflict and post-conflict situations where the UN has a Country Team and a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation or political mission/office (Secretary-General Decision No. 2008/24 (SG Decision 2008 – see Annex 1).[1] Noting the concerns expressed by many in the humanitarian community, the SG Decision of 2008 also stated that integration arrangements 'can yield significant benefits for humanitarian operations … should take full account of recognised humanitarian principles, allow for the protection of humanitarian space, and facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors' (UN, 2008: para i (e)). Intense debate has, however, continued within both the UN system and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on whether UN integration supports or undermines humanitarian space.[2] This debate has tended to focus on principled arguments rather than an analysis of empirical evidence. In order to address this, in its meeting of 12 March 2010 the UN Integration Steering Group (ISG) agreed on the need for an independent analytical study to assess the impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space based on evidence collected at the country level.[3] The decision was welcomed by the IASC and the various consortia of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

In January 2011, on behalf of the ISG, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) and the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) commissioned the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at the Overseas Development Institute and the Stimson Center to jointly undertake this study, noting their research and policy expertise in the fields of humanitarian action and peacekeeping, respectively. The research team comprised HPG Research Fellows Victoria Metcalfe and Samir Elhawary, and Alison Giffen, Research Fellow at the Stimson Center.

1.1 Structure of the report

This report is structured as follows. Chapter 2 begins with an introduction to the concept and policy of UN integration at the strategic level and outlines how the policy has evolved. Chapter 3 provides an overview of how the concept and policy of UN integration is understood and implemented in the field. Chapter 4 assesses how integration arrangements in the various contexts have impacted upon humanitarian space, either positively or negatively. Chapter 5 identifies additional factors that impact humanitarian space and which should be taken into consideration when assessing the impact of UN integration arrangements. Chapter 6 offers conclusions on the impact of UN integration on humanitarian space in relation to the evidence collected, and highlights headquarter and field experiences that have yielded positive practice in terms of supporting humanitarian space. This final section also proposes steps that stakeholders could take to more effectively manage the risks and maximise the opportunities of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space.

1.2 Methodology

The research for this study used both qualitative and (where available) quantitative data. It included an initial review of existing literature and available data pertaining to UN integration and humanitarian space generally, and consultations with key UN actors and international NGOs. Three primary case studies were then selected, in consultation with the ISG, IASC and the research team – Somalia (UNPOS), the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and Afghanistan (UNAMA). The case studies were selected using a number of criteria, including: contexts in which debates about the impact of UN integration were ongoing; geographic and contextual diversity; the presence of different types of integration arrangements; different mission types (political, peacekeeping); and the agreement of the UN mission and agency senior managers in the field to participate in the study.

Although the research team considered the entire history of the UN integrated presence in each of these cases, the primary focus was on the period from the SG Decision of 2008 to the present. Field trips were undertaken to Afghanistan, DRC and Kenya (for Somalia) between May and July 2011. In both DRC and Afghanistan, the research team was able to make a short visit to field locations (Bunia and Goma in DRC; Jalalabad in Afghanistan). Additional interviews were conducted with key stakeholders via telephone, including a number of former Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) and Deputy Special Representatives of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators (DSRSG/RC/HCs).

The research team also undertook a limited desk review of additional UN integrated presences in Liberia (UNMIL, 2003–2008), the Central African Republic (BONUCA/BINUCA, 2008–11) and Darfur (UNMIS, 2005–2007). These reviews were

1 The Decision listed 19 UN missions in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Europe and the Americas. Uganda, Nepal and Chad are no longer UN integrated contexts due to the draw-down of the missions and the situations in Libya and South Sudan have subsequently become UN integrated presences, bringing the current total to 18.

2 The IASC is an inter-agency forum for coordination, policy development and decision-making involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian actors. It was established in 1992 and endorsed in UN General Assembly Resolution 48/57 in 1993.

3 The ISG comprises DPKO, DFS, DPA, OCHA, PBSO, OHCHR, DOCO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR and WFP.

complemented by telephone interviews with key stakeholders. The purpose of these reviews was to supplement data collected from the three main case studies.

Over the course of the study, the research team conducted over 150 semi-structured interviews (one-on-one and group interviews) with staff from DPKO, DPA, UN agencies, international NGOs, national NGOs, independent experts, national authorities and donors. In order to encourage frank and open discussions interviews were confidential, and interviewees were advised that there would be no attribution in the report. A list of research questions (available on request) was used by the research team to guide the interviews.

A number of challenges were encountered during this study, including the limited availability of quantitative data on many of the issues covered. In addition, the terms of reference were developed by the ISG and required the research team to document the positive and negative impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space. The terms of reference did not however allow for comparison between UN integration and non-integrated contexts. The field work was restricted to an average of ten days per case, with time available for interviews further limited by movement restrictions related to the security situation in some of the contexts studied. The research team did not conduct interviews with affected communities or with non-state armed actors due to security and time restrictions. A small number of interviews were conducted with government officials in Afghanistan and DRC. As such this report does not offer a comprehensive analysis of how humanitarian actors are perceived by national stakeholders and the extent to which these perceptions are influenced by UN integration arrangements. The analysis provided in relation to this issue is based on available perceptions surveys, secondary information provided by national NGOs and national staff of international organisations and other available primary data including press releases and press statements issued by state and non-state armed actors.

Box 1: Objectives of the study

As per the terms of reference (Annex 2), the objectives of this study are as follows:

- Analyse HQ and field practices in an effort to document the positive and negative impacts of integration arrangements on humanitarian space.
- Identify practices whereby integrated approaches have yielded significant benefits to humanitarian operations, and conversely where they have negatively affected humanitarian operations.
- Establish a shared understanding of concerns related to integration and humanitarian space.
- Make recommendations towards the improved management of the positive and negative impacts of integration arrangements on humanitarian space.

Prior to finalising the report, extensive consultations were undertaken to discuss the draft findings and recommendations. This process included group consultations with the ISG (working level), the IASC and NGO consortia in Geneva, New York and Washington DC. A draft of the report was also circulated for comment to all current DSRSG/RC/HCs as well as DPKO, DPA, OCHA, UN agency and NGO stakeholders at UN headquarters and in the field in the country studies concerned. As the commissioning body, the ISG (principals level) was consulted on a revised version of findings and recommendations. All comments received were reviewed and considered in the final draft of the report.

1.3 Terminology

For the purposes of this study, the term 'UN integration' refers to efforts to 'maximise the individual and collective impact of the UN's response'. As articulated in the SG Decision of 2008, it is the 'guiding principle for all conflict and post-conflict situations where the UN has a Country Team and a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation or political mission/office, whether or not these presences are structurally integrated'.[4] The defining elements of integration are explored in Chapter 2.

There is no commonly accepted definition of 'humanitarian space', even within the IASC.[5] However, for the purposes of this study the ISG asked the research team to focus on five priority areas:

- The security of humanitarian workers.
- Access to and of beneficiaries.
- The ability of humanitarians to interact with non-state armed groups.
- Perceptions of humanitarian actors among beneficiaries, states and non-state actors.
- Humanitarian advocacy or 'humanitarian voice'.

A number of other terms used in this study also merit definition. The core principles of humanitarian action, humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence will be used frequently. These terms are generally taken to mean the following (see for example OCHA, 2003; OCHA, 2010; IFRC/ICRC, 1996):

- *Humanity:* the provision of humanitarian assistance wherever it is needed and in a manner that respects and protects the dignity and rights of the individual.

4 This refers to country-specific political missions and does not, therefore, include UN political offices with regional mandates such as the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and the UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA).

5 The concept of humanitarian space has been subject to many interpretations, including the physical access that international aid agencies and their partners have to populations in need; the space aid agencies require to enable them to adhere to the core principles of humanitarian action; the nature of the 'operating environment' that agencies work in, particularly security conditions; and the ability of populations themselves to access assistance and protection (HPG, 2010).

- *Impartiality:* the provision of humanitarian assistance without discrimination among recipients and guided solely by needs, with priority given to the most urgent cases of distress.
- *Neutrality:* the provision of humanitarian assistance without engaging in hostilities or taking sides in controversies of a political, religious or ideological nature.
- *Independence:* the provision of humanitarian assistance in a manner that is autonomous from the political, economic, military or other objectives of any actor engaged in the areas where humanitarian action is being undertaken.

'*Impartiality*' is also one of the three basic principles[6] of international peacekeeping, though it has a different meaning in such contexts. The 2008 United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines (the Capstone Doctrine) describe impartiality as follows:

> *United Nations peacekeeping operations must implement their mandate without favour or prejudice to any party. Impartiality is crucial to maintaining the consent and cooperation of the main parties, but should not be confused with neutrality or inactivity. United Nations peacekeepers should be impartial in their dealings with the parties to the conflict, but not neutral in the execution of their mandate* (UN DPKO DFS, 2008).

In this regard, 'not neutral' means 'not condon[ing] actions by the parties that violate the undertakings of the peace process or the international norms and principles that a [United Nations] peacekeeping operation upholds' (*ibid.*).

DPA-led UN Political Missions currently do not have guiding principles like those outlined in the Capstone Doctrine, though a recent independent review suggests that impartiality should be included in any future development of principles. The review stated that the UN political mission should operate in a way that engenders trust and allows the mission to serve as an 'honest broker among all parties and deliver tough messages when necessary'.[7] A 'political mission cannot be seen as serving the agenda of any party to a conflict, outside actor, or special interest' (Gowan, 2010).

6 Three basic principles have long served as a foundation for UN peacekeeping operations. They include consent of the parties (strategic consent is required by the main parties of a conflict to deploy and operate a UN peacekeeping operation), non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate, and impartiality (UN DPKO DFS, 2008).

7 Like the Capstone Doctrine, the review asserts that impartiality 'does not mean neutrality in the sense of passivity or equal treatment of all parties in the face of abuses' (Gowan, 2010).

Chapter 2
UN integration: concept and policy

Following the end of the Cold War, UN Member States began to search for more effective responses to intra-state conflicts. Starting in the late 1980s, the UN Security Council increasingly authorised multi-dimensional peacekeeping missions combining political, military and civilian actions to support transitions to independence or from war to peace. In 1997, the concept of 'integration' was introduced by the Secretary-General to reflect evolving practice on the ground. It aspired to ensure a higher degree of coherence among UN entities to help achieve these ambitious peacekeeping and peacebuilding goals. This chapter provides an overview of the UN's pursuit of coherence and the evolution of the concept of UN integration.

2.1 Origins and introduction (1990s)

The UN emerged from the Cold War as a central mechanism for preventing and resolving conflicts. It assumed this responsibility by more broadly engaging in conflict-affected countries, many of which were characterised by large-scale violence against civilians and humanitarian crises. The Security Council began authorising a surge in the number and scale of UN missions. Unlike the 'first generation' of peacekeeping – consisting of missions primarily deployed to monitor ceasefires or maintain buffer zones – UN operations were being tasked with the ambitious goal of managing transitions from war to sustainable peace (Eide et al., 2005). In pursuit of this goal, missions became more multidimensional in their mandates and approach, expected to simultaneously draw on political, military and civilian capacities. This included military, police and civilian components within missions and closer cooperation with the UN Country Team (UNCT) in relevant areas.

Tensions emerged between UN actors involved in these multidimensional presences, for example around the prioritisation of shorter-term political and peacekeeping objectives over the longer-term objectives of development agencies (Minear, 1997: 54).[8] Meanwhile, a lack of political will to effectively engage in some contexts saw humanitarian action substituting for greater political and/or military involvement, such as in Bosnia and Rwanda. These tensions and shortcomings were believed to result from the absence of a coherent strategy to sequence and manage interventions. The need for coherence was highlighted in Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 1995 *Supplement to the Agenda for Peace*, and was also a central finding of the 1996 *Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda*. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's 1997 report *Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform* reinforced the message, calling for 'unity of purpose' and recognising the need to 'act coherently' both at headquarters and in the field (UN, 1997).

The experiences of the 1990s also demonstrated to the humanitarian community the potential of humanitarian action to fuel or sustain conflict, and led to a new concern to 'do no harm'. There was a perception that the nature of conflict was changing, and that humanitarian organisations were ill-equipped for the challenges associated with 'complex emergencies' (Kaldor, 1999; Duffield, 2001). There was subsequently much debate and discussion on the need to integrate humanitarian action with military, diplomatic, political and commercial interventions (Macrae and Leader, 2000; CHD, 2003). Whilst there was no consensus on the ideal relationship between humanitarian action and other policy spheres, there was a general acceptance that complex emergencies required more comprehensive (and ultimately political) solutions than the simple provision of relief.

2.2 Articulating the policy and early implementation (1998–2004)

Early examples of 'integrated' arrangements preceded the introduction of the term 'integration' in 1997. For example, in UNTAG (Namibia, 1989–90), an Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) (UN, 2001a). The first instance of a combined DSRSG/RC/HC was in UNMIH in Haiti in 1994 (UN, 1996). During the 1990s and early 2000s the UN Secretariat began to reflect these practices – many originating in the field – in policy, and spearheaded several reforms to foster greater coherence within the UN system. One such policy articulated the leadership responsibilities of the SRSG, who was given the 'authority and the responsibility to establish the political framework for, and provide overarching leadership to, the UN team in country' (UN, 2000b).[9] Strategic frameworks were introduced in some countries to link the UN's political, humanitarian and development actors into one coherent strategy (Macrae and Leader, 2000). In Afghanistan (1998) and then in Sierra Leone (2000), the process sought to translate the lessons from the 1990s into practice and

8 Minear (1997) gives an example of the Secretary-General overruling UNDP and FAO recommendations for a longer-term timetable for land transfers in El Salvador in favour of the shorter-term political objectives of the UN Observer Mission (ONUSAL), including relieving fiscal and political pressure on the Salvadoran government. A similar example relates to UNTAC in Cambodia.

9 The 2000 Guidance also specifies the following: 'The SRSG/RSG will be responsible for giving political guidance to the overall UN presence as well as providing the impetus for a coordinated and coherent approach by all the UN components in the country. The RC/HC will be responsible for the coordination of development and humanitarian operations. The SRSG/RSG will chair a regular inter-agency meeting at which the political, humanitarian, human rights and development situations will be reviewed. The SRSG/RSG and the RC/HC will copy all relevant substantive communications to one another as necessary.'

ensure that political and humanitarian programmes were 'informed by and informed' each other (CHD, 2003). An alternative approach to developing common strategic plans for UN integrated presences, known as the Integrated Mission Concept, was first implemented in Kosovo in 1999, where one of the pillars of UNMIK was led by UNHCR and oversaw the humanitarian response.[10]

The *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (UN 2000a, also known as the Brahimi Report) reflected on these early initiatives and proposed additional ways to harness UN resources for peace consolidation, including the creation of Integrated Mission Task Forces (IMTFs). IMTFs were intended to serve as a standard vehicle for integrated planning and support to specific peace operations. The mechanism was first established to support planning for Afghanistan in October 2001, and was used in the planning of subsequent integrated peace support operations (Eide et al., 2005). In 2001, the second DSRSG/RC/HC position was created (in Sierra Leone). This 'triple hat' function was 'expected to serve as the principal interface between the mission and the UN Country Team' (UN, 2006a). Humanitarian offices or pillars were integrated into missions under the lead of UNHCR or DHA[11] (e.g. in UNTAG, ONUMOZ and UNMIK); these developments were the earliest and most visible expressions of integration arrangements. These practices continued with the integration of OCHA[12] offices into the UN mission in UNAMA in Afghanistan in 2002, and UNMIL in Liberia in 2004.

As discussed further in Chapter 3, the structural link between the mission and the HC function has been contentious, however, because the role of the HC and of OCHA is to provide coordination and services for the broader humanitarian community – beyond the UN humanitarian system. HCs are appointed by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), in consultation with the IASC, when a new emergency arises or when an existing one escalates.[13] The HC represents the wider humanitarian community (UN and non-UN humanitarian actors) and is 'responsible for leading and coordinating humanitarian action of relevant organisations in country with a view to ensuring that it is principled, timely, effective and efficient, and contributes to longer-term recovery' (IASC, 2009).[14] Some humanitarian actors, particularly non-UN, have raised concerns about the practice of combining the HC role with both the RC function[15] (IASC, 2005) and, relevant to this study, the DSRSG role. They have also asserted that the DSRSG role adds additional political responsibilities and reporting lines that humanitarian actors need to distance themselves from, particularly in conflict situations, in order to maintain their independence and neutrality. Similarly, when OCHA is integrated inside the mission, many non-UN humanitarian actors feel that its services are subsumed under an umbrella that includes political and developmental objectives. They have subsequently expressed concern that their participation in UN humanitarian coordination mechanisms in these instances can then be connected to and affected by UN development or political processes and decision-making, something which would not occur with a separate OCHA office.

2.3 Review, revision and context-driven implementation (2005–2011)

In 2005, an independent assessment of UN integration (Eide et al., 2005) was commissioned by the Expanded Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) Core Group.[16] This influenced a series of guidance notes that aimed to improve the effectiveness of UN integration and determine its most appropriate form in different circumstances, including how best to manage the interface between peacekeeping, humanitarian action and development.

One of the key pieces of guidance was the 2006 guidelines on the Integrated Missions Planning Process (IMPP). In contrast to the previous emphasis on structural integration, these guidelines highlighted the critical principle of 'form follows function', whereby 'structure is derived from an in-depth understanding of the specific country setting; of the evolving security, political, humanitarian, human rights and development imperatives in that particular country; and of the particular mix of assets and capacities available and/or required to achieve the desired

10 The Integrated Mission concept is described as 'a common strategic plan and a shared understanding of the priorities and types of programme interventions that need to be undertaken at various stages of the recovery process' that would seek to 'maximize the UN system's contribution to peacebuilding in countries emerging from conflict' (Annan, quoted in De Coning, 2007).

11 The Department for Humanitarian Affairs (DHA) was established by the Secretary-General in 1993 to support the newly created post of Emergency Relief Coordinator and Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs.

12 In 1998, the DHA was reformed as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). OCHA's mandate includes the coordination of humanitarian response, policy development and humanitarian advocacy.

13 The first Humanitarian Coordinator was appointed in 1992 by the Secretary-General to coordinate the humanitarian system in Somalia. The IASC formalised the role in 1994 (IASC, 1994).

14 Revised TORs for HCs were issued in 2003, and most recently in 2009. The 2009 TOR presents a narrower mandate for the HC role than previous IASC guidelines. The 2003 Revised TOR details the HC's reporting, management and coordination functions, specifically highlighting the HC's role in ensuring a comprehensive response to internal displacement and strategic coordination functions such as contingency planning, advocacy, promoting humanitarian accountability and cooperating with entities tasked with reconstruction activities (IASC, 2003). The 2009 TOR sets out a more limited set of responsibilities related to specific tools of humanitarian preparedness and response such as the CHAP, cluster system and funding pools (IASC, 2009).

15 Often the role is assigned to the existing Resident Coordinator, creating an RC/HC. In some instances a standalone HC may be appointed or a UN agency may be designated as the lead in a humanitarian response, in which case the head of that agency is appointed as the HC.

16 The Secretary-General created the ECHA to enhance coordination between UN agencies in various humanitarian sectors. The ECHA is chaired by the Under-Secretary-General of Humanitarian Affairs; it 'brings together UN humanitarian agencies and the political, peacekeeping and security departments of the UN Secretariat to address issues related to humanitarian crises'. See http://ochaonline.un.org/ocha2005/Pt%20II%20iasc.htm. The ECHA Expanded Core Group comprises DPKO, DPA, OCHA, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR and WFP.

impact through mutually supportive action' (UN, 2006b: 3). The guidelines revised the mission planning process to facilitate greater engagement of UN humanitarian agencies in decisions on integrated arrangements. ECHA and the UN Development Group were consulted on these guidelines, and agreed to establish standing capacity to engage with DPKO in mission planning at UN headquarters and in the field.

Also in 2006, the SG issued a Guidance Note on Integrated Missions. This further defined the roles and responsibilities of the SRSG and the DSRSG/RC/HC, describing the SRSG as 'the senior UN Representative in the country', with 'overall authority over the activities of the United Nations' (UN, 2006a). The Guidance Note outlines the SRSG's responsibility to foster inter-agency coordination through existing and new forums. Of particular note to this study, the Guidance Note states that 'the SRSG will uphold humanitarian principles (as outlined in GA 46/182) in the implementation of the mission's mandate and support the creation of an effective humanitarian operating environment' (UN, 2006a: para 10). The Guidance Note also makes clear that the DSRSG/RC/HC, under the SRSG's overall lead, retains the coordination roles inherent in his/her RC and HC roles and that he/she has a secondary reporting line to the UNDP Administrator and ERC in these capacities.

Much of the debate surrounding integration up until 2008 focused on the role of the DSRSG/RC/HC, and whether OCHA was inside or outside the political or peacekeeping mission. This, many believed, distracted discussions at HQ and in the field away from a much-needed focus on achieving coherence and greater collective impact through a shared vision and common objectives (HPG and Stimson, 2011). In an effort to clarify and consolidate pre-existing guidance on integration, the Secretary-General issued Decision No. 2008/24 in 2008, following the recommendation of his Policy Committee. This Decision included several important developments.

First, the SG Decision stated that the purpose of UN integration was to 'maximize the individual and collective impact of the UN's response, concentrating on those activities required to consolidate peace'. Coherence became subordinated to this overall purpose, rather than being an end in itself. Second, it explained that UN integration should be applied in *both* conflict *and* post-conflict settings. Although in practice integrated arrangements had been applied in conflict contexts, previous guidance referred only to 'post-conflict' settings; as such, the new language reflected realities on the ground. Third, integration was explained as applying to *all* contexts in which there was a UN country-specific political or peacekeeping mission and a UN Country Team. This was an important clarification, as the language used in the 2006 IMPP guidelines and the SG's 2006 Guidance Note had led to the misconception that integration applied only to DPKO-led mission contexts. Fourth, integration was clearly linked to the UN's efforts towards peace consolidation, rather than encompassing all UN activities, including purely humanitarian ones. This has shifted the emphasis towards integrating UN mission and development activities which are seen as critical to consolidating peace, such as institution-building and early recovery efforts. Life-saving humanitarian activities are now seen as largely outside the scope of activities aimed towards peace consolidation – and therefore integration mechanisms such as the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF – see Chapter 3.2.3).

The SG Decision also sought to clarify minimum standards or requirements for UN integration. It indicated that 'there should be an effective strategic partnership' between the UN mission and the UNCT under the leadership of the SRSG. The SG Decision stated that this should be achieved through the development of shared objectives, closely aligned planning and agreed results, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. These minimum requirements are referred to as 'strategic' integration throughout this report. The SG Decision also re-emphasised the principle of flexibility in the country-level structural arrangements that should be established to support strategic integration.

Box 2: The Secretary-General's Policy Decision No. 2008/24

The Secretary-General's Policy Decision No. 2008/24 outlines four defining elements of a UN integrated presence:

- The main purpose of integration is to 'maximize the individual and collective impact of the UN's response, concentrating on those activities required to consolidate peace'.
- An effective strategic partnership should exist between the UN mission/office and UN Country Team under the leadership of the SRSG to ensure that 'all components … are operating in a coherent and mutually supportive manner, and in close collaboration with other partners', such as INGOs and host governments.
- Country-level arrangements can take different structural forms, but all integrated presences should include a shared objective, closely aligned or integrated planning, agreed results and agreed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation among UN components.
- UN integration arrangements can 'yield significant benefits for humanitarian operations' and should 'take full account of recognized humanitarian principles, allow for the protection of humanitarian space, and facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors'.

The provision that UN integration arrangements 'should take full account of recognised humanitarian principles, allow for the protection of humanitarian space and facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors' is of particular relevance to this study. It is an acknowledgement that tensions can emerge between the UN's responsibilities related to humanitarian action and its support to peacekeeping and

peace-building, and that these tensions need to be managed. It also makes clear that integration arrangements should not subordinate humanitarian concerns but 'take full account' of them instead. Although not explicitly stated, this could be viewed as an implied minimum requirement for the consideration of humanitarian action in UN integrated arrangements. The statement in the SG Decision that integration arrangements 'can yield significant benefits for humanitarian operations' does not suggest that integrated arrangements and decision-making will always prioritise or benefit humanitarian action.

In 2009, UN humanitarian and development actors joined DPKO and DPA in updating the IMPP guidance to outline the role of UN headquarters in implementing the SG Decision No. 2008/24, and in 2009 and 2010 further guidance was developed to explain the role and responsibilities of field staff (mission and UNCT) in implementing the SG Decision (UN, 2009c; 2010a).[17] Also in 2009, OCHA developed a policy instruction on 'OCHA's Structural Relationships within an Integrated UN Presence' to complement the SG Decision (OCHA, 2009). This sought to address some of the concerns within the humanitarian community regarding the impact of UN integration on humanitarian coordination functions. The policy instruction stated that '[t]here is nothing inherent in the concept of an integrated UN presence that is contrary to humanitarian principles'. It also explained that the relationship of the HC and OCHA to the integrated UN presence should be determined by a 'careful analysis of the political and security contexts, and three additional and related factors: the role of non-UN humanitarian actors; the role of national authorities; and the likely external perceptions of the peacekeeping or political mission within an integrated presence'. On that basis, the policy instruction outlined three possible models for this relationship:

- *One foot in and one foot out*: A DSRSG/RC/HC is appointed, but OCHA maintains a clearly identifiable presence outside the mission. This is considered appropriate for situations in flux, and is the default relationship.
- *Two feet out*: Includes a clearly identifiable OCHA presence outside the UN mission and an RC/HC role separate from the UN peacekeeping or political mission. This approach is appropriate for exceptionally unstable situations.
- *Two feet in*: A DSRSG/RC/HC is appointed and an OCHA office is integrated into the UN mission. This is appropriate for stable, post-conflict settings.

The 2009 OCHA policy instruction represented a step forward because it recognised the complexity of conflict and post-conflict settings and noted the importance of considering other factors beyond simply the status of the conflict in determining structural arrangements. However, the policy instruction only addressed the position of the HC and OCHA in the UN integrated presence. As will be explored in Chapter 3, structural arrangements established to support strategic integration are related to more than just these two functions.

In May 2011, Secretary-General Decision No. 2011/10 'strongly reaffirm[ed] the principle of integration' and re-emphasised the importance of strategic-level integration, which it said should be achieved through a shared vision of the UN's strategic objectives (UN, 2011a). This Decision also restated that 'country level arrangements can take different structural forms, reflecting the specific requirements and circumstances'. It also reflected the commitment of the ISG principals to 'ensure more consistent and effective implementation within their own department/agency' by sending clear messages and guidance to staff at headquarters and in the field, and articulated that the ISF should be 'embedded in core strategic processes, such as resource allocation and mandated reporting'. The SG Decision also stated that 'delivery against ISF priorities will also form an element of major accountability mechanisms, including but not limited to SRSG Compacts and Reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council'.

17 These guidelines were developed by an inter-departmental and inter-agency IMPP Working Group convened by DPKO.

Chapter 3
UN integration in practice

This chapter outlines how the concept of UN integration is understood and implemented in practice *specifically* as this relates to humanitarian space. The focus is on the three main case studies (Afghanistan, DRC and Somalia – see Boxes 3, 4 and 5 for summaries of the country contexts), though this analysis also draws on the experiences of UN integration in the three desk review contexts (CAR (2008–11), Darfur (2005–2007) and Liberia (2003–2008)).

The research for the study has identified a number of factors affecting both how the concept of UN integration is understood, and how it is implemented in practice with regard to the protection of humanitarian space. These factors include a general lack of awareness on the part of some UN and non-UN staff of the content of the policy on UN integration, including as it relates to humanitarian space; limited ownership by some UN agency and OCHA staff of the policy more broadly; limited understanding amongst some DPKO and DPA staff of, or appreciation for, the operational relevance of humanitarian principles; a lack of transparency in decision-making processes which impact on humanitarian considerations; and a general lack of accountability for non-compliance with the policy on UN integration, including the provisions relating to humanitarian space.

These factors are interconnected – limited understanding of the provisions relating to humanitarian space, for example, has resulted in problems in implementation, which in turn have reinforced perceptions amongst some humanitarian staff that UN integration subordinates humanitarian priorities to political concerns. The implementation of the policy is itself affected by the polarised positions of the various communities of actors involved, undermining the spirit in which UN integration is meant to be pursued and often obscuring the potential benefits which UN integration arrangements can offer in some contexts.

3.1 Understanding of the concept and policy

Most UN staff (mission, OCHA and agencies) interviewed in this study generally understood that the main purpose of UN integration was to increase coherence within the UN system aimed at maximising the individual and collective impact of the UN system towards peace consolidation. However, beyond this basic familiarity with the concept there was often a limited understanding and awareness of the details of the policy and guidance on implementation. In general, awareness of the concept and policies was lower amongst UN staff in the field than among those at HQ, and those outside the UN system (including NGOs, UN Member States and donors) had, not

Box 3: Afghanistan

Between 1992 and 1996, regional countries sponsored various Afghan factions in an increasingly violent civil war. The Taliban emerged in 1994 and quickly gained power and territory. By 1996, when they entered Kabul, the Taliban were in control of more than half the country. The Taliban were accused of harbouring al-Qaeda in the wake of the September 11 attacks, prompting a US-led intervention in 2001. The end of Taliban rule was formalised with the 2001 Bonn Agreement, which was endorsed by the UN Security Council and created a transitional government and an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul. However, the agreement excluded key powerbrokers, including members of the Taliban and other Pashtun leaders. Meanwhile, continued conflict spurred greater international military intervention. NATO assumed the leadership of ISAF in 2003, which was later tasked with creating a secure and stable environment, supporting reconstruction and development and strengthening governance and the rule of law across Afghanistan. Conflict intensified further in 2006, with the insurgency spreading across the country. Failure to defeat the insurgency, coupled with domestic pressure among NATO countries to withdraw, has prompted a rethink of the international community's strategy. There are now attempts to broker a negotiated end to the conflict with the Taliban ahead of the planned withdrawal of international troops beginning in 2014.

UNAMA, which was established in 2002, was originally intended to have a 'light footprint'. However, in 2008 and 2009, following a major shift in the international coalition strategy in the country, the mandate was significantly broadened to include leading international civilian efforts to support the Afghan government and to facilitate greater political outreach to Afghan leaders. In the latest iteration of its mandate, UNAMA is to 'monitor the situation of civilians, to coordinate efforts to ensure their protection, to promote accountability, and to assist in the full implementation of the fundamental freedoms and human rights provisions of the Afghan Constitution'. It continues to be mandated 'to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, in support of the Afghan Government and in accordance with humanitarian principles, with a view to building the capacity of the Government so it can assume the central and coordinating role in the future' (UN, 2011b). Security Council Resolution 1974 also reiterates 'the synergies in the objectives of UNAMA and of ISAF' and the importance of 'a comprehensive approach in addressing the challenges in Afghanistan to successful transition to Afghan security leadership' (UN, 2011b). ISAF is mandated to 'work in close consultation' with the UN (UN, 2003a). UNAMA is also now tasked to support national reconciliation efforts, including with the Taliban.

Box 4: Democratic Republic of Congo

Between 1996 and 2003 DRC experienced two wars. In the first (1996–97), the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, with the backing of Rwandan and Ugandan troops, ended the 30-year rule of Mobutu Sese Seko; the second (1997–2003) involved a number of African governments and armed actors. Although several ceasefire and peace agreements were signed between 1999 and 2003 conflict continued, with various domestic and foreign armed groups resisting disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DRR) efforts and re-forming into formidable rebel groups, often supported by neighbouring governments and the profits from illicit resource extraction. National elections were held in 2006; however, there are allegations of corruption within the government, the national security forces are implicated in violence against civilians and a lack of infrastructure and government services contributes to poor humanitarian indicators. Many parts of DRC remain plagued by violence against civilians, including conflict-related sexual violence, and there are approximately 1.7 million conflict-related IDPs. National elections were underway in November 2011 as this report was being finalised.

The UN Security Council approved a small observer and protection force, MONUC, in 1999. As insecurity persisted MONUC's mandate evolved and its numbers increased, eventually becoming one of the UN's largest multidimensional peacekeeping operations. Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter the mission was mandated to use force to protect civilians, first in Eastern DRC and then across the entire country. Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) military operations in the East during 2009, some undertaken with MONUC support, resulted in large-scale displacement. During 2010 the DRC government pressed for the drawdown and exit of MONUC, and nearly 1,700 troops have been withdrawn. MONUC has also been renamed the UN Stabilisation Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), to reflect a greater focus on stabilisation and transition in addition to its priority task of civilian protection.

Under Security Council Resolution 1991 of 2011, MONUSCO's future configuration is dependent in part on the DRC government and MONUSCO achieving the following objectives: '(a) The completion of the ongoing military operations in the Kivus and Orientale Province, resulting in reducing to a minimum the threat from armed groups and restoring stability in sensitive areas'; and '(b) An improved capacity of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to effectively protect the population through the establishment of professional, accountable and sustainable security forces with a view to progressively taking over MONUSCO's security role' (UN, 2011d). Implementation of the mandate has involved supporting the FARDC in line with the human rights due diligence policy on UN support to non-UN security forces (formerly referred to as the conditionality policy), and support for the electoral process.

Box 5: Somalia

Somalia is in a protracted state of collapse. The end of the Mohamed Siad Barre regime in 1991 marked the start of two decades of civil war, clan conflict and foreign interventions. The Security Council authorised the deployment of a DPA-led political mission, UNPOS, in 1995. Established in Nairobi, UNPOS initially concentrated on monitoring political developments, with minimal engagement in the country. International interest increased following the attacks on the United States in 2001 and the emergence in Somalia of an Islamist insurgency, prompting an Ethiopian military occupation, the deployment of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), direct US counter-terrorism operations and international support for the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Following the Djibouti Peace Agreement of 2008, signed by the government and a faction of the opposition, UNPOS was asked to support the agreement's implementation and to assist in recovery and development efforts. However, fighting has persisted between the TFG and AMISOM and a hard-line faction of the Islamist insurgency, al-Shabaab. Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation has continued to deteriorate, compounded by the emergence of famine in 2011 in many areas of the South.

UNPOS' current mandate is based on Security Council Resolution 1863 of 2009 (most recently reinforced by Security Council Resolution 2010 (UN 2011f)). UNPOS is tasked with strengthening the capacity and reach of the TFG. The UN, specifically UNSOA, is also tasked with supporting AMISOM (authorised by UN Security Council Resolution 1744 (UN, 2007), which is taking a lead in the fighting against al-Shabaab and protecting the TFG in Mogadishu. AMISOM is also mandated to protect UN personnel.

surprisingly, a more limited understanding of the concept, its origins and related policies.[18] Few DPKO, DPA, OCHA or UN agency staff (with the exception of those at HQ who were working on these issues directly) were aware of the main policies related to integration, including the SG Decisions of 2008 and 2011 and their provisions on the protection of humanitarian space. Many staff were also unaware that the policy has evolved in part to manage the tensions between UN humanitarian and political/peacekeeping objectives, or that the policy focuses on UN activities aimed at peace consolidation and that UN lifesaving humanitarian activities largely fall outside of this.

In the contexts reviewed in this study, there was often a lack of understanding amongst UN mission, UN agency and NGO staff

18 This was also a finding of the 2005 Independent Study Commissioned by the Expanded UN ECHA Core Group (Eide et al., 2005).

of what exactly the policy on UN integration arrangements entails. Many were unaware that strategic integration is a minimum requirement and that UN integration arrangements should vary in form and be appropriate to the context and the strategies being pursued (as explained in Chapter 2). With respect to country-level arrangements, there was a common assumption that this referred to the DSRSG/RC/HC function or the location of the OCHA office within the mission, rather than a broad spectrum of arrangements including strategic internal coordination mechanisms and structurally integrated offices and support units. Similarly, the principle of 'form follows function' was often understood as meaning that the DSRSG/RC/HC role was only applicable to post-conflict contexts. Stakeholders in Somalia were more aware of the concept of strategic integration, largely because there has been significant advocacy and high-level policy debate on this issue in recent years.[19] Even so, staff interviewed from UNPOS, OCHA, UN agencies and NGOs still tended to consider integration as two separate operational models – *strategic* and *structural* integration.

There were also challenges relating to understanding of the concept between UN mission and UN and non-UN humanitarian staff. Some UN humanitarian staff seemed unaware that their own agency or office had been involved in the development of policy and guidance on UN integration – through the Policy Committee and ECHA – and had successfully negotiated provisions related to humanitarian action (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). In DRC, for example, a number of UN agency staff believed that integration was a 'DPKO policy' which they had no obligation to implement. Some UN humanitarian and NGO staff suggested that the concept of UN integration was incompatible with the principles of humanitarian action, and that there is an inherent contradiction between the UN's political and humanitarian roles. As noted elsewhere (see for example Ulich, 2010), despite the language in the SG Decisions of 2008 and 2011 and related guidance, some UN humanitarian and NGO staff interviewed, both at HQ and in the field level, believed that the 'hidden agenda' of UN integration was to subordinate humanitarian priorities to political objectives.

This assumption, at least in part, stems from personal or institutional experiences of UN mission staff, at varying levels, seeking to subordinate humanitarian objectives when they were not deemed politically expedient, or instances where UN humanitarian actors have had to agree on a compromise with competing political objectives which may not be acceptable to other humanitarian actors (see Chapter 4.4.3 and 4.4.5). Many UN humanitarian staff, as well as staff from NGOs, were deeply sceptical that UN integration can benefit humanitarian action, and felt that the costs and risks of working in a more integrated manner (e.g. the impact on how they are perceived) were high and that the benefits, if any, were limited. As a result, many UN and non-UN humanitarian staff are still reluctant to buy in to the concept and process of UN integration.

For their part, some DPA and DPKO staff interviewed in this study had a limited understanding of humanitarian principles, or did not appreciate that they are important in helping to ensure humanitarian actors can safely and effectively deliver humanitarian assistance and protection to populations in need. Furthermore, some UN mission staff did not recognise the potential tensions between political and humanitarian objectives and felt that UN integration should align the UN's humanitarian and political or peacekeeping objectives. In Afghanistan, for example, some mission staff expected UN agencies to provide assistance to particular populations (including those affected by pro-government military operations) in support of their stabilisation objectives and, in one instance, failed to consult UN agencies before making commitments to ISAF in this regard;[20] in Somalia some UNPOS staff have voiced an expectation that UN humanitarian agencies would provide assistance to affected populations explicitly to help consolidate territorial gains made by AMISOM and the TFG. In addition, some DPKO and DPA staff, at HQ and in the field, were apparently unaware of the critical role NGOs play as implementing partners for UN agencies, and therefore were not able to appreciate the significance of the position that some NGOs have taken in Afghanistan (and others have threatened to take in Somalia) in distancing themselves from the whole UN system because of their concerns about UN integration (as discussed in Chapter 4). Mission staff cannot successfully 'take full account of recognized humanitarian principles, allow for the protection of humanitarian space, and facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors' (UN, 2008) if they are not sufficiently aware of humanitarian principles or do not understand how humanitarian organisations operate.

Understanding of humanitarian principles and their importance among some mission staff was also, in part, confused by how humanitarian actors themselves behave. For example, a number of DPKO staff highlighted that, in Afghanistan, multi-mandated UN agencies and NGOs were undertaking recovery and development programming (sometimes in support of state institutions), whilst continuing to advocate for humanitarian space (also see Collinson et al., 2010). In both DRC and Darfur, several mission staff highlighted what they felt were contradictory positions among some humanitarian actors who had called for military intervention to protect civilians and facilitate humanitarian access, but were then unwilling to engage with UN peacekeeping staff on the ground (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

There are evidently significant gaps and problems in the way the concept and policy on UN integration is understood and

19 Some INGO representatives working on Somalia had taken steps to raise awareness amongst the broader INGO community in Nairobi about existing UN policies on integration in preparation for joint advocacy on UNPOS' proposed structural integration.

20 One UN agency asserted that this illustrated the lack of understanding or appreciation by some UNAMA staff of the importance of humanitarian principles and the need for a distinction between the UN's humanitarian and political objectives. They also felt that in this instance UN integration mechanisms had not been utilised to facilitate decisions on this issue.

implemented. In part this relates to the complexity of the guidance and policy documentation on this issue and shortcomings in their dissemination. In addition, other reform processes, such as UN security management, humanitarian reform[21] and 'delivering as one',[22] which have a similar focus on greater coherence, have been developed over the last ten years in parallel to the concept and policy on UN integration. UN and non-UN stakeholders have struggled to keep up with these simultaneous developments, and few of these reforms have included guidance on how they relate to UN integration or vice-versa.

3.2 Implementation of the concept and policy

As outlined in Chapter 2, UN integration requires *strategic integration* that is built upon shared objectives, closely aligned planning and a strategic partnership between the UN political or peacekeeping mission and the UN Country Team. The guidance provides for flexibility in country-level arrangements to support this strategic partnership, including in relation to leadership structures, and the research team found a range of country-level arrangements across the case studies. This section reviews these arrangements as they relate to humanitarian space. First, it looks at the Integrated Mission Planning Process which is used to support the establishment of new missions and the transition or withdrawal of existing missions and to determine the leadership arrangements. These are both largely HQ-driven processes as they relate primarily to the design and planning for new missions or review of existing missions in the event of a major change in mandate or context. Second, it outlines country-level arrangements which the field effectively has responsibility for determining. These include a diverse array of strategic and/or thematic coordination processes, mechanisms and frameworks. Finally, this section briefly reviews integrated operational support functions that have been established in order to facilitate sharing of assets and other operational issues. The range of arrangements identified in the course of this study is depicted in Figure 1.

3.2.1 The Integrated Mission Planning Process

The IMPP process[23] provides the framework for designing new UN integration arrangements and reviewing existing ones. The current IMPP guidelines[24] provide for the participation of UN humanitarian actors, and to a degree non-UN humanitarian actors, in the planning and review of UN integrated missions. The participation of UN humanitarian actors is required in both the headquarters process (the Integrated Mission Task Forces in DPKO-led missions and Integrated Task Forces in DPA-led missions), and at the country level, through the integrated field coordination bodies, often called an Integrated Mission Planning Team (working level) or a Senior Policy Group (senior leadership level), which should include UNCT leadership.[25]

Practice varies, but in general OCHA and the main UN humanitarian agencies participate in both the HQ and country-level IMPP processes in countries where they have a presence. However, respondents in this study noted that, because the mechanisms were led by DPA or DPKO, UN humanitarian actors often found it difficult to have their concerns taken into account, including but not limited to final decisions on the structures and mechanisms for UN integration. Respondents also noted several instances where agreements reached during the IMPP process were later changed or altered by the lead department at headquarters. For example, in the lead-up to the transition to a UN Integrated Peace Building Office in CAR (BINUCA), an inter-agency strategic assessment, led by DPA as the lead department for this integrated presence, was undertaken. While the process was generally inclusive, towards the end DPA made recommendations on the mission structure that had not been agreed by others involved, including UN humanitarian actors.[26] In Somalia there was agreement in the Strategic Assessment of 2008 and 2010 that UN integration would not include integrated reporting lines (e.g. the combining of the DSRSG and RC/HC roles). However, without consultation the SG report on the situation in Somalia in April 2011 stated that structural integration would be pursued in the shortest time possible (UN, 2011c). This did not change the structure on the ground but it did undermine confidence in the negotiations between UNPOS and the UNCT at country level and between DPA and other UN actors at HQ.

In both these instances, a lack of transparency in the process between UN mission and UNCT members in-country and staff at headquarters led to a perception that the concerns of UN humanitarian actors are not given due consideration in key decisions about UN integration arrangements. In contrast, the strong and continued engagement of OCHA and UN agencies at headquarters and at the country level in the IMPP for UNAMID was instrumental in influencing decisions on leadership structures, including maintaining a separate RC/HC and a

21 Following the Humanitarian Response Review (HRR) in 2004, the Humanitarian Reform agenda was launched by the ERC. It aims to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring greater predictability, accountability and partnership. The three pillars of the reform are the cluster approach, humanitarian financing and strengthening of humanitarian coordinators. See http://oneresponse.info/Pages/default.aspx.

22 In 2007, the UN launched the pilot initiative *Delivering as One* in eight countries, none of which had a UN peacekeeping or political mission. The purpose of the initiative was to explore how the UN system could deliver development aid in a more coordinated and effective manner, including in partnership with and serving the needs of the country concerned and in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The initiative resulted from a 2006 report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on UN System-wide Coherence (UN, 2006c). The eight pilot countries were Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uruguay and Vietnam. See http://www.undg.org/?P=7.

23 In 2006, the Secretary-General endorsed the Guidelines for Integrated Missions Planning Process (IMPP) and established it as 'the authoritative basis for the planning of all new integrated missions, as well as the revision of existing integrated mission plans for all UN departments, offices, agencies, funds and programmes' (UN, 2006b).

24 As per the requirement for regular review of guidance, the 2010 IMPP guidelines (UN, 2010a) were being reviewed at the time of the writing of this study.

25 SG Decision No. 24/2008 called for a 'shared analytical and planning capacity as well as an integrated strategic framework (ISF) at the field level to articulate a shared vision of the UN's strategic objectives and an associated set of agreed results, timelines and responsibilities for tasks critical to the consolidation of peace' (UN, 2010a).

26 Internal UN documents seen by the study.

Figure 1: Common Characteristics/Capacities of Structural Integration

The Main Purpose of Integration:

To 'maximise the individual and collective impact of the UN's response, concentrating on those activities required to consolidate peace'

Strategic Integration

APPLIES TO ALL contexts where the UN has a country team and multidimensional peacekeeping operations or political mission/office.

THIS SHOULD INCLUDE 'an effective strategic partnership between the UN mission/office and the country team, under the leadership of the SRSG (or ERSG)'.

Minimum Requirements of Strategic Integration

The minimum requirements of a UN integrated presence include:

- A shared vision of the UN's strategic objectives
- Closely aligned or integrated planning
- A set of agreed results, timelines and responsibility for delivery of tasks critical to consolidating peace
- Agreed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation

Five Mechanisms that Support Strategic Integration

HQ-Level Planning and Coordination

1. *HQ-Level Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP) and Integrated (Mission) Task Forces (I(M)TFs)*
   - Provides a 'basis for the planning of all new integrated presences and the revision of existing integrated presences'
   - Supported at UNHQ by a DPKO-led Integrated Mission Task Force (IMTF) or a DPA-led Integrated Task Force (ITF) and at the country level by Integrated Field Coordination Mechanisms (described below)

Country-Level Arrangements

2. Integrated Planning and Coordination
Each UN field presence should have a standing coordination body or bodies that bring together the Mission and the UNCT to provide strategic direction and planning oversight to the joint peace consolidation efforts of the UN field presence. Examples include Strategic Policy Groups and Integrated Strategy and Planning Teams.

3. ISF: Integrated Strategic Framework
Each integrated presence should undertake an ISF, which is a short, internal UN, strategic-level planning tool that includes:

- Shared vision and analysis
- Strategic objectives, results, timelines, responsibilities
- Coordination and implementation arrangements
- Monitoring

4. Shared Analytical and Planning Capacity
The IMPP and ISF should be supported in the field by a shared analytical and planning capacity. This can be accomplished through strategic-level integration but should include shared, dedicated staff capacity.

Shared analytical and planning capacities may include structural arrangements such as an integrated office or unit.

5. Optional Thematic Mechanisms
Thematic mechanisms include strategic-level processes and frameworks (UN system-wide strategies or working groups) that foster better coordination and planning on thematic issues such as protection of civilians or objectives/pillars agreed in the ISF. Thematic mechanisms may also include structural arrangements such as staff dedicated to supporting the implementation of joint strategies, joint offices/units and sometimes joint programmes.

Gradations of Structural Arrangements

CONTEXT-SPECIFIC arrangements (in addition to the minimum requirements of strategic integration) that have integrated reporting lines and/or joint offices, assets, or resources. These may provide *Analytical and Planning Capacity (4)* or support *Optional Thematic Mechanisms (5)*. Structural arrangements may or may not include a triple-hat (DSRSG/RC/HC) and/or integration of humanitarian coordination or other pillars.

This diagram reflects the following policies: Decisions of the Secretary-General No. 24/2008 and existing IMPP Guidelines endorsed by the Secretary-General as of 2010 as well as practices observed in the cases reviewed for this study.

separate OCHA office, and minimising mission capacities and tasks that overlapped with the mandates of UN humanitarian actors (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).[27]

UN staff also noted that the planning process focused on mission start-up, rather than planning for the duration of the UN integrated presence, and that consideration of humanitarian concerns arising from changes in the context or the UN mission mandate was at times inadequate. Many interviewees highlighted the experience of Afghanistan, where despite a serious deterioration in the situation from 2006 onwards, and substantial changes in the mandate of UNAMA in 2008, there was a reluctance to adapt existing arrangements to better protect humanitarian principles, for example through the establishment of a separate OCHA office. Similarly, in DRC, some UN humanitarian staff expressed concerns about the lack of a review of UN integration arrangements in relation to MONUC's new focus on stabilisation.[28]

3.2.2 Leadership structures and accountability

Leadership structures vary in the contexts reviewed in this study. In Afghanistan, DRC, Liberia and CAR, the RC/HC is also the DSRSG. These 'triple hats' report, in relation to their respective responsibilities, to the SRSG (for performance of their DSRSG responsibilities), to the ERC (for performance of their HC responsibilities) and to the UNDP Administrator (for performance of their RC responsibilities).[29] The purpose of integrating the DSRSG/RC/HC role in the mission structure is to ensure greater coherence of the UN effort and leadership, to facilitate a complementary approach amongst senior managers of the UN integrated presence and to ensure effective management of the competing priorities assigned to the mission. The RC/HC role has been kept separate from UNPOS[30] in Somalia, and in Darfur the RC/HC is separate from UNAMID.[31] These structures were agreed following concerns expressed by humanitarian actors that a more distinct humanitarian leadership/coordination function was required in these contexts because of the nature and dynamics of the conflict parties, the risks relating to association of humanitarian actors with political or peacekeeping agendas and the need for dedicated capacity to lead the humanitarian response.

The integrated leadership structures (e.g. the combining of the DSRSG and RC/HC roles) have become one of the major points of tension and confusion between UN political/peacekeeping actors and the humanitarian community. In the design of new mission structures respondents involved in the planning process asserted that there was a tendency on the part of the lead department (DPA or DPKO) to view the DRSRG/RC/HC as the default leadership option in UN integrated presences. Many humanitarian actors argue that, in some contexts, integrated leadership on humanitarian issues is not appropriate as there is a need for a distinct identity for the HC, separate from the UN mission, to minimise the influence, or the appearance of influence, of the UN's political objectives on its humanitarian efforts. In addition, they argue that there is a need for dedicated capacity to lead the humanitarian response – many respondents noted that it was not possible for one manager to dedicate appropriate attention to all of these competing tasks and that invariably the humanitarian responsibilities were de-prioritised as a result. However, the SRSGs, DSRSG/RC/HCs and DSRSGs (political) interviewed for this study highlighted the advantages of this combined role, arguing that the position was able to more effectively influence internal mission planning and decision-making processes, as well as external actors (including host state governments), to the benefit of humanitarian action (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

This study found that reluctance to establish a separate HC is not always a function of the opposition of lead departments. In March 2011, motivated by the need for increased leadership and capacity dedicated to the negotiation of humanitarian access and humanitarian advocacy, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Afghanistan requested the creation of a stand-alone HC, yet this request was never considered by the relevant HQ mechanisms (e.g. the Afghanistan IMTF).[32] Although there may have been additional reasons, humanitarian respondents in Afghanistan indicated that some HCT members did not consult their headquarters before making their request to the ERC and that this was identified as one reason why the request was not backed at the global level. This example illustrates that implementation of UN integration is also influenced by existing challenges in the relationship between the field and HQs, not just within the UN secretariat but also within UN agencies, funds and programmes.

The debate on the combined DSRSG/RC/HC function cannot be entirely separated from long-standing policy debates on combining the RC and HC functions. As noted, these debates have focused on concerns that one manager cannot realistically pay sufficient attention to, or balance tensions between, each of these important roles and that as a result the humanitarian tasks have tended to be de-prioritised in favour of longer-

27 A number of interviewees expressed concerns that these early 'successes' were subsequently eroded as the humanitarian liaison unit in UNAMID has been significantly expanded in both size and scope, thereby overlapping with existing capacities and mandates of the UNCT.

28 However, a number of respondents also highlighted that the differences with MONUC's mandate and activities were small, and that the introduction of an explicit 'stabilisation' strategy merely formalised existing activities.

29 The DSRSG/RC/HC is also usually assigned the function of Resident Representative of UNDP.

30 In Somalia, the decision to maintain a separate RC/HC was based on a recommendation from the 2008 and 2010 Strategic Assessments, and reaffirmed in a principals level meeting convened by the Chef de Cabinet of the SG.

31 During the time period reviewed for this study (2005–2007), the RC/HC in Sudan was also the DSRSG for UNMIS, with a Deputy RC/HC focusing primarily on Darfur. The Deputy RC/HC was maintained when UNAMID was established in 2008, but continued to report to the existing RC/HC and kept separate to the Joint Special Representative of UNAMID. In 2011, following the referendum that resulted in the creation of an independent Republic of South Sudan, UNMIS was withdrawn and the former Deputy RC/HC function has now been combined in one RC/HC position for the Republic of Sudan, including Darfur.

32 Letter from the Humanitarian Country Team (Afghanistan) to Valerie Amos, Emergency Relief Coordinator, 6 March 2011, unpublished document.

term development priorities. However, others, in particular UN development and multi-mandated agencies, have argued that a separation would undermine the important links between humanitarian and development/recovery strategies and would undermine the authority that the RC role can bring to the HC role in relations with national stakeholders (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

SRSGs and DSRSG/RC/HCs interviewed in this study also highlighted the importance of a 'leadership team' (though this is not solely reliant on combining the DRSG/RC/HC roles), which could utilise the different roles, authorities or competencies to ensure stronger humanitarian leadership, as was the case in Darfur and CAR during the periods reviewed. In these cases, OCHA had consistently strong heads of office that could assume similar responsibilities to the HC, when necessary and as appropriate (see Chapter 4.5). A number of humanitarian respondents also highlighted the weaknesses of some individual mission leaders and shortcomings in the relationship between mission leaders, and stated that the potential added value of these complementary roles is often lost or has, in some instances, undermined humanitarian priorities. In this regard, maintaining and ensuring the appropriate use of the reporting lines of the DSRSG/RC/HC to the SRSG, the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) and the UNDP Administrator was seen as crucial in ensuring appropriate consideration of humanitarian priorities in UN integrated contexts.

Discussions of structural arrangements have also been shaped by the debate on the location of humanitarian coordination functions, and whether a standalone OCHA office should be established or whether these functions should be integrated into the UN mission structure. This has been a source of tension and frustration in the planning and review of missions in several contexts, including Afghanistan and Liberia. In the former, the pre-existing OCHA coordination functions were folded into the mission structure when it was established in 2002. However, as noted earlier, the lead department (DPKO) and mission leadership were reluctant to review this arrangement when the context changed and humanitarian needs began to increase after 2006. NGO-led calls for a separate OCHA office intensified after UNAMA's mandate changed in 2008. NGOs argued that a separate UN humanitarian coordination function was needed to address gaps in programming and information that resulted because UNAMA did not have sufficient expertise or capacity to perform the necessary roles (various NGOs, 2008). Agreement was finally obtained in late 2008 for the creation of a separate OCHA office, which was established on 1 January 2009.

Of particular concern to many humanitarian respondents in this study was the lack, or perceived lack, of accountability for senior mission managers who failed to comply with the UN integration policy as it relates to protection of humanitarian space. Noting that there are concerns regarding the efficacy of performance management systems in the UN more generally, the examples in Somalia in particular (see Chapter 4.3 and 4.5) were highlighted in this regard. Many respondents noted that, even where it seems generally known that a mission manager has taken action that clearly undermined humanitarian principles, there is little evidence of them being held to account, or of corrective action being taken. This has contributed to a general perception amongst many humanitarian actors, UN and non-UN, that the policy and its provisions relating to humanitarian space are not taken seriously by lead departments or the senior management of the UN system more broadly.

3.2.3 Country-level arrangements

As noted earlier, decisions on country-level arrangements, with the exception of leadership and lines of accountability, have effectively been delegated to the country level (mission and UNCT). These arrangements include the development of the ISF and the establishment of strategic, thematic and operational coordination mechanisms and structures, as discussed below.

Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF)

In order to foster the development of the strategic partnership, the SG Decision of 2008 requires all UN integrated presences to develop an Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF). Subsequent IMPP guidance explained that the ISF should include a shared vision of the UN's strategic objectives; closely aligned or integrated planning; a set of agreed results and timelines and the allocation of responsibility for the delivery of tasks critical to consolidating peace; and agreed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation. ISF support missions have commonly been deployed from the IMPP working group at headquarters, and have included staff of the lead department, OCHA, DOCO and UN agencies. The ISF for Somalia was developed in late 2010 and early 2011, and in Afghanistan it was completed in July 2011. A first draft of the ISF for DRC was developed in 2009–2010, and a new process was underway at the time this study was undertaken. An ISF was completed in CAR in 2010–2011.[33] The ISF process should assist in determining the appropriate arrangements to support the achievement of the strategic vision (discussed below) and is also a product of these coordination arrangements since the strategic planning mechanisms are generally used to develop and revise the ISF. ISFs are intended to be revised on a regular basis to ensure appropriate strategic objectives and coordination between the UN integrated presence and the UNCT.

In Somalia and Afghanistan, UN respondents felt that the process of developing the ISF had been as important, if not more so, than the final product. Both UN humanitarian and political/peacekeeping staff generally felt that the process had brought them together at senior and working levels, a relatively unusual occurrence, and had increased mutual awareness of their respective priorities and challenges. Many noted that this was the start of a process of confidence-building, and that this type of discussion should continue. Views on the final document in Afghanistan and Somalia varied, but most

33 The time periods reviewed in Darfur (2005–2007) and Liberia (2003–2008) preceded the policies and guidelines that required the development of an ISF.

UN humanitarian actors felt that their considerations and priorities had been dealt with appropriately. In Afghanistan, humanitarian perspectives were included in the context analysis, but humanitarian actors argued against including a specific humanitarian objective because they felt that the ISF was focused on activities aimed towards peace consolidation, and that it was important therefore to make a clear distinction between the ISF and the UN's humanitarian aims; the document points readers to the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) as the principal humanitarian strategy. In Somalia, the process and the final draft were generally viewed positively by humanitarian actors, though many noted that further work is required to resolve outstanding areas of disagreement.

Key challenges remain in relation to the ISF process, particularly in DRC. During the first ISF process in 2009, MONUSCO staff argued that the ISF should be an internal UN planning document as per the IMPP guidance, whereas some UNCT members (including multi-mandated humanitarian agencies) felt that the process should include the host government. Some UNCT respondents interviewed for this study also expressed concerns that, following a Technical Assessment Mission to DRC, the 'final' ISF document was changed by the lead department at headquarters, adding benchmarks for transition that were perceived as more relevant for the peacekeeping mission than for UN agencies. These disagreements over process and substance stalled finalisation of the document. The 2009 ISF was ultimately rejected by the DRC government. At the time of the research visit, MONUSCO was initiating a new process.

In addition, despite guidance in the 2010 IMPP, there was a lack of clarity across the three main case studies as to how the ISF should relate to existing planning processes and frameworks, specifically CAPs and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). UN agency staff interviewed in a number of contexts noted that, because no funding was tied to the ISF, there was little incentive or value for UN agencies to participate in an additional planning process. In CAR the ISF was considered an intermediary step between the existing UNDAF and the forthcoming 'UNDAF Plus', and was felt to have usefully filled a gap in terms of strategies covering early recovery, governance and national capacity-building. In Somalia, some NGOs also expressed concern about the lack of transparency in the process, and were unclear whether it was internal to the UN or whether they should have been consulted (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

Integrated Coordination Mechanisms

As noted earlier, IMPP guidance on implementation of UN integration requires a minimum level of coordination between the UN mission and UNCT to support the development and achievement of the UN's vision and agreed strategic objectives (often identified in the Strategic Assessment and/or ISF). The 2010 IMPP guidelines specify that mechanisms must be in place at the 'strategic, coordination and planning levels' (UN, 2010a), but allow for flexibility in how this is achieved. The research team identified a variety of country-level arrangements across the case studies. These include strategic coordination mechanisms used to facilitate senior level 'strategic direction and planning oversight' (both at the beginning and throughout the life of the integrated presence) such as Senior Policy Groups (SPGs), thematic coordination between the UN mission and UNCT (often on agreed objectives identified in the ISF process) and, in some cases, operational support mechanisms have been, or are, required to support integration. In some instances, arrangements have included dedicated staffing structures and capacities and in others they took the form of strategic coordination mechanisms.

In the main case studies considered in this research, coordination mechanisms are in place to support planning and the achievement of strategic objectives, including both strategic coordination and formal structural arrangements. It should be noted that, according to the IMPP guidelines, these arrangements should exist throughout the duration of the mission, and are meant to constitute a senior leadership team, as called for in multiple fora, not solely for the purpose of specific planning processes such as the ISF.

In Somalia, an SPG was established as a strategic coordination mechanism in 2011. The SPG is led by the SRSG and includes the RC/HC and head of UNSOA. The SPG has to some degree facilitated coordination, including in relation to humanitarian advocacy (see Chapter 4.5). In DRC there are a number of integrated senior-level strategic arrangements to support planning and implementation of strategic objectives, including a Strategic Planning Group and an Integrated Mission Planning Team, which involves MONUSCO, OCHA and UN agencies.

In addition to these coordination mechanisms, the 2010 IMPP guidelines also call for a 'shared analytical and planning capacity' (UN, 2010a) and these are in place in varying forms in each of the three main contexts. In Somalia a Joint Planning Unit (JPU) was established in 2010,[34] as a working-level virtual integrated unit, with staff from UNPOS and the UNCT, tasked with ensuring regular information exchange between its core members (UNPOS, OCHA, the Resident Coordinator's Office (on behalf of UNCT), UNDSS and UNSOA), facilitating more informed planning and providing a forum to discuss, negotiate and resolve tensions between UN agencies and UNPOS.[35]

MONUC (now MONUSCO) established an Integrated Office (IO) in 2005. The IO is an integrated unit with dedicated civilian staffing from the mission and UNCT. It reports to the DRSRG/RC/HC and 'works with UN agencies and MONUSCO sections to

34 The establishment of the JPU was delayed by two years, which may have reinforced existing perceptions that UNPOS and UN integration did not offer any added value to the humanitarian community. The delay in the establishment of the unit was due to the timing of budget cycles, a slow recruitment process, obstruction from the then SRSG and overall lack of capacity within UNPOS (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

35 Originally the JPU was meant to engage with the various thematic working groups that were to be established under the ISF to facilitate cooperation between UNPOS and the UNCT on the objectives identified in the ISF. Discussion regarding the form of these working groups is ongoing.

identify concrete objectives that can be better achieved through joint action' (United Nations Organisations in the DRC, 2011). Many respondents asserted that it has facilitated more effective and appropriate efforts in support of joint UN and mission objectives, including protection of civilians and combating sexual violence.[36]

In line with DPKO internal guidance, DPKO-led missions will also usually have a Joint Mission Analysis Cell (JMAC)[37] to gather, analyse and disseminate information from across the UN system and from external sources, including non-UN humanitarian actors (UN DPKO, 2006). A JMAC was established in DRC in 2005, comprising analysts from diverse backgrounds including humanitarian work.[38] At times, the JMAC has included a secondment from OCHA and it was noted that this had proved particularly useful in ensuring access to humanitarian information and, in turn, the inclusion of this information in the analysis provided to support senior-level decision-making. In Afghanistan a Joint Analysis and Policy Unit (JAPU) has been created to perform similar functions to the JMAC. The JAPU is currently expanding outreach to UN humanitarian actors to collate information and share analysis.

Thematic and programmatic processes and mechanisms

As noted above, the IMPP guidance encourages UN missions to establish integrated strategies, processes and mechanisms to support specific objectives agreed in the ISF. The study team found a range of these 'thematic' strategies, processes and mechanisms in the cases studied, many of which were 'bottom-up' initiatives designed to address challenges the integrated presence was facing on the ground. The 2010 IMPP guidelines encouraged country-level arrangements to build upon existing thematic coordination mechanisms, including humanitarian clusters, as appropriate, which was the case in some contexts.

In Afghanistan, CAR, DRC and Liberia, civilian representatives of the UN mission participated (as observers or members) in the humanitarian cluster system or similar mechanisms dealing with shared or common goals, such as civilian protection and early recovery. In Afghanistan, protection of civilians is to some extent a shared objective between the mission and agencies and NGOs. Although UNAMA does not have an explicit protection mandate, it does have a human rights component that monitors and reports on civilian casualties. The UNAMA Human Rights Unit has in the past been a co-lead of the Protection Cluster with UNHCR, and it continues to share information and analysis and identify trends and areas of priority. As outlined in Chapter 4.5, this strategic arrangement has facilitated collaboration and complementary advocacy efforts on protection of civilians, which were deemed to have improved protection outcomes.

New strategic arrangements have also been created in Afghanistan. Each ISF objective or pillar has a corresponding UN integrated working group led by UN agency and/or UNAMA representatives and supported by the Resident Coordinators Office. These mechanisms do not include NGOs, and are primarily focused on recovery and development issues; however, some, such as maternal health and protection and rule of law, cover issues of humanitarian concern, and as a result a number of UN humanitarian agencies are engaging in them. Discussions are ongoing in Somalia between UNPOS and the UNCT on establishing integrated thematic units relating to the objectives identified in the ISF. Again, these are largely linked to development, governance and recovery issues.

Strategic arrangements in DRC include thematic strategies and coordination forums, complemented by structural arrangements. MONUSCO facilitates these processes and dedicates additional civilian resources to them, while seeking to avoid overlap with UN agencies and clusters.[39] Many of these structures relate to the development of joint coordination mechanisms, strategies and assessments on protection of civilians.[40] Although protection of civilians has been a mandated task for most UN peacekeeping missions since 1999, in 2008 the Security Council asserted it as the priority objective of MONUSCO. Protection is also a key objective of the humanitarian community, as asserted in the Humanitarian Action Plan. Collaboration between MONUSCO and the UN humanitarian community and partners on this issue has become more formal in recent years, drawing on the comparative advantages of the mission (civilian (including police) and military) and the wider humanitarian community.

In consultation with the protection cluster, in 2009 MONUSCO developed a UN System-Wide Strategy on the Protection of Civilians, and created mechanisms to facilitate coordination between MONUSCO (civilian and military components) and

36 The IO is also tasked with supporting joint objectives in relation to the stabilisation of Eastern DRC and peace consolidation in the western provinces, inclusive operations management, security measures and transitional activities.

37 In DPKO-led missions, a Joint Operations Centre (JOC) and a JMAC is required at the in-country headquarters to support head of mission decision-making. JOCs are 24-hour information centres that provide daily situation analysis based on information gathered from across the UN system. A JMAC collects and synthesises information (including from beyond the UN system) to provide medium- to long-term context analysis. At the time of this study, political missions had not yet established a comparable policy on the establishment of information gathering and analysis capacities. See DPKO Policy Directive, 'Joint Operations Centers and Joint Mission Analysis Centers', 1 July 2006. Available at http://www.peacekeepingbestpractices.unlb.org.

38 It should be noted that having a humanitarian background does not necessarily mean that individuals are representing humanitarian interests or concerns.

39 Some UN agencies and NGOs were concerned that MONUSCO was taking over responsibilities and activities that should be led by the UNCT, while others recognised that the mission had a distinct role in providing protection from physical violence, as well as a comparative advantage in terms of access to resources. Some respondents also noted that the protection cluster had struggled over the years to maintain consistent leadership capacity and resources, and that this was affecting collaboration between the mission and the cluster.

40 There are also structural links between MONUSCO and the UN agencies in relation to combating conflict-related sexual violence. The DSRSG-ROL is the UN lead for combating sexual violence.

the UNCT/HCT. These include the Senior Management Group-Protection (SMG-P)[41] at the national level and the Senior Management Group-Protection Provincial (SMG-PP).[42]

The SMG-P includes mission personnel (civilian and military), OCHA and UNHCR, thus linking to the protection cluster.[43] Meetings are facilitated by the IO. The SMG-PPs were just being established in provincial mission offices at the time of the research visit but have, or are intended to include, similar representation at the provincial level and are supported by the Civil Affairs Section. The Civil Affairs Section, which also reports to the DSRSG/RC/HC, dedicates the bulk of its capacities and resources to support interaction on protection between UN agencies and the various civilian and military components of MONUSCO. In 2006, the protection cluster and the Civil Affairs Section developed a protection matrix outlining the geographic areas they felt should be prioritised for MONUSCO military or other support. Today, the matrices, which cover different geographical areas, include input from NGOs and are used as a basis for discussion in the SMG-P and SMG-PPs on the prioritisation of mission resources for protection of civilians. The SMG-Ps and protection matrices are being used in Kinshasa and in parts of Eastern DRC to develop common strategic approaches, help with joint assessment and analysis and ensure more effective protection responses (see Chapter 4).

There has also been some effort to coordinate within the UN integrated presence on 'stabilisation' strategies. MONUSCO is explicitly mandated to support stabilisation in conflict-affected parts of DRC, and coordination between MONUSCO and the UNCT on this has included integrated strategies, funding and programmes. There are two stabilisation strategies and structures in DRC. The first is the Stabilisation and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas (STAREC), launched in 2009, which includes humanitarian and social assistance as a key priority.[44] In order to implement STAREC, the mission developed the International Security and Stabilisation Support Strategy (ISSSS) in 2008/9 and established the Stabilisation Unit, an integrated UN structure based in Goma. Two of the ISSSS priorities relate to the role and programmes of humanitarian actors, including sexual violence and return, reintegration and recovery.[45] UNHCR, UNICEF and several NGOs have been involved in the elaboration and implementation of these objectives.

Tensions have arisen between stabilisation's political and security-related objectives (including military tactics that have had a deleterious impact on civilians) and the humanitarian principles of neutrality and impartiality, as well as the principle of 'do no harm'. After careful discussion with UN agencies, the scope of the ISSSS was nuanced to better reflect humanitarian concerns. In this regard, UN agencies explained that they have sought to manage their involvement by undertaking programmes under the stabilisation rubric only where the stabilisation geographical and programme priorities match humanitarian geographical and programme priorities (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Where stabilisation priorities did not match the agencies' analysis of humanitarian needs, they did not engage in the stabilisation programme (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Moreover, humanitarian actors involved in the ISSSS Return, Recovery and Reintegration pillar worked together to ensure that under this pillar, activities were undertaken with due respect for humanitarian principles and the concept of 'do no harm'. In Somalia, there are also attempts by UNPOS to coordinate with the UNCT on stabilisation, a continuing challenge for the UN as outlined in the ISF. However, the UNCT is reluctant to engage in what is considered a highly political area of intervention.

3.2.4 Operational support

The final area of country level arrangements relates to the provision of support for integrated operations including administration and finance, logistics and security management. Mechanisms established in these areas originate in policies and practices that differ from those discussed in Chapter 2, and are not adequately addressed in existing IMPP guidelines. They are however connected to both the practice of UN integration and the impact that integration arrangements may have on humanitarian space.

Administration and finance

In the contexts reviewed integrated coordination arrangements that required an investment of staff and other resources from the UN mission (DPKO or DPA) were constrained by ongoing challenges relating to the lack of integration of administrative and financial systems between the Secretariat and UN agencies, funds and programmes. For example, structural arrangements in DRC were largely supported out of the peacekeeping mission's assessed funds. However, secondments of UN humanitarian staff were funded by OCHA or by the UN agencies concerned, making these positions and resources susceptible to unpredictable changes in voluntary funding. In almost every case reviewed, bureaucracy relating to administrative and financial systems hindered the easy and effective sharing and use of staff and resources in integrated mechanisms, increasing transaction costs and exacerbating tensions between the actors involved.

41 The SMG-P includes the SRSG, DSRSG/RC/HC, DSRSG-ROL, Force Commander, Police Commissioner, the head of OHCHR, the country representative of UNHCR and the OCHA head of country office.

42 Initially the protection cluster was the primary mechanism for communication and coordination in DRC. It was initially co-chaired by UNHCR and MONUSCO. However, MONUSCO was later asked to relinquish this role over concerns that it was not appropriate for the mission to lead a humanitarian coordination mechanism. A Protection Working Group was created in the Kivus to facilitate better communication and coordination between the mission and the humanitarian community. The SMG-P and SMG-PP were modelled on this working group.

43 At the global level, on behalf of the Global Protection Cluster, OCHA is currently leading an initiative to develop guidance on interaction between the Protection Cluster and UN peacekeeping missions (which are integrated where there is a UNCT).

44 The other two priorities of STAREC are security and the restoration of state authority, and economic recovery.

45 The other three core objectives of the ISSSS are security, political dialogue and state authority.

Logistics

DPKO missions such as MONUSCO in DRC typically deploy large-scale logistical assets including air and other transportation assets. In an integrated mission, these assets are more readily accessible to UN humanitarian actors because of integrated lines of accountability and because the mission is nominally obliged to take into consideration the logistical needs of UN humanitarian agencies and OCHA (see Chapter 4.4.2). However, there remain administrative and financial challenges to the shared use of logistical assets. Some UN humanitarian staff and staff in NGOs felt that they were overlooked in favour of mission staff and were often withdrawn from flights at the last minute. This prioritisation related both to the administrative and financial arrangements mentioned above, and to the understanding of mission staff.

Security

Following the attacks against the UN in Baghdad in 2003, the UN embarked on what it described as a radical reform of its security management, merging the various UN security systems into a single framework under an Under-Secretary-General for security and safety in 2004.[46] The United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) was established in January 2005 to support this function at headquarters and in country operations, where decision-making responsibilities are delegated to a Designated Official (DO). Security management processes are now part of the integrated UN presence. Current guidance states that, in UN integrated missions, the highest-level UN authority – usually the SRSG – serves as the DO, with authority transferred to the DSRSG/RC/HC in the SRSG's absence from the country (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). The DO function is supported by a Security Management Team (SMT). Outside of the mission headquarters, the DO function is delegated to an Area Security Coordinator (ASC), commonly the head of the local office of the UN mission (where one exists), rather than a representative of the DSRSG/RC/HC (e.g. senior manager of OCHA or a UN agency). Area Security Management Teams (ASMTs) support the ASC function. The SMT and ASMTs generally include mission security staff, UNDSS staff and representatives of OCHA and UN agencies. In fact, guidance states that the SMT should include representatives of intergovernmental organisations and NGOs that have signed a memorandum of understanding with UNDSS. Other support mechanisms include Security Cells, which undertake assessments and provide analysis to support decision-making by the DO or ASC, and which may involve security officers from agencies and NGOs, as well as Joint Mission Analysis Centers and Joint Operation Centers in DPKO-led missions.

46 This decision was taken by the General Assembly in A/RES/59/276, XI, 7–23 December 2004.

Chapter 4
The impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space

This chapter assesses the impact of specific UN integration arrangements on the five areas of humanitarian space identified for this study: humanitarian worker security, access, engagement with non-state armed actors, perceptions of humanitarian actors and humanitarian advocacy. Whilst this chapter discusses each of the five areas separately, they are closely inter-connected; impact in one area affects another. This is reflected in the analysis below. As per the terms of reference for this study, this chapter will assess first the positive and then the negative impacts in each area of humanitarian space.

The analysis will illustrate that there have been both positive and negative impacts in these five areas, and that these impacts have varied between UN humanitarian actors (UN agencies and OCHA) and NGOs and other non-UN humanitarian actors. It should be noted that this study found that many other factors, in addition to UN integration, directly impact humanitarian action in each context and determine whether and how integration arrangements can enhance or restrict humanitarian space. These factors are discussed in Chapter 5.

This chapter is based on the findings from the three main case studies, supported with data from the three desk review contexts.

4.1 Security of humanitarian workers

To the extent that motivations for attacks on humanitarian workers can be determined, available security analysis, statistical data and incident reporting provide no clear evidence of a direct link between UN integration arrangements and attacks on humanitarian workers in the contexts reviewed for this study. Previous research on this topic has similarly concluded that attacks are the result of various criminal, political and economic interests, and there is no evidence to suggest that attacks against humanitarian workers are more likely to occur in a UN integrated mission context (Harmer, 2008). Even in Afghanistan, for which the most comprehensive data is available, the Afghan NGO Safety Office (ANSO) could identify no cases where there was a clear link between a security incident affecting an NGO and UN integration arrangements (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

Despite the absence of clear empirical evidence, most security analysts interviewed for this study tended to agree that, in particular environments, the association of humanitarian actors with political actors including the UN can increase security risks. Given what is at stake – the lives of humanitarian workers and the effective delivery of life-saving assistance to those in need (and noting that these incidents occur in volatile and uncertain environments) – it is prudent to take into account these concerns and weigh the risks of certain UN integration arrangements against their potential benefits to humanitarian operations.

4.1.1 Threats to the security of humanitarian workers

Afghanistan, Somalia and DRC are among the most threatening places in the world for humanitarian workers. For the period 2008 to 2010, they accounted for 60% of the total number of humanitarian workers affected by violence (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2011). These incidents affect UN agencies and NGOs, with national staff, particularly of NGOs, bearing the brunt of incidents (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2011; Egeland et al., 2011).

In Afghanistan there has been a significant increase in security incidents since the resurgence of the Taliban in 2006. Last year 126 incidents involving NGOs were reported, including the killing of 28 staff (20 national, eight international) (ANSO, 2011). Despite increased risk-mitigation measures, the fatality rate has remained more or less constant since 2006, which saw the highest number of humanitarian worker fatalities since 1999 (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2011a). In Somalia there were over 150 incidents between 2006 and 2011, with a peak of 86 in 2008 (Humanitarian Outcomes, 2011b). The number of incidents has declined dramatically since 2008 largely because the humanitarian presence in South Central Somalia has been scaled back (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).[47] In DRC there has been a steady increase in security incidents against humanitarian workers since 2008, with 112 incidents that year, 176 in 2009 and 198 in 2010 (DRC Humanitarian Action Plan, 2011 and OCHA, 2011a). In the year to September 2011 there were 133 incidents in North and South Kivu alone (these provinces usually account for the majority of incidents involving humanitarian personnel) (UN, 2011g).

Available empirical research and interviews conducted for this study suggest various proximate causes for attacks on humanitarian workers, including political, economic and criminal motives, and various root causes, including the blurring of the distinction between humanitarian assistance and military action and counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism strategies (Fast, 2010). In Somalia, many attacks are associated with economic incentives linked to clan dynamics and a widespread

47 The number of humanitarian actors in South Central Somalia increased in 2011 in response to the famine there.

perception at the local level that humanitarian assistance is a resource to be captured or shared (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Many stakeholders also highlighted the dangers of being associated with the TFG, AMISOM, the US government and UNPOS. In Afghanistan, some interviews highlighted the 'blurring of the lines' between ISAF and humanitarian actors as a principal motive for attacks, whilst others suggest that attacks are linked to a broader military tactic by non-state armed actors to demonstrate their power and undermine the state or intervening international forces (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011; see also Hammond, 2008). In DRC attacks are reportedly predominantly criminal or economic in nature, though there are also reports of humanitarian workers being kidnapped to secure prisoner exchanges (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Individual and organisational factors such as the behaviour and nationality of individual staff, the quality of humanitarian programming, the lack of a coordinated strategy on security and the source of donor funding were also cited as key risk factors (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

The emphasis on particular motives highlights a general tendency to reflect one's own immediate concerns. For example, in an attempt to reinforce the importance of humanitarian principles humanitarian actors tend to stress association with certain political entities or the 'politicisation of assistance' as the primary cause of attacks. Equally, some peacekeeping and political actors tend to emphasise criminal motives and radical ideologies as the primary cause (Fast 2010; HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Discussions with security analysts in the contexts studied suggest that there is some truth in most of the explanations put forward for attacks on humanitarian workers, highlighting the multiple causes behind them.

4.1.2 The impact of UN integration arrangements on the security of humanitarian workers

Positive impacts

Despite the challenges outlined below, certain practices or mechanisms of UN integration have to a degree enhanced the physical protection of UN and non-UN staff in some of the contexts reviewed. There are also some positive examples of technical cooperation on security assessment and analysis.

UN peacekeeping missions are now regularly tasked with the protection of humanitarian workers (both UN and non-UN), as is the case with MONUSCO and UNAMID. Fulfilment of this task has been supported in some instances by UN integration arrangements. In DRC, for example, a number of respondents noted that the UN integrated environment has helped to ensure that the military component of the mission takes on board the needs of UN humanitarian actors, and to a degree those of their partners in the use of its assets. This has been reinforced by structural arrangements including the DSRSG/RC/HC role, the Integrated Office and the SMG-P and SMG-PPs, which have the authority and access to relevant decision-makers within the UN mission and are able to intervene on behalf of UN humanitarian actors and their partners. In Haut and Bas Uele in north-eastern DRC, UN agencies and some NGOs rely on MONUSCO for area security and, as a last resort, military escorts. The mission's provision of area security in particular has proved an effective deterrent to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and criminal gangs (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Some respondents highlighted that, in the Kivus, there is a tendency to rely on MONUSCO military escorts as the default risk mitigation strategy, which is not always in line with the principle of last resort provided for in civil–military guidelines (see, for example, IASC 2008).

At the technical level there are some positive examples where integrated security structures had facilitated the sharing of security-related information. Engagement of UN and non-UN security professionals in the Security Cells in DRC and Afghanistan was seen as providing a useful forum for technical-level collaboration between UN agencies and the mission. This cooperation was felt to have improved assessments of security risks in some areas, and has raised awareness of the different approaches to analysing security used by the humanitarian and the political or peacekeeping components of the UN (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). In DRC, some NGOs engage with MONUSCO on area security in order to inform their own security analysis and risk mitigation strategies, and in some cases have asked MONUSCO to deploy patrols after aid distributions in order to protect beneficiaries. UN military leaders in MONUSCO suggested that the UN integrated presence had facilitated their support to the humanitarian community, as they now felt under a greater obligation to offer their services.

In Liberia, representatives of UNMIL's JMAC participated in high-level and some working-level humanitarian coordination meetings to provide security briefings, and provided specialised briefings for new NGO representatives. Mission staff and UN and non-UN humanitarian respondents identified information sharing as one of the primary benefits of UN integration in Liberia. Noting the common reluctance of some lower-level military staff to share information, one of the UNMIL Deputy Force Commanders during the period reviewed (2006–2008) made particular efforts to ensure that security information was shared between his staff and UN and non-UN humanitarian actors. In the case of CAR, BINUCA does not have a JMAC or a Security Cell, but mechanisms including the UNCTs and SMTs and informal meetings are used to share political analysis and security-related information. Respondents reported daily, positive engagement between OCHA and BINUCA staff in this regard. In each of these cases, integrated arrangements have enabled information exchange on security-related issues that has benefited UN and non-UN humanitarian actors, either directly or via OCHA or the UNCT.

Despite these positive experiences, the potential benefits of UN integration arrangements in terms of sharing security-related information have not been fully realised because of the overall tensions around UN integration and humanitarian space and at times the absence of a transparent and accountable framework

for sharing and using information. It should be noted that some information, such as that relating to individual beneficiaries, is highly confidential and it is not appropriate to share (ICRC, 2008). In DRC and Somalia, many humanitarian actors, both UN and non-UN, expressed concerns about sharing security information with parts of the integrated presence for fear of improper use. In the case of DRC, UN agencies and NGOs were worried that the MONUSCO military component would use this information for military operations or share it with the FARDC. For their part, MONUSCO military staff said that their ability to share security information with NGOs was at times restricted because of FARDC concerns about confidentiality. In Somalia, some humanitarian actors were reluctant to share any security-related information with the UN in case it was passed by the mission to the United States, AMISOM or the TFG, potentially leading to accusations that they were spying (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). This reinforces the need for transparent and accountable frameworks for sharing and using information, which recognises concerns over the use of sensitive information.

Negative impacts

UN peacekeeping or political missions face increased threats where they have limited legitimacy and credibility or are acting against the interests of particular stakeholders. As discussed in Chapter 5, this lack of legitimacy can stem from the UN's historical role in a country and from its mandate and activities on the ground. In some of the cases studied, the UN mission is perceived to have taken sides in support of the government and against some opposition groups. In Somalia, for example, UNPOS was expelled from al-Shabaab-held areas in July 2009 because it was deemed to be supporting 'the apostate government' and positioning itself 'against the establishment of an Islamic state'[48] in alignment with wider international objectives in Somalia. In DRC, targeted attacks by non-state armed actors on MONUSCO troops have in some cases been related to their role in disarming, demobilising and reintegrating fighters, which some groups see as undermining them by persuading their members to break ranks or by confiscating their weapons (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).[49]

According to interviews with security analysts (both UN and non-UN), in these contexts association with, and physical proximity to, the UN political or peacekeeping mission and its objectives would mean that UN agencies and, to a lesser degree, other humanitarian actors share the security risks facing the mission. Security of humanitarian actors is in part based on an implicit agreement with the fighting parties: provided humanitarian action is carried out in a neutral and impartial manner, the parties allow humanitarian actors to operate and respond to needs (Leader, 2000). Associating humanitarian agencies with the UN's political or peacekeeping mission (especially when its mandate is contested) can violate this agreement and places the work of humanitarians at risk.

This sharing of risks is more likely to occur when UN integration arrangements are publicly visible, such as through integrated leadership (e.g. DSRSG/RC/HC), joint programming and other structural arrangements, for instance the integration of OCHA within the mission. The risk of association through integration arrangements is also likely to be higher in contexts where external stakeholders or non-state armed actors that pose a threat to the UN presence may be able and willing to differentiate between different UN actors and adhere to international humanitarian law (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). For this reason, structural arrangements have not been implemented in Somalia, with UN security professionals suggesting this is an important measure for mitigating security risks for humanitarian personnel.

It is important to note, however, that association with the UN mission is not solely the result of UN integration arrangements. UN agencies can be associated with the political objectives of the UN by virtue of the fact that they are part of the UN system. As highlighted by UNHCR: 'As part of the UN, we have to some extent to live with contradictions. We cannot aspire to the same degree of independence as, for example, the ICRC or a humanitarian NGO. We must recognise that the humanitarian family is diverse, and reconcile our role in building national protection capacity, including the capacity of government institutions (as, for example, in Afghanistan), with our humanitarian mandate' (UNHCR, 2009).

NGOs can be associated because they are part of UN-led coordination mechanisms like the clusters, and some are implementing partners for UN agencies. This is a particular risk where international or national military forces have sought to use humanitarian assistance in their counter-insurgency and stabilisation activities and when groups lack the will or capacity to distinguish between the roles, responsibilities and guiding principles of different UN agencies and NGOs. In Afghanistan, for example, a threat issued by the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in June 2011 made no distinction between the UN, NGOs or other foreign organisations, noting that 'they are all funded by the Pentagon under the name "PRT" or "aid organisation", but these are all part of the process of occupying our country, and therefore they are not allowed to function' (Zabihullah Mujahid, 2011). In Somalia, al-Shabaab seems able and willing to distinguish between UN organisations and individual NGOs, expelling particular organisations due to their links with US funding or to certain programming, such as food aid, but does not always choose to do so (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

In such cases, it is clearly important that humanitarian organisations invest in strategies to make and maintain a distinction between themselves and other actors and decisions

48 'Press Release Regarding the Status of the Various NGOs and Foreign Agencies Operating in Somalia', Department of Political Affairs and Regional Administrations, Harakat Al-Shabaab Al-Mujahideen, 20 July 2009.

49 For example, armed men (alleged to be Mai Mai) attacked a MONUSCO base at Rwindi in North Kivu on 23 October 2010. On 18 August 2010, armed men killed three MONUSCO peacekeepers and injured seven at a base at Kirumba in North Kivu (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

on visible UN integration arrangements should be informed by a comprehensive analysis of all risk factors, including those relating to association with the UN mission. UN integration policy, such as the SG Decision of 2008 and OCHA's policy instruction of 2009, emphasises the need for flexibility in the design of structural arrangements partly to mitigate these risks. However, many humanitarian respondents questioned whether flexibility had been demonstrated in relation to the DSRSG/RC/HC role. Despite requests from the country-level HCT for a separate HC, the combined DSRSG/RC/HC function is still in place in Afghanistan and OCHA, albeit now independent from UNAMA, and is still co-located in some UNAMA compounds for security reasons. Concerned about the security risks of being perceived as associated with UNAMA, many international and national NGOs have stopped or severely restricted their visits to UN offices, particularly common UN premises, and some have as a result withdrawn from UN-led humanitarian coordination initiatives, including individual clusters and discussions at the HCT level (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Although the SG Decision 2008 states that UN integration arrangements should 'facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors', these integration arrangements in Afghanistan have impacted upon coordination within the humanitarian community.

4.2 Humanitarian access

As defined by UN General Assembly Resolution 46/182, humanitarian access has two key aspects: the ability of humanitarian actors to reach populations in need of protection and assistance; and the ability of affected populations to access assistance and basic services (UN, 1991). Whilst recognising the importance of the latter, this study necessarily focuses on the former because of constraints in engaging with communities in the course of this study.

Examples collected in the field, and in secondary case reviews, demonstrate that certain UN integration arrangements have supported increased access for UN and some non-UN humanitarian actors, through facilitating the use of mission logistical assets, use of UN military escorts (as a last resort) and provision of area security. There are, however, opportunities to support humanitarian access, including sharing of information and analysis, that are not being exploited. There are also concerns about the extent to which UN integration arrangements have resulted in a more risk-averse approach in UN operational security management policies and practices, which in turn has affected access for UN humanitarian actors and their partners. The extent of this impact was unclear and requires further exploration.

4.2.1 Challenges to humanitarian access

In the three main case studies, humanitarian actors face serious constraints in accessing populations in need. In DRC access is limited in large areas of the country; few humanitarian organisations can operate freely in South Central Somalia; and in Afghanistan some UN agencies reported having access to only about half of the country. Information collected from the field indicates that access is limited for a variety of reasons, many of them well-known and articulated in detail elsewhere. Constraints include bureaucratic impediments imposed by governments and non-state armed groups, logistical and infrastructure limitations, high levels of insecurity and restrictive operational security management measures (see for example UN, 2009b; Egeland et al., 2011).

4.2.2 The impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian access

Positive impacts

In several of the contexts studied, UN integration arrangements have enabled increased humanitarian access for UN agencies and some of their partners through the provision of logistical and security assets, such as passenger and cargo transportation, shared residential and office accommodation and the use of UN military assets for escorts and area security. Although UN peacekeeping missions are commonly mandated by the Security Council to facilitate humanitarian access, as is the case of MONUC,[50] UNAMID[51] and UNMIL,[52] UN mission and humanitarian staff explained that having a mandate is not in itself sufficient to ensure actual support on the ground. The DSRSG/RC/HC function in particular was deemed crucial in ensuring that, to the extent possible, UN mission staff allowed timely and appropriate access to mission logistical and air assets for UN agencies and, where relevant, their NGO partners (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). In DRC the former DSRSG/RC/HC was able to use his authority as a senior manager within the mission to intervene with mission logistics staff. In CAR, the DSRSG/RC/HC also used his position within the mission to call for DFS/DPKO logistical support to transport crucial humanitarian supplies from the UN logistics hub at Entebbe, Uganda. BINUCA covered the financial costs of transportation (HPG and Stimson Interviews, 2011).

MONUSCO air assets have been crucial for many UN agencies and NGOs in DRC as only around a fifth of the country is accessible by road (DRC Humanitarian Action Plan, 2009) and the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) programme is insufficient to meet agencies' needs (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). As noted earlier, MONUSCO has played a key role in securing access to populations in Haut and

50 Security Council Resolution 1906 (2009) required MONUC to 'Ensure the effective protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and United Nations personnel and facilities' (UN, 2009d).

51 Security Council Resolution 2003 requires UNAMID to 'ensur[e] safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, and the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and humanitarian activities, so as to facilitate the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance throughout Darfur; and *requests* UNAMID to maximise the use of its capabilities, in cooperation with the UN Country Team and other international and non-governmental actors, in the implementation of its mission-wide comprehensive strategy for the achievement of these objectives' (UN, 2011e).

52 Security Council Resolution 1509 (2003) required UNMIL to support 'Humanitarian and Human Rights Assistance: [and] to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, including by helping to establish the necessary security conditions' (UN, 2003a).

Bas Uele in Province Orientale by providing aircraft, area security and military escorts as a last resort.[53] In Afghanistan DPKO/DFS logistical assets, including access to residential or office accommodation, have been used by OCHA and some UN agency staff to access remote areas where the general security situation is extremely difficult.

UNMIL in Liberia was explicitly mandated to assist with the provision of humanitarian aid, including ensuring access for humanitarian agencies, and the integrated mission was used as the mechanism through which the military and civilian components of UNMIL engaged with UN humanitarian actors to plan and coordinate this support. In the early years of UNMIL, weekly integrated Humanitarian Operation Centre (HOC) meetings were held between UN humanitarian agencies and UNMIL's CIMIC and humanitarian coordination staff. UNMIL CIMIC seconded an officer to the HOC and the JMAC also attended to provide security briefings. These HOC meetings were used to coordinate UNMIL patrols which were aimed at facilitating humanitarian assessments, as well as protecting the civilian population (Fiawosime, 2005). In addition, UNMIL military engineers along with civilian components were involved in the construction of infrastructure to facilitate the movement of humanitarian assistance and the return of refugees (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

In Darfur in 2006 and 2007, negotiations on the extension of the formal agreement between the government of Sudan and the UN to enable humanitarian access, the Joint Communique, were led by OCHA and the DSRSG/RC/HC of UNMIS. Most respondents highlighted that the fact that the RC/HC was also the DSRSG (a senior manager in a large UN peacekeeping mission) was crucial in brokering this agreement and in subsequent discussions on access because it lent him significant additional authority and leverage vis-à-vis the government.

Although many humanitarian actors recognised the potential benefits to access presented by integration arrangements, concerns were raised about the consistency of UN mission support in this regard. Some UN agency staff in DRC reported difficulties in consistently getting use of mission aircraft (particularly for regular flights), and OCHA staff in Afghanistan were unable to secure UNAMA residential accommodation in some field locations despite repeated requests (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). In each study location, the research team also found differing views amongst non-UN humanitarian actors on the appropriateness of using UN integrated mission assets to access populations in need. Some NGOs do so as a last resort, or because of convenience or financial considerations (UN mission flights are provided free of charge). Other non-UN humanitarian actors do not, as a matter of policy, use UN civilian or military assets and would prefer to see an increase in the capacity of UNHAS or other comparable non-mission assets (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

Negative impacts

Many respondents highlighted problems with the UN's operational security management system, specifically that it tends to emphasise protective rather than enabling approaches to managing security risks. There has been a problem historically within the UN system in that there has been a tendency towards avoiding risk, rather than seeking to more effectively manage it.[54] This is not directly related to UN integration arrangements. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, in UN integrated contexts the DO or ASC functions are often conferred on mission staff, and where this has been the case many UN humanitarian actors interviewed felt that this has compounded a risk-averse approach. In Afghanistan and DRC, UN agencies explained that, coupled with limited capacity and resources within UNDSS, the integrated mechanisms for discussing security risks, including the SMTs, ASMTs and integrated policy fora, were at times dominated by the military (in the case of DRC) or political perspectives on risk (in the case of Afghanistan). UN humanitarian agencies tend to be more risk-tolerant because they seek to balance security risks with the humanitarian imperative and use their acceptance as a humanitarian actor to reach populations in need (see Metcalfe et al., 2011). Respondents suggested that UN military or political actors generally take a more risk-averse approach because they do not have to consider the humanitarian imperative. Because the UN operates under a common security framework, the decisions taken by the DO and ASC apply to all UN staff and in some instances their implementing partners. In Somalia, the fact that the DO function sits with the RC/HC is deemed to have helped facilitate access, with UN operational security management shifting to a more enabling approach focused on helping UN agencies and their partners to deliver critical programming (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011; HPG and SOAS, 2011).

The focus on 'protective' rather than 'enabling' approaches to security management has meant tighter restrictions on movement of staff (convoys, military/security escorts) and 'bunkerisation' of office and residential accommodation. These measures have made it more difficult for OCHA and UN agency staff to actively and consistently engage with locals in order to negotiate access. They have also affected inter-agency assessments, as some NGOs will not travel in a convoy using MONUSCO military escorts. As one interviewee asserted: 'The main problem here is with MONUSCO and the UNDSS/MONUSCO agreement, where MONUSCO makes the

53 It should be noted that there are far fewer MONUSCO troops in these areas than in North and South Kivu. Given the threat posed by the LRA and other groups, humanitarians asserted that they had argued for increased MONUSCO military deployments to provide area security in Haut and Bas Uele in Province Orientale (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

54 As of January 2011, a new security management framework and Security Level System (SLS) is being rolled out across the UN system. This new system is based on an *enabling* approach – which shifts the emphasis from assessing risk and limiting activities accordingly to a focus on programme goals and the need to utilise all possible measures to facilitate safe delivery against these goals. See for example Egeland et al., 2011. The system was being rolled out in the countries considered in this study although many interviewees from across the UN system noted that it would take some time to change the working culture to reflect this new approach.

decision, not UNDSS … They are curtailing access based on their mandate and take a more risk adverse approach' (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

The extent to which risk-averse approaches within the UN system relates to UN integration arrangements versus other factors, such as increased accountability for security decisions and high-profile attacks on the UN system in recent years, was not clear from the research conducted in the course of this study. However, the examples documented underline the importance of strengthening the capacity of UNDSS to undertake independent security assessments, including ensuring sufficient deployment of UNDSS staff and vehicles. The experiences in DRC also highlight the importance of active UN agency and OCHA engagement in the SMT and ASMT to ensure that humanitarian considerations are sufficiently reflected in the decision-making process, including adherence to existing civil–military guidelines on the use of military assets.

NGO concerns over their association with the UN mission through integration arrangements have, in some instances, led to their withdrawal from discussions with UN humanitarian actors on access. Regardless of whether this is a decision based on the need for adherence to humanitarian principles or one based on assessed risk, it has an operational impact on the effective coordination of the humanitarian community, and consequently could negatively impact upon humanitarian access strategies. In Afghanistan, for example, the NGO consortium ACBAR rejected a request to participate in a joint HCT strategy on access on the grounds that their own access negotiations would be jeopardised by association with OCHA, which 'is not an independent organisation since it is part of an integrated mission'.[55] Likewise in Somalia, NGOs have warned that they will be forced to curtail strategic and operational engagement with UN humanitarian agencies on access if the UN proceeds with structural integration (Somalia NGO Consortium, 2010).

4.3 Engagement with non-state armed actors

The research team did not find evidence of official UN 'no contact' policies with respect to humanitarian engagement in any of the contexts studied, or of a widespread practice of political interference in humanitarian engagement with non-state armed actors. However, the research for this study identified some examples where UN mission leaders used their authority in the UN integrated presence to limit humanitarian engagement with non-state armed actors when this was deemed to be detrimental to political objectives at a particular time. In one case this had an operational impact, and also, more broadly, it undermined the relationship between humanitarian actors and the UN political or peacekeeping mission. There remains confusion within the humanitarian community, including amongst UN humanitarian actors, about the existence of 'no contact' policies in the UN, which suggests a need for greater clarity from the managers of UN integrated presences, including the DSRSG/RC/HC or RC/HC, on the importance of humanitarian engagement with non-state armed actors.

55 Feedback from ACBAR members to the HCT on a joint UN/NGO advocacy strategy, 12 May 2011, unpublished document.

4.3.1 The challenges of engaging with non-state armed actors

The principle that humanitarian actors can and should engage with all parties to a conflict to facilitate humanitarian action, and specifically humanitarian access, is inherent in the provisions of international humanitarian law, and was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 46/182 of 1991 (UN, 1991). This principle has subsequently been reiterated by the Secretary-General in his reports on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (UN, 2009b; UN, 2010c). Yet in practice, humanitarian engagement by UN actors with non-state armed actors such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, al-Shabaab in Somalia and the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and other groups in DRC has been limited, particularly at a senior level (e.g. with the central *shura* (council) of al-Shabaab). This has undermined efforts to obtain the security guarantees necessary for accessing populations in need, and has limited opportunities to undertake humanitarian advocacy, including on protection of civilians (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

The research for this study indicates that the principal constraints to humanitarian engagement in the contexts reviewed for this study are the high levels of violence; the ideology, objectives, tactics and capability of non-state armed actors; and legal and bureaucratic restrictions imposed by donor and host governments, including in relation to counter-terrorism strategies (some of these wider issues are explored in more detail in Chapter 5). Many humanitarian actors, particularly in Afghanistan and DRC, are at a loss as to how to overcome these challenges, and have made inadequate investment in engagement strategies (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Research for this study also found that more comprehensive assessments of the wider context and barriers to engagement are necessary to address these challenges, including through UN integration arrangements.

4.3.2 The impact of UN integration arrangements on engagement with non-state armed actors

Positive impacts

This research found some examples where UN mission staff have supported humanitarian engagement with non-state armed actors. In the DRC this included support from MONUSCO Child Protection Advisors in facilitating direct contact and engagement of UN humanitarian actors with certain non-state armed actors on the release of child soldiers. Respondents noted that this support was valuable because the mission had relations with some of these actors that humanitarian actors did not, and that integration arrangements, including the DSRSG/RC/HC role, helped facilitate this support. In parts of Afghanistan, some UN humanitarian actors at the local level have requested support, in specific circumstances, from local UNAMA political affairs staff in obtaining contacts for or making discreet introductions to local non-state armed actors,

to facilitate access or to negotiate the release of hostages. In this case, respondents felt that the increased coordination and communication between the mission and UN humanitarian actors related to UN integration arrangements identified specific competencies of mission staff that could be used to provide this support. These examples were not widespread and there was concern among many humanitarian actors that support of this kind should only be provided in specific, agreed, circumstances. In other instances such as in CAR, the UN leadership (SRSG, DSRSG/RC/HC, OCHA head of office) has ensured ongoing engagement with non-state armed actors on humanitarian issues, even where the host state was sensitive to high-level UN contact with certain groups.

Some UN staff, both humanitarian and from the mission, acknowledged that there were benefits in sharing analysis of non-state armed actors to inform UN humanitarian engagement strategies. They also suggested that integration arrangements such as the DSRSG/RC/HC function, the strategic and operational coordination mechanisms such as SPGs and JPUs and planning processes could facilitate the appropriate exchange of information and analysis. Respondents highlighted that both MONUSCO and UNAMA were able, because of their political/peacekeeping roles and capacities, to develop analysis of non-state armed actors, including their dynamics and power relations at various levels, which could inform the development of humanitarian engagement strategies for UN agencies and OCHA. In Afghanistan, some UNAMA staff noted that their recently expanded role in relation to national reconciliation processes had enabled them to assess the appetite of armed non-state actors for engagement on humanitarian issues and identify key opportunities which UN humanitarian actors may be able to capitalise upon. A strategic discussion on how UN integration arrangements could support increased humanitarian dialogue with non-state armed actors is crucial given both the importance and the challenges of humanitarian engagement in Afghanistan, and the other contexts reviewed.

Negative impacts

On occasions the senior managers within a UN integrated presence have asked UN humanitarian actors not to engage on humanitarian issues with certain non-state armed actors. This is largely related to groups that are considered 'spoilers' to a peace process or political process and engagement was limited so as to ensure that it would not confer some level of legitimacy on these groups. In the most notable example, in Somalia humanitarian actors (UN and NGO) asserted that, in 2008, the then SRSG pressed UN agencies and NGOs not to engage with al-Shabaab, calling on them instead to dedicate their efforts to building the capacity and legitimacy of the TFG (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). This message was reinforced publicly by the SRSG, who went as far as saying that 'those who claim neutrality can also be complicit. The Somali Government needs support – moral and financial – and Somalis … as well as the international community, have an obligation to provide both' (Ould Abdallah, 2009). The SRSG later reportedly modified his position, indicating that he was simply asking that humanitarians inform the mission when and why they were engaging with non-state armed actors (HPG and Stimson, 2011). This did not have an operational impact since UN and non-UN humanitarian actors continued to engage with al-Shabaab where possible, but the incident undermined relations between UNPOS and the humanitarian community at large. This incident, referred to by many humanitarians outside Somalia, has also reinforced negative views of UN integration more broadly.

In one case in DRC, in 2007–2008 the political leadership in MONUC (now MONUSCO) strongly discouraged high-level engagement with Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP) leader Laurent Nkunda on the screening and release of child soldiers. This was during the Amani peace process, and MONUC was keen to ensure equitable engagement with all the armed actors involved. Engaging with the CNDP leader on this issue at that particular time, it was argued, would raise the group's profile, which would in turn undermine the UN's political strategy. As a result, pressure was placed on those involved in the initiative and the screening process was ultimately suspended, albeit with an agreement to raise the issue during the course of the peace process and resume screening at a later date. However, the peace negotiations stalled and the opportunity to screen children in the CNDP was subsequently lost. Some respondents highlighted the difficult position of the DSRSG/RC/HC in this instance, with responsibilities to both support the effective implementation of MONUC's political strategy and ensure positive humanitarian outcomes. The positive relationship between the then DSRSG/RC/HC and UN agency staff was deemed fundamental in brokering an agreement at the country level between UN actors, rather than necessitating an HQ-level process in which humanitarian stakeholders may have had less influence over the outcome because the decision-makers were further removed from the complexity of the context (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). However, the decision reached was not likely to have been acceptable to many humanitarian actors, including those outside the UN system.

Despite these incidents, UN senior management at HQ and in the field interviewed for this study indicated that there is no official or institutional UN policy of 'no contact' with non-state armed actors for humanitarian purposes. The experience in Somalia in particular indicates a lack of sensitisation of some UN mission leaders and/or a reluctance to acknowledge the importance of humanitarian engagement with all warring parties in a conflict. In the contexts reviewed in this study, the research team found that there was sometimes a lack of effective leadership from the UN integrated presence, particularly the DSRSG/RC/HC, in promoting the importance of humanitarian engagement with all parties to a conflict, including non-state armed actors. As a result, many UN humanitarian actors and their partners were working under the assumption that there was a *de facto* policy of 'no contact' with certain non-state armed actors, particularly the Taliban and al-Shabaab. In Afghanistan some UN agencies and NGOs were limiting their efforts or were operating a 'don't

ask, don't tell policy', whereby international staff assumed or knew that national staff were engaging with local-level Taliban but without the explicit authorisation or support of their organisation, or were engaging more strategically but were unwilling to share this with UNAMA staff (either for information purposes or to share analysis and lessons learnt).

The research indicates that the checks and balances in UN integration arrangements, such as the integrated policy fora and the reporting line of the DSRSG/RC/HC or RC/HC to the ERC, are not always sufficiently effective in protecting humanitarian principles. The lack of accountability for mission leadership in the Somalia case example was highlighted as a concern by many humanitarian respondents (see Chapter 3.2.2).

As with issues of access and security, UN agencies highlighted that being politically or generally associated with the UN mission, through highly visible UN integration arrangements, hampers efforts to engage non-state armed actors. This was the case in DRC during periods when MONUC and now MONSUCO actively supported or engaged in FARDC military operations against non-state armed groups. As one respondent noted, 'it's difficult to create a relationship with the FDLR when MONUSCO is partnering with the FARDC to hit them on the same day' (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). As discussed above, in some instances, UN operational security management decisions linked to UN integration arrangements are deemed to have also placed restrictions on the scope for UN agencies to engage non-state armed actors. In DRC and Afghanistan, military or security escorts were required for travel to most areas of the country, including areas controlled by non-state armed actors, even when UN humanitarian staff felt that this was not necessary. In Afghanistan, preliminary efforts by OCHA to contact the Taliban in some parts of the country were effectively curtailed because staff were not able to travel to meet Taliban representatives without security escorts. However, as noted in Section 4.1, the extent to which this risk-averse approach to managing security is linked to UN integration arrangements, as opposed to other factors inherent in the security management system, is unclear and requires further investigation.

4.4 Perceptions of humanitarian actors

This section focuses on the perceptions that the general population, non-state armed actors and governments have of humanitarian actors, and how these may be influenced by UN integration arrangements. It should be noted that the perceptions of these actors are difficult to assess in most contexts as they are extremely fluid and vary across time and place. A comprehensive survey of perceptions amongst national actors was not possible within the scope of this study.[56] The analysis provided here is informed by the views of other respondents, including national staff of international organisations and national NGOs, and by the secondary information available on this issue, including perception studies and public statements by non-state armed actors and governments.

From this information, it is evident that how UN humanitarian actors are perceived is influenced by the manner in which the UN political or peacekeeping component is perceived. This is independent of the existence of UN integration arrangements, though in contexts where the UN mission is contested and local actors distinguish between different UN actors, highly visible UN integration arrangements may compound perceptions that UN humanitarian actors are aligned with the UN political or peacekeeping mission. It is therefore crucial that UN integration arrangements are determined by an informed understanding of how humanitarian actors are perceived and what influence these arrangements may have in this regard.

4.4.1 Challenges of perception for humanitarian actors

The perceptions that local stakeholders have of humanitarian actors are important as they determine the extent to which humanitarian actors can gain the acceptance that is necessary to access populations in need. Earning this acceptance[57] is contingent upon acting, and being seen to act, in a manner that demonstrates that humanitarian organisations are distinct, in terms of their objectives, principles and operations, from political and military actors, that they do not support these other actors, either directly or indirectly, and that they will provide assistance to all who need it. In practice, earning this acceptance also requires investment in good-quality programming, transparency in identifying beneficiaries, engaging with all appropriate stakeholders and in some circumstances keeping a low profile (Egeland et al., 2010; HPN, 2011).

Humanitarian actors sometimes find it difficult to control how they are perceived. As noted by one commentator, 'in Afghanistan, whether they like it or not, aid agencies are seen as embedded in an externally-driven nation-building process that is being attacked by insurgents and that … is deeply flawed and unpopular' (Donini, 2006). Many respondents in DRC noted that, in volatile environments where contact between international humanitarian actors and local communities or other local actors is often restricted, rumours and allegations can thrive, undermining previously positive perceptions of humanitarian actors.

At times, host governments have been critical of the aid endeavour and have attempted to undermine humanitarian organisations in the eyes of the general population. In Somalia,

56 The budget and time-frame necessary to undertake methodologies required to asses perceptions (such as surveys) were not available to the research team. The research team also had only limited access to national authorities in Afghanistan and DRC, and despite attempts, no engagement with the TFG in Somalia.

57 An acceptance approach is defined as 'actively building and cultivating good relations and consent as part of a security management strategy with local communities, parties to the conflict, and other relevant stakeholders and obtaining their acceptance and consent for the humanitarian organisation's presence and its work' (Egeland et al., 2011).

for example, the government has made public statements that undermine the reputation of humanitarian organisations. For example, between 2007 and 2008, some members of the TFG heavily criticised NGOs in the Somali media, with the former Prime Minister, Ali Mohamed Gedi, accusing humanitarian organisations of being corrupt, of smuggling weapons, of profiting from deals with warlords and Islamists and having their own governance agenda in the country (Fletcher, 2007). In Afghanistan, the government has also openly criticised aid organisations, accusing them of corruption and undermining the authority of the government, in part to deflect attention from its own deficiencies (Donini, 2006). In DRC, the government has accused humanitarian agencies of refusing to work with regional and local governments, setting up parallel government services for their own gain (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). These perceptions of the host government, and their attempt to influence the perceptions of local populations, were prevalent in these contexts irrespective of the establishment of UN integration arrangements.

4.4.2 The impact of integration arrangements on perceptions of humanitarian actors

Positive impacts

Whilst the study team did not find examples of UN integration arrangements improving perceptions of humanitarian actors, some UN mission and agency communications staff recognised the need to mitigate the risk of negative impacts on humanitarian space through emphasising the distinction between the UN mission's role and objectives and those of UN agencies in public information and outreach. In the three main case studies, UN mission communications staff have sought greater collaboration with UN agencies on the nature and timing of public information activities so as to manage possible tensions relating to message content and priorities and, where appropriate, to ensure that messages are complementary. Communications staff in all three missions asserted that it was standard practice, when contacted by journalists about humanitarian or development issues, to immediately redirect enquiries to the appropriate UN agency, thereby reinforcing the distinction between agencies and the mission. In UNAMA, communications staff also supported agencies by sharing expertise and assets, and encouraging agencies to undertake more communications work of their own to channel messages to local populations, rather than the traditional focus on providing information for donors and other international stakeholders.

In DRC it was noted that, while it was important for the MONUSCO-run Radio Okapi to run programming of interest to communities so as not to appear as a MONUSCO propaganda initiative, more could be done to raise awareness of the diversity within the UN system in order to distinguish between humanitarian and other actors. In Somalia, UN-sponsored radio programmes have been reintroduced in Mogadishu and have a wide audience. These programmes could be used as a vehicle to raise public awareness of the distinctions between the various UN actors and activities. The UN Support Office for AMISOM (UNSOA)[58] (which is separate from UNPOS and the UNCT) has worked with private companies to undertake surveys of Somalis in Mogadishu to better understand their perceptions of AMISOM. Other actors may undertake similar surveys when security allows.

Negative impacts

Several respondents, including national NGOs and government officials, asserted that some national stakeholders, including local communities and non-state armed groups, understand the difference between humanitarian actors (UN and NGOs) and UN peacekeeping or political components. In Somalia this was believed to relate to the fact that many Somalis have experience of engaging with or even working for UN agencies over the last 20 years (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). In this regard, respondents highlighted the example of al-Shabaab, when it ordered the withdrawal of UNPOS from Baidoa in 2009 but allowed UNICEF and OCHA to remain. Several UN agencies in Afghanistan also pointed to their long-term engagement with communities in the country, or during the period when they were refugees in neighbouring countries, and felt confident that this relationship helped beneficiary communities to identify them as humanitarian actors.

This distinction was deemed to be under threat through greater association with the UN mission. While UN humanitarian actors are generally seen to be associated with the UN mission by virtue of being part of the UN, highly visible collaboration between UN humanitarian and political/peacekeeping components can reinforce this perception. For UN agencies, this association is particularly problematic where the UN mission is engaging in specific acts that are likely to prove controversial with national actors, such as issuing public reports on human rights or civilian protection, supporting elections or contested peace processes or actively engaging in the conflict. Being perceived as part of the UN's political or peacekeeping agenda was of particular concern to UN and non-UN humanitarian actors in Afghanistan, DRC and Somalia because the UN missions in these contexts have a mixed record and in some instances are deemed to be supporting a particular actor in the conflict. In Afghanistan, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan responded to a recent UNAMA statement on civilian protection by asserting that 'such propaganda and biased reporting only encourages the invading forces to increase their transgressions, which in turn damages the image of the *UN* [emphasis added]' (Zabihullah Mujahid, 2011). No distinction is made between the UN mission and UN agencies. In DRC, national NGOs noted that MONUC/MONUSCO's engagement in proactive military operations from 2005 onwards had undermined the previously positive perception of the mission's role,[59] and

58 UNSOA is a DFS support office, not a DPKO- or DPA-led political or peacekeeping mission. It is the only office of its kind and is tasked with supporting AMISOM and liaising with UNPOS.

59 It should be noted that, prior to 2005, MONUC was seen by some actors as having lost its credibility because it was unable to protect itself or its areas of operation against major assaults by non-state armed actors. The more robust use of force was for self-defence and for the protection of civilians in Eastern DRC.

linked this to widespread rumours that the UN had ulterior motives for engaging in DRC.

Some UN agencies in DRC were concerned that the use of MONUSCO military escorts, required to access populations in many areas, undermined their perceived independence and neutrality since 'the same MONUSCO contingent will bring ammunition to the FARDC one day and escort a UN agency the next. This creates a problem of perception for agencies' (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). One key issue highlighted by both NGOs and UN agencies in Afghanistan was the relocation of some UNAMA and UN agency staff to local ISAF bases during major security incidents,[60] which they felt demonstrated to the population and the Taliban the close relationship between the UN and ISAF.

In Afghanistan, there has also been some concern that UNAMA political staff have sought to use humanitarian 'successes' to further political objectives at the local level, negatively affecting the perception that humanitarian actors are neutral and independent. Some UNAMA staff seemed to accept this, admitting that humanitarian information was at times useful in relation to their political dialogue with the Taliban: 'they want to talk about more than just politics', as one respondent noted.

The issue of perception was a significant concern among both UN and NGO humanitarian staff interviewed for this study. Many felt that UN integration arrangements are in tension with the widely recognised humanitarian objective of ensuring distinctiveness from other actors in order to gain access to populations in need. However, there has been little discussion in UN integrated policy fora on how to assess and and analyse perceptions for planning and evaluation or to otherwise mitigate or overcome these tensions in practice.

4.5 Humanitarian advocacy

The research team documented a number of examples where UN integration arrangements have successfully augmented humanitarian advocacy on key issues, including access and the protection of civilians. There are also some examples where the UN mission leadership or senior staff have sought to limit or have undermined humanitarian advocacy when it was deemed to have a negative impact on political imperatives. These cases mainly related to individual UN mission staff, and the research team did not find evidence of any widespread practice in this regard. These incidents have however undermined the relationship between UN political/peacekeeping components and UN and non-UN humanitarian actors in particular contexts and have, to a degree, reinforced negative views of UN integration more broadly.

60 For example, in the immediate aftermath of an attack on the UN compound in Mazar e Sharif in April 2011, some UN staff were required to move temporarily to the nearest ISAF base.

4.5.1 Challenges to humanitarian advocacy

Advocacy on behalf of populations in need is a key component of any humanitarian response, whether through the media, public statements or quiet diplomacy. However, the extent to which humanitarian actors can undertake advocacy aimed at influencing key national or international stakeholders is often subject to a range of limitations, including the capacity, ability and willingness to undertake such efforts, particularly with respect to the HC. In some cases host states have imposed or encouraged self-imposed restrictions on public advocacy by both the UN and non-UN humanitarian actors. Coordinated advocacy by the humanitarian community is also often weak – the diversity of humanitarian actors, mandates and priorities often means that it is difficult to reach consensus on public messages, particularly on sensitive issues such as the protection of civilians and humanitarian access. These factors were prevalent in many of the contexts reviewed for this study.

4.5.2 The impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian advocacy

Positive impacts

In a number of contexts reviewed for this study, humanitarian advocacy was strengthened by the strategic use of the different components of the UN integrated presence. For example, despite some reservations about UNAMA's leverage on other issues (discussed below), its advocacy on protection of civilians demonstrates how the combined capacity of the various components of the UN family, under strong leadership, can take a principled stance in support of the Afghan people and successfully influence key stakeholders. The regular reports and press releases on civilian casualties, as well as the quiet diplomacy that has accompanied more public advocacy, have consistently highlighted the responsibility of all armed actors to minimise the impact of the conflict on civilians as required by International Humanitarian Law (IHL), and their shortcomings in this regard. Respondents explained that integrated reporting lines and policy fora made it possible to pursue a multi-layered approach that utilised the comparative advantages of the various components and levels of the UN integrated presence (SRSG, UNAMA Human Rights Unit, UN agencies). High-level advocacy with ISAF in particular has had significant success, including in the development of tactical directives on minimising civilian casualties and policies relating to the investigation of civilian casualties and compensation mechanisms (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011; HPG and UNHCR, 2011).

Recognising UNAMA's added value in this regard, the protection cluster is keen to see greater involvement of the UNAMA Human Rights Unit in its work, including on issues beyond civilian casualties.[61] UNAMA's engagement, it was explained,

61 A number of humanitarian actors have advocated with the UNAMA Human Rights Unit to expand its work to cover other key protection issues, including forced displacement. UNAMA Human Rights Unit has, however, been reluctant to do so because of capacity constraints and consideration of where its added value lies.

was important both for its technical and analytical contribution, and for the advocacy capacities it offers through the mission leadership with the government, ISAF and other national and international actors (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). In a similar vein, UN Mine Action staff specifically asked the recently-arrived DSRSG/RC/HC to issue a press release condemning the killing of two national mine action officers, using his DSRSG title (UNAMA, 2011). MACCA staff explained that citing his role as the DSRSG gave greater weight to the statement: 'we wanted to send a strong political message that this was unacceptable' (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). These examples offer positive practice that should be considered in more detail with a view to sharing lessons learnt.

In Somalia, complementary advocacy has been undertaken by UNPOS leadership on some humanitarian issues. One senior member of the humanitarian community recalled that it was helpful during the Djibouti process in 2008 that both the RC/HC and the former SRSG were delivering the same message to the TFG on the importance of the independence of humanitarian action (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). In this regard, the SPG in Somalia (created in 2010) was felt to be an important mechanism in which all components of the UN could be kept informed of key advocacy messages and strategies, and where necessary the sequencing of messages could be debated, ensuring more informed and transparent decision-making. Similarly, humanitarian actors credited the UNMIS DSRSG/RC/HC with ensuring that the UN position during the Darfur ceasefire negotiations in 2004/5 and in the AU-led negotiations on the DPA in 2005/6 promoted important humanitarian messages, including the requirement for all conflict parties to respect and ensure respect for IHL generally, and the rights of IDPs and other vulnerable groups in particular.

Given that political or peacekeeping components are not always best placed or willing to undertake humanitarian advocacy, the dual reporting line of DSRSG/RC/HCs to the SRSG in country and the ERC at headquarters is essential. In Somalia, the advantages of maintaining a direct channel through which to pass advocacy messages were evident in the example provided below, where the SRSG and RC/HC differed on the need for the UN to speak out on protection of civilians.

Integration arrangements are also believed to have strengthened opportunities for advocacy within the mission. In DRC, the UN humanitarian agencies and their partners, with the support of MONUSCO Civil Affairs, generally felt that they were able to influence the way that MONUSCO prioritised its military and political capacities in support of protection of civilians in parts of Eastern DRC. This influence was possible through the formalised integrated protection mechanisms including the protection matrix, SMG-P and SMG-PP, with improved protection outcomes as a result; in North Kivu, for example, MONUSCO was deployed in a high proportion of the areas that the humanitarian community had identified as 'must areas' (e.g. requiring an immediate deployment of troops to protect the civilian population). Interviewees from both the humanitarian community and the mission (civilian and military) asserted that the tools and mechanisms created had improved protection responses to populations at risk. They also asserted that these experiences had strengthened mutual understanding of the various players' differing priorities and the challenges faced by humanitarian and mission actors in relation to their respective roles in civilian protection. Even where the final decision regarding the deployment of mission resources was not in line with the requests made, some humanitarian actors involved in the process felt that their concerns had at least been given due consideration.[62] These tools and mechanisms offer positive practice that could be built upon, and may be relevant to other contexts.

More recently, several respondents in Afghanistan also referred to the potential for UN humanitarian actors to influence the position of UNAMA with regard to reconciliation efforts and, following advocacy by the humanitarian UN, the successful rejection by the SRSG of ISAF's attempts to link the humanitarian response with the Transition. This example illustrates the importance of the UN adopting a coherent advocacy position on key issues, taking a collective principled stance in the face of significant pressure from member states. Despite these positive examples, the advantages that UN integration offers in terms of augmenting the 'humanitarian voice' have not been fully exploited and it is evident that both UN mission and UN and non-UN humanitarian actors are at times reluctant to cooperate on these issues.

The examples in Afghanistan, Somalia and DRC are promising and demonstrate that, with a degree of trust and confidence, good leadership and effective processes and frameworks in place, such efforts can be highly effective. These contexts also demonstrate how important humanitarian experience in mission leadership is in determining whether UN integration supports or hinders advocacy efforts. Most of the positive examples provided were in part attributed to the humanitarian sensitivities of the SRSGs or DSRSGs concerned, as well as the effective use of other critical leadership capacities (e.g. a strong OCHA head of office; Force Commanders and Deputy Force Commanders open to working with civilian components (if not directly with humanitarians)). All of the DSRSG/RC/HCs interviewed for this study highlighted that their position within the UN mission structure ensured that they had additional capacity, knowledge and leverage within and external to the mission, which was crucial to effective advocacy on humanitarian issues. This was supported by SRSGs, Force Commanders, civilian staff and some UN humanitarian staff. However, most also acknowledged that the advantages of the DSRSG/RC/HC role were only brought to bear effectively when the individual in the position had the skills to manage competing priorities and exploit opportunities. Since the capacities of senior UN leaders are likely to continue

62 A small number of interviewees commented that greater transparency was needed to explain to the protection cluster why certain decisions that were taken at mission HQ were not in line with requests made.

to vary despite efforts to strengthen skills and competencies, establishing formal mechanisms and reporting lines can help to protect humanitarian concerns and ensure, despite changes in leadership, that integration arrangements support rather than hinder humanitarian advocacy.

Negative impacts

In some instances, individual mission leaders have sought to restrict humanitarian actors from speaking out on issues of concern at a time and in a manner of their choosing. In Somalia, there were serious concerns regarding adherence to IHL by Ethiopian forces and other conflict parties between 2006 and 2008. At that time, UN and non-UN humanitarian actors felt that this issue was being played down by the UNPOS leadership, who seemed to condemn atrocities caused by insurgents but did not sufficiently acknowledge or publicly denounce those committed by Ethiopian and TFG forces (Bradbury, 2010; HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). One senior member of the UNCT explained that the former SRSG sought to prohibit public advocacy by UN agencies on this issue; as a result, humanitarian messages on the protection of civilians had to be channelled through the ERC and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders so as not to hinder working relations at the country level (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Having a separate RC/HC with a direct reporting line to the ERC meant that the message was passed on, even if not at the country level.

There are also examples where the UN mission leadership has been reluctant to speak out on humanitarian issues, even when these were of a serious nature and required a more senior UN response, or where they had additional leverage with the target audience. Existing policy does not imply that integrated arrangements will necessarily result in decision-making that benefits humanitarian stakeholders, and in this case humanitarian advocacy. However, the following examples illustrate weaknesses in integrated arrangements or decision-making that undermined advocacy efforts by the humanitarian community. In 2010, UNPOS leadership was deemed to have been largely silent on the protection of civilians in relation to intensified fighting between AMISOM and TFG forces and al-Shabaab, which was resulting in high numbers of civilian casualties, many of them attributed to AMISOM by human rights organisations (see for example HRW, 2010). The lack of advocacy on this issue by UNPOS and other actors, and the overall deficiencies in the application of the rule of law, led several analysts to dub Somalia an 'accountability free zone' (Bradbury, 2010; Menkhaus, 2010). Whilst there was some attempt by UNPOS to influence AMISOM's behaviour through quiet diplomacy, there was a strong perception, both inside and outside of Somalia, that human rights abuses were being tolerated because of geopolitical interests in the country (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011; Menkhaus, 2008). This view was compounded when the former SRSG denied allegations of abuse and accused the Somali media of inciting hatred when reporting on an incident in which AMISOM allegedly targeted civilians in retaliation for a roadside bombing (HRW, 2009). Persistent media reporting and documentation by human rights groups since 2008 have led to greater public recognition in the UN of this issue and more active attempts by the UN, through training and secondment of technical staff, to ensure that AMISOM adheres to its obligations under international humanitarian law (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). However, this issue may have been dealt with more swiftly and effectively if the UNPOS leadership had weighed in earlier.

In DRC, MONUSCO had been reluctant to support humanitarian advocacy on the impact of operations by the LRA on civilians in the north-east of the country. Some respondents expressed concern that, despite UN humanitarian reporting on the issue, including through integrated mechanisms, MONUSCO was not responding either operationally or in terms of pressing the government and the FARDC to intervene to protect civilians (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).[63] Whilst this did not preclude advocacy by humanitarian actors, they asserted that their efforts were unlikely to be effective if not supported by MONUSCO since the mission had a far more influential relationship with the FARDC and the DRC government and they were unlikely to take the issue seriously if MONUSCO did not concur with the humanitarian community. These stakeholders believed that the operational impact was significant (no additional protection was afforded to affected communities), and asserted that the experience had undermined faith in the mission's commitment to the protection of civilians.

In Afghanistan, a number of respondents asserted that UNAMA's role in supporting the international community and the Afghan government has meant that it has, in the past, been reluctant to highlight the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation since this would cast a negative light on the overall international intervention in the country. A number of UN agency, NGO and other respondents referred to previous difficulties in gaining public acknowledgement by the mission of the unfolding humanitarian situation, including increasing displacement of civilians (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011), and asserted that this had weakened their position in advocating with donors and influencing donor policy. Given reluctance within the donor community, many of whom are parties to the conflict, a coherent voice from the UN integrated presence was imperative.[64]

The extent to which the UN mission can be an effective advocate on humanitarian issues is largely determined by its relationship with advocacy targets and the extent of its leverage over them. For example, the ability of UNPOS to

63 MONUSCO military staff argued that humanitarian reports were inaccurate because they did not have sufficient intelligence data. Interviews also highlighted that some key analysts and decision-makers in Kinshasa may not see the LRA as a major threat to the stability of the DRC and as such not as high a priority as maintaining stability in the east of the country.

64 This was part of the rationale for the HCT's call for the separation of the HC function from the DSRSG; the HCT argued that an independent HC could act as a stronger advocate for the rights of civilians affected by the conflict to receive humanitarian assistance.

influence the TFG over humanitarian access in the current famine response has been undermined by the presence of non-traditional donors, who present a ready source of funding for government programmes without the conditions or qualifications that UN agencies, funds and programmes normally require (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Several humanitarian actors argued that UNAMA would not be an effective advocate on some issues because it simply does not have political leverage over key stakeholders in Afghanistan; one respondent noted that 'the UN is a dwarf here, politically small, and has very little influence'.[65]

65 It should be noted that respondents' opinions on the size and influence of UNAMA varied. Many humanitarian actors commented on its large size/footprint and some felt that UNAMA had an overbearing presence in Afghanistan, especially in comparison to UN agencies or INGOs. Nevertheless, most agreed that UNAMA had little leverage, particularly in relation to ISAF or other major regional influences.

Chapter 5
Contextual factors impacting on humanitarian space

The previous chapters have focused on the development and implementation of UN integration arrangements, and the impact these arrangements have had on the five areas of humanitarian space. This chapter outlines some of the wider contextual factors influencing humanitarian space in the cases reviewed in this study. Although existing guidance indicates that UN integration arrangements should be appropriate to the context in which they are operating, it does not articulate what variables present in the context should be taken into consideration when assessing how UN integration arrangements could positively or negatively impact upon humanitarian space.

Across the different cases reviewed in this study, the research team found a number of common issues in the wider context that should be taken into account when designing UN integration arrangements in order to protect humanitarian space. These common issues are divided into three categories: the conflict and political environment; the historical role and mandate of the UN; and challenges to humanitarian space related to how the humanitarian system itself operates. Although dealt with separately, these issues interact with and influence each other.

5.1 Conflict and the political environment

5.1.1 The type and level of conflict

The conflicts considered in this study vary greatly and it is not possible to neatly categorise them by the label 'conflict' and 'post-conflict'. Each has multiple patterns of violence that change and interact over both time and geography. Each of the conflict situations reviewed in this study has entered periods of relative stability prompted by a peace agreement or an international intervention. However, these periods of 'stability' have often been characterised by high levels of violence and displacement, and in some cases have given way to renewed or intensified hostilities.

The type and level of the conflict, and how it is analysed by the UN system and others, has a bearing on the extent to which UN integration arrangements affect humanitarian space. Thus, UN integration arrangements in Afghanistan were based on a more positive analysis of the conflict than many humanitarian actors considered realistic. There was no provision for a separate humanitarian identity for the UN system, and both the RC/HC and OCHA were fully integrated into UNAMA. Even as hostilities intensified from 2006 the general analysis of the situation remained focused on the transition to recovery and development, and the original arrangements remained in place for several years. In contrast, a shared recognition in Somalia among UNPOS and the UNCT that the conflict is ongoing and frequently in flux has led to more limited structural integration arrangements, with the objective of safeguarding humanitarian space.

5.1.2 State and non-state actors

The ability of humanitarian actors to provide assistance and protection to affected populations depends crucially on the strategies and objectives of state and non-state armed actors, particularly their willingness or capacity to adhere to international humanitarian and human rights law. UN integration arrangements should be considered in light of what impact they may have on this relationship, and on the ability of humanitarian organisations to operate and be seen as operating in a manner that does not favour one actor over another.

The host state

The strategies and objectives of the host state, including in relation to humanitarian actors, vary over time and relate closely to its legitimacy and credibility. A national government may be the product of an inclusive peace process, and may have a measure of popular support and international legitimacy. Alternatively, it may have emerged as a result of an international intervention or a partial peace agreement that excluded key powerbrokers. Despite international recognition and support in this context, such a government may have little credibility with the general population.

Concerns about national and international credibility may influence the extent to which a government is willing to respect humanitarian principles. A host state may seek to play down humanitarian concerns and emphasise recovery and development to dramatise the benefits of peace, raise revenue or protect their image, as has happened in the DRC, Darfur and Somalia. In an attempt to avoid scrutiny of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, host state governments may also restrict humanitarian access, as was the case in Darfur, where the Sudanese government used complex bureaucratic arrangements to restrict movement and punish humanitarian actors undertaking activities related to the protection of civilians and conflict-related sexual violence. They may also seek to exert control over humanitarian assistance in order to increase their own legitimacy and bolster support from local populations; using the rhetoric of counter-terrorism, governments may also criminalise any

contact, including humanitarian engagement, with non-state armed actors (Pantuliano et al., 2011).

In Afghanistan, the government suffers from a lack of capacity and legitimacy and corruption is widespread (Barakat et al., 2008). There is a common perception that the UN-backed presidential poll in 2009, in which Karzai was re-elected, was marred by irregularities. Meanwhile, the government is failing to meet its responsibilities to its citizens with regard to the provision of basic services and the rule of law (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). In Somalia, the TFG lacks widespread representation, suffers from internal divisions and corruption and is largely confined to the capital, Mogadishu (ICG, 2011; HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). It has sought to control humanitarian assistance in order to boost its own limited legitimacy and undermine that of its opponents, and has at times made public statements that undermine the reputation of aid organisations (see Chapter 4.4).

In DRC and Liberia, national elections have brought opposition groups into peace agreements and have conferred a level of legitimacy on both governments, particularly in the eyes of the international community. However, the government in DRC still lacks the capacity to govern and control the whole of its territory and remains in conflict with some national and regional armed groups. The FARDC is implicated in sexual violence and other human rights abuses, further undermining the government's legitimacy. The authorities depend on UN peacekeeping operations to protect civilians and on the international humanitarian community to deliver basic services, though here too the government has been critical of humanitarian agencies, accusing them of refusing to work with regional and local governments and setting up parallel services for their own gain (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011).

UN integration arrangements should take into consideration how the government is perceived in order to identify how to position the UN integrated presence and arrangements publicly and privately in a way that does not undermine humanitarian space. This is of particular importance given that UN missions and UN development agencies are regularly mandated to support capacity-building with the government. Similarly, if the host state government is failing to respect IHL or is opposing the activities of humanitarian actors, integrated arrangements should identify the potential risks and benefits to mitigate these obstacles.

Non-state armed actors

Non-state armed actors in the contexts studied have varying ideologies, objectives and tactics. Some aim to capture state power or to force its reform, while others seek to de-legitimise the state or to cause or maintain its dysfunction. Their motivations may be political, ideological and/or economic, and they often lack the will or the capacity to respect IHL. Where humanitarian organisations are considered to be operating contrary to the objectives and ideology of these groups, they are likely to be at risk of attack or denied access. In other cases, for example in Afghanistan and Somalia, non-state armed actors may seek to show that the state and its supporters (including intervening forces) cannot protect civilians, including humanitarian actors (Hammond, 2008). Many have tried to use humanitarian assistance to support their military objectives, including demonstrating their authority and punishing communities deemed to be supporting the state. Groups looking to increase their popular legitimacy may be more open to engagement with humanitarian actors and more willing to support access. Thus, the strategies and objectives of non-state actors have a significant impact on humanitarian space; certain UN integration arrangements may create or exacerbate these challenges or potentially enhance opportunities for engagement.

The Taliban in Afghanistan espouse a radical Islamist ideology and aim to remove the current government. They have mainly targeted government and ISAF personnel but are also implicated in attacks against UN agencies and NGOs. They have systematically targeted civilians as part of their military strategy to discredit the government, undermine international military forces and gain publicity for their cause. Some largely criminal groups also reportedly use 'the threat of continued instability as a bargaining tool to increase their influence' and undermine the already weak central government (ANSO, 2011). However, as noted earlier elements of the Taliban leadership are becoming more interested in possible political negotiations and the need to increase popular support as a credible authority. This has given rise to greater sensitivity over their perceived adherence to international humanitarian law, including allowing access for humanitarian organisations.

The TFG's main opposition in Somalia, al-Shabaab, is believed to be internally divided. Elements linked to foreign fighters pursue a hard-line, global and radical Islamist ideology, while others are more pragmatic and nationally-focused, and thus more willing to engage in access negotiations with humanitarian organisations (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). The group lacks widespread public support, in part due to its poor human rights record. It promotes a strong anti-American and anti-Western discourse and has shown hostility to any entity, foreign or national, deemed to be supporting the TFG and its forces and/or Western governments (Bradbury, 2010; HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). This has led to abductions, interrogations and threats against some humanitarian organisations and their staff. In some areas, al-Shabaab has demanded that humanitarian assistance be coordinated through its local relief committees in an effort to boost support among local communities.

In DRC many armed groups are influenced by or originate from neighbouring countries and have shown a significant disregard for civilian security. Most however are believed to be motivated by economic gain rather than political aspirations (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Likewise in CAR and

Darfur, some armed actors do not espouse recognisable political or ideological agendas and attack civilians and humanitarian actors primarily for their assets and resources.

The capability of non-state armed groups is also relevant since it partly dictates the level of violence in an area, and whether the groups can understand and adhere to international human rights and humanitarian law. In Afghanistan respondents noted that ISAF military offensives against the Taliban have eliminated many of their higher-level military commanders, leaving younger, less experienced fighters to take their place. These younger militants often have less awareness or interest in engagement with humanitarian actors or the provision of assistance to communities under their control. Similar concerns were relayed in DRC and Darfur, where peace agreements or military offensives changed the character of the conflict and resulted in the splintering of armed groups and increased competition for economic resources to support military efforts.

5.1.3 The geopolitical context

UN integration arrangements should also take into account the manner in which the geopolitical context and the agendas of international political actors impact humanitarian space. Afghanistan and Somalia are both on the frontline of the 'global war on terror' and international forces are engaged as conflict parties. The attacks in the US on 9/11 put so-called fragile states at the centre of international politics, with many governments concerned by the potential threats that stem from these contexts, notably terrorism and organised crime. In practice, this has meant greater attention and engagement through a mix of political, military, development and humanitarian assistance, with the objective of mitigating or eliminating these threats. These so-called stabilisation strategies have often explicitly used humanitarian assistance in support of political objectives, undermining adherence to humanitarian principles (Collinson et al., 2010). In particular, these strategies have sought to explicitly support the national authorities and isolate non-state armed actors militarily, financially and politically.

In Afghanistan, the international agenda has involved the deployment of NATO troops to undertake counter-insurgency operations, the provision of political and economic support to the government and extensive investment in promoting development. US and other military forces have also explicitly used humanitarian assistance as a means to contribute to 'force protection' and to gather intelligence (Donini, 2011), supporting the view that humanitarian organisations are part of the wider international political strategy. In Somalia, the international focus has been on strengthening the TFG with political, military and economic assistance, and at times carrying out direct counter-terror operations with the aim of defeating al-Shabaab. The counter-terrorism agenda in Somalia has impacted on humanitarian space as humanitarian actors have found it difficult to operate in areas under the control of proscribed 'terrorist' organisations, as they risk violating legislation in donor countries if their assistance benefits these groups. Donor governments have also been less willing to provide humanitarian funds or to support humanitarian dialogue in these circumstances (Pantuliano et al., 2011).

In the DRC international engagement stems from concerns about regional stability, the scale of violence against civilians and opportunities to exploit mineral wealth. Unlike Afghanistan and Somalia, responsibility for stemming the violence and supporting the transition to peace has been given primarily to the UN. Likewise in Darfur, although there are some links to international counter-terrorism efforts international engagement since 2004 has been motivated by large-scale violence against civilians, a high-profile advocacy campaign in the US and concerns that the conflict in Darfur would undermine the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between North and South Sudan. The recent increase in international interest in CAR has stemmed from concerns at the destabilising effects of the Darfur conflict and the movement of the LRA from Uganda into CAR. International interest in Liberia, particularly from the US, was related to the role that former Liberian leader Charles Taylor had played in destabilising the Mano River region of West Africa and the systematic and widespread violence against civilians that marked the conflict that ensued, including the use of sexual violence against women.

5.2 The historical role and mandate of the UN

The way the UN has acted in various contexts in the past is highly relevant to how it is perceived today, and to the impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space. The UN (political/peacekeeping actors and specialised agencies, funds and programmes) often has a long history of engagement in the contexts in which it intervenes. This legacy has a significant impact on current levels of acceptance and support from international and national actors.

The credibility of the political UN in Somalia has been undermined by its actions in the past. In the early 1990s, the UN through UNOSOM embarked on an ambitious attempt to promote political reconciliation and state-building. The UN became increasingly seen as a partisan entity embroiled in a complex political process and waging a difficult battle against various warlords (Menkhaus, 2010). This ultimately forced the withdrawal of UNOSOM II in March 1995. Current support for the TFG needs to be understood in this context. Many Somalis are resentful of the UN's history of partisan engagement, which has been pursued without widespread consultation and is based on shifting mandates depending on the international political imperatives of the time (Hammond and Vaughan Lee, forthcoming 2011).

In Afghanistan, trust and confidence in the UN has been undermined by its support for the government and ISAF forces. It promoted a 'peace now, justice later' approach, which in practice accepted the inclusion of warlords in government and downplayed accountability for perpetrators

of past human rights abuses. Consequently, the UN is seen as a key protagonist in a partisan strategy that supported new political authorities rather than serving the interests of the Afghan people. UN backing for the contested presidential election result in 2009 has only reinforced this perception and further undermined the UN's credibility in the country.

5.2.1 The UN's mandate and mission

The UN's mandate, and the manner in which it is implemented on the ground, varies in each of the contexts studied. The mandate is determined by the UN Security Council, which in turn is influenced by the geopolitical context. UN mission mandates and how they are implemented will have a significant impact on how the mission is perceived by national and international stakeholders, and needs to be factored into any analysis of UN integration arrangements and humanitarian space. In contexts where the UN mission is mandated to support the host state, peace agreements or electoral processes which have limited credibility amongst national stakeholders, certain UN integration arrangements may affect the ability of UN humanitarian actors and their partners to maintain perceptions of neutrality and impartiality.

It is important to note that these mandates are adopted by the members of the UN Security Council and in line with the UN Charter – invoking the sovereign equality of all UN Members. In practice, this has mainly ensured an emphasis on supporting the efforts of the respective governments in each context, despite concerns about their legitimacy. Consequently, and as discussed in Chapter 4, where conflict is ongoing and non-state armed actors have been excluded or have opted out of the peace process tensions have emerged between UN political and military actors and UN humanitarian actors on UN integration arrangements. This is due to the difficulty the UN mission faces in positioning itself as an impartial (in the humanitarian meaning) actor and/or legitimate peace broker. In many of the contexts studied, the UN mission has or is perceived to have taken sides *in support of* the government and *against* some opposition groups. This is in contrast to the need for UN humanitarian actors to adhere to the humanitarian principle of neutrality, which requires them to provide humanitarian assistance without engaging in hostilities or taking sides in controversies of a political, religious or ideological nature.

The scope of mission mandates and their implementation also have a bearing on humanitarian space considerations. Mandates are often a long list of complex tasks, and in some instances include tasks which clearly overlap with the existing mandates of UN offices or agencies. As one respondent noted, Security Council mandates are usually a 'shopping list' of what Security Council members want rather than a strategic review of needs, and it is incumbent on the leadership of the mission to identify and manage competing priorities. Where political/peacekeeping mandates overlap with the mandates of UN humanitarian actors, tensions and competition have resulted in some instances. For example, as a legacy from the original mandate, the latest iteration of UNAMA's mandate provided in Security Council Resolution 1974 states that UNAMA and the SRSG should 'coordinate and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance' (UN, 2011b). This clearly overlaps with OCHA's humanitarian coordination role; since the reopening of an OCHA office in Afghanistan in late 2009 tensions have arisen between UNAMA and OCHA staff in some sub-office locations as a result. There are, however, recognised synergies on some humanitarian tasks, such as the prevention of sexual violence, support to children affected by armed conflict and the return, reintegration and resettlement of displaced persons. As noted by UNHCR, 'there are important links between the issues and populations of concern to UNHCR and the objectives of integrated missions' (UNHCR, 2009).

5.3 Challenges related to the humanitarian system

External factors – the political and security environment, respect for international humanitarian law by the main actors – crucially affect the ability of humanitarian organisations to respond effectively and safely to protection and assistance needs. However, internal factors related to the nature and operation of the humanitarian system itself can also have a significant bearing in this regard and should be taken into account when assessing the impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space.

5.3.1 Inconsistent adherence to humanitarian principles

Humanity, neutrality, independence and impartiality are fundamental principles underpinning humanitarian action. In practice, however, adherence to these principles is often inconsistent. Some humanitarian organisations accept funding from conflict parties, advocate for military intervention and sometimes fail to provide assistance to particular groups in need. These actions, evident in the three main case studies to varying degrees, are likely to influence how humanitarian actors are perceived, as will variations in the standards, quality and effectiveness of assistance.

5.3.2 Multi-mandated agencies and organisations

Most major humanitarian organisations (UN and NGOs) also engage in recovery, peace-building and development programming, such as capacity-building and community reconciliation. The risks facing 'multi-mandate' agencies have generated particular debate within the humanitarian community (see, for example, HPN, 2011). The guiding principles of development practice place greater emphasis on supporting governments, national ownership and state capacity-building, objectives which are not always consistent with humanitarian principles, or which can at times create tensions between development and humanitarian principles. This has been a contentious issue in Afghanistan, where organisations with a purely humanitarian mandate have been critical of the role of multi-mandate organisations and have

called on them to choose, in active conflict contexts, between providing relief and development assistance – with the latter seen as tantamount to taking sides and as undermining neutrality (Hofman and Delauney, 2010).

5.3.3 Competition and divisions within the humanitarian system

A large and diverse array of actors and networks are engaged in international humanitarian response, and coordinating them and reaching consensus on key issues is often a significant challenge. While they have different objectives and characteristics and undertake varying forms of action, they are seen as part of a loosely configured 'system' on the basis of broadly shared values and goals and their connection to a variety of interlinked funding and coordination structures. In practice, however, the system is characterised by high levels of competition (HPG, 2011b). Whilst common standards and codes of conduct have been developed, their application is often weak. In Somalia, for example, despite efforts to develop and agree on common standards, humanitarian organisations often do not adhere to them in practice, making it easier for the authorities and non-state armed actors to manipulate and extort assistance – diverting relief aid, collecting taxes and expelling organisations. Such acts rarely solicit a united response, largely because one organisation usually fills the gap left by another, or is willing to meet demands for fees that other organisations reject (HPG and Stimson interviews, 2011). Likewise, there is no common humanitarian position on the use of military assets (including UN peacekeeping assets) as a last resort in contexts such as Liberia and DRC.

5.3.4 The humanitarian system as a Western enterprise

Despite claiming to be based on universal values and goals, the origins and identity of the humanitarian community are predominantly Western. Most humanitarian organisations have their headquarters in the West, and the vast majority of humanitarian funding comes from Western states (Harvey et al., 2010). This, coupled with attempts to incorporate humanitarian assistance into Western-led stabilisation campaigns, particularly in Iraq and Afghanistan, has entrenched the view that humanitarian organisations are extensions of Western power – which some groups consider hostile. This is used as a justification for some attacks against humanitarian workers.

Chapter 6
Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This study was commissioned to analyse and document the impacts of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space, particularly in the five priority areas of security, access, engagement with non-state armed actors, perceptions of humanitarian workers and humanitarian advocacy. The aim was to identify positive and negative practices and establish a shared understanding of concerns related to UN integration and humanitarian space. Within that framework, this final chapter summarises the main conclusions of the report and makes recommendations towards the improved management of the relationship between UN integration and humanitarian space.

The benefits and risks of UN integration in relation to humanitarian space have been intensely debated for many years. Although there are differences in the way that HQ and field staff of lead departments, UN and non-UN humanitarian actors view integration, a central finding of this study is that in general positions on UN integration remain polarised. The difficulty in reconciling these different positions lies in the fact that some UN humanitarian staff are deeply sceptical that in practice UN integration can benefit humanitarian action and claim there has been little evidence to suggest otherwise, and many NGOs are opposed to UN integration on principle, arguing that, in conflict situations in particular, UN integration arrangements blur the distinction between humanitarian and political action, subordinate humanitarian priorities to political prerogatives and therefore place humanitarian action at significant risk. Many humanitarian staff interviewed, UN and non-UN alike, tended to emphasise the most negative experiences, such as Somalia and Afghanistan, as evidence in this regard. Conversely, many in the UN political and peacekeeping community have tended to emphasise positive experiences of UN integration, particularly in DRC and Liberia, and the significant progress made in policy development and practice in recent years. They also question some humanitarian concerns on the basis that no real evidence has been provided to substantiate them.

A climate of mistrust and negativity has thus prevailed and the entrenched nature of the positions of the supporters and detractors of UN integration is undermining the spirit in which UN integration is meant to be pursued, its effective implementation in practice and the objectives it seeks to achieve. Almost two decades after the search for greater coherence and integration began, the debate on its impact on humanitarian space remains polarised.

6.1.1 UN integration in practice

The concept of integration within the UN system has changed significantly since its introduction in the late 1990s. This evolution has included an acknowledgement that tensions sometimes emerge between the UN's responsibilities related to humanitarian action and its support to peacekeeping and peacebuilding. The Secretary-General's Decision of 2008 on UN integration sought to address these tensions by emphasising the need for flexibility in the form that UN integration arrangements should take in different contexts. The Secretary-General's Decision of 2008 also emphasised the need for these arrangements to 'allow for the protection of humanitarian space, to take full account of humanitarian principles, and to facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors'. The policy also states that integration arrangements 'can yield significant benefits for humanitarian operations'. However, whilst there is consensus within the UN system on the importance of coherence in maximising the individual and collective impact of the UN system, there are still serious concerns within some UN humanitarian agencies and among many NGOs regarding some of the structural arrangements put in place to achieve it (including the triple-hat role of the DSRSG/RC/HC and the integration of the OCHA office into the mission).

Integration arrangements have at times been designed to support humanitarian space, such as the separation of the RC/HC roles in Darfur and Somalia, or have resulted in decisions that protected humanitarian space. In some cases integrated arrangements have yielded benefits for humanitarian actors. For example, a number of respondents credited the unique role that DSRSG/RC/HCs can and have played in advancing humanitarian priorities in some of the cases reviewed. However, these positive experiences have often been obscured by negative experiences resulting from inconsistent implementation of the policy. In the contexts reviewed for this study, the extent to which the design, planning, implementation and review of integration arrangements have taken account of humanitarian principles and allowed for the protection of humanitarian space has been inconsistent. This has created or exacerbated tensions between the various actors within the UN system, and between the UN and the wider humanitarian community.

The inconsistent implementation of UN integration policy as it relates to humanitarian space stems from a number of factors. These include a limited understanding and awareness of the policy and guidance among humanitarian and political/peacekeeping staff, a lack of ownership of the policy by some UN agency and OCHA staff, a lack of understanding of the operational importance of humanitarian principles amongst some staff of lead departments, a lack of clear minimum standards related to humanitarian space issues in existing guidance, a lack of transparency and accountability in

decision-making and insufficient commitment and investment in the concept and its implementation across the UN system.

Understanding and awareness of the policy on UN integration, and the provisions relating to the protection of humanitarian space, were poor amongst UN and NGO staff in the contexts studied. This is not a new observation, and there are evident deficiencies in the dissemination of policy and guidance. In some field contexts, a number of UN agency and OCHA staff did not acknowledge or were unaware that the policy was system-wide, that their own headquarters had been involved in its elaboration or that it had been endorsed by their principals. Some UN mission staff were unaware of the safeguards relating to humanitarian space in the policy, or that humanitarian principles have operational relevance.

The main requirement of UN integration policy and guidance is strategic integration based on a shared vision, closely aligned goals and a strategic partnership between the UN mission and the UNCT. However, debates on integration arrangements have been dominated by the question of whether to integrate the RC/HC and/or OCHA functions into the mission structure, at the expense of efforts to support strategic integration; in practice achieving strategic integration, including the necessary buy-in from different stakeholders in the UN integrated presence, has been inconsistent.

An absence of clear guidance on how to address humanitarian space issues in UN integrated presences has contributed to the lack of understanding of the policy with respect to humanitarian principles, and subsequently inconsistent implementation in this regard. Recent IMPP guidance does not adequately specify how arrangements can be designed to help protect humanitarian principles, or how non-UN humanitarian stakeholders should engage in these discussions.

Throughout both the design and implementation of integrated presences, there have been instances where the level of transparency has been insufficient regarding decisions that impact upon humanitarian space. There were instances in most of the country case studies where decisions taken by the leadership at the UN Secretariat or in UN agency HQs differed from agreements arrived at (often through integrated processes) by the leadership of the integrated UN presence in the field. Whilst this may not be surprising given ongoing challenges in the relationship between HQ and the field, the rationale behind the decision or the process that led to it was often not adequately communicated to country-level stakeholders, increasing suspicions that humanitarian priorities were being subordinated by the political leadership even when this was not the case.

The study also found examples where UN political, peacekeeping and humanitarian staff at various levels did not comply with UN integration policy as it relates to humanitarian principles, the protection of humanitarian space and the facilitation of effective humanitarian coordination. Ineffective performance management and accountability mechanisms for UN staff are not related to UN integration per se. However, the lack of accountability for non-compliance with UN integration policy, including as it relates to humanitarian action, has failed to ensure corrective action or prevent the recurrence of decision-making that is inconsistent with this policy. It has also contributed to the sense of mistrust amongst many UN and non-UN humanitarian staff.

In some instances, planning processes for UN integration arrangements were successful (after much negotiation) at including and taking into account the concerns of humanitarian actors relating to the protection of humanitarian space and effective humanitarian coordination. In Darfur and Afghanistan, advocacy by UN humanitarian actors and their non-UN partners ultimately resulted in agreement to ensure a separate OCHA office and, in the case of Darfur, a separate RC/HC as well. In addition, ISF processes in Somalia, Afghanistan and the CAR helped to build confidence and greater mutual awareness of the respective objectives of UN humanitarian, political and peacekeeping components.

In order for UN integration to be successful, it will require a major shift in working culture, with clear senior-level commitment and the allocation of appropriate human and financial resources. However, across the UN system (lead departments, UN agencies and OCHA) there remains insufficient investment in and commitment to the implementation of the UN integration policy, including with respect to the protection of humanitarian space. Dedicated staffing capacity particularly at UN headquarters (of UN agencies, OCHA and lead departments) to support the development and implementation of integration policy is weak. Representation of OCHA and some UN agencies in critical high-level policy or operational discussions relating to integration is inconsistent and often lacking in seniority. In addition, there has been limited investment in the training and sensitisation of UN agency, OCHA and lead department staff in the field and HQ at all levels on the importance of integration for strategic objectives, and how concerns relating to humanitarian space can be addressed.

Existing HQ-level mechanisms such as the I(M)TFs, the ISG and the Policy Committee are not consistently used, and as a result have not always proved effective as transparent dispute resolution mechanisms when disagreements arise in the field relating to issues of humanitarian space.

6.1.2 The impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space

In line with the terms of reference, this study considered the impact of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space, based on the experience and examples collected at headquarters and in the field. This research indicates that UN integration arrangements have had both positive and negative impacts on the five priority areas of humanitarian space. There

are however differences in impact, both positive and negative, for UN humanitarian actors (UN agencies and OCHA) and for NGOs and other non-UN humanitarian actors. Impact is also related to the context, including the political and conflict environment, and to the understanding of the concept of UN integration amongst staff and its implementation.

The impact on UN humanitarian agencies is qualified in part by their status and mandates – they are UN entities and cannot therefore be neutral and independent in the manner of the ICRC, for example, even in non-integrated UN presences or countries with no UN political or peacekeeping presence. For NGOs and other non-UN humanitarian actors, the positive and negative impacts are less pronounced than for UN agencies because they are not part of the UN system per se.

The research team found examples where UN integrated arrangements had created or exacerbated risks to humanitarian space. However, there were also examples of UN integration arrangements taking into account humanitarian principles and yielding benefits for humanitarian operations. It is important to note that the primary risks to humanitarian space were contextual, such as the status and nature of the conflict, the nature of armed actors, the behaviour of host governments, the policies of other member states including relating to funding and comprehensive approaches and the characteristics of the humanitarian community itself, such as adherence to humanitarian principles and the lack of collective and coherent responses to these broader challenges to humanitarian space. The positive and negative impacts of UN integration arrangements should be understood in relation to these broader characteristics, which differ in each context. The impacts of UN integration arrangements on the ability of UN and non-UN humanitarian actors to operate in a principled and effective manner should be comprehensively assessed in all contexts, and the risks of certain country-level arrangements, particularly highly visible or structural arrangements, should be weighed in relation to the potential benefits to humanitarian operations.

To the extent that motivations for attacks on humanitarian workers can be identified, the research team was not able to find examples where there was a clear link between UN integration arrangements and attacks on humanitarian personnel of UN or non-UN entities. These findings are based on data and analysis provided by security experts (UN and non-UN) and assessments, which indicate that the primary risks to the security of humanitarian workers relate to multiple and often overlapping economic, criminal and political factors. However, UN integration arrangements that increase the visible association of the political or peacekeeping mission with UN humanitarian agencies may, in certain circumstances, pose an additional risk to the security of humanitarian personnel. This was the case for example in DRC when MONUC became a party to the conflict, and in Afghanistan and Somalia, where the UN mission mandate and activities are strongly contested by one or more of the conflict parties. In these environments threats to the UN mission increase, and through increased association can extend to UN humanitarian agencies and, to some degree, their partners. The design and review of UN integration arrangements, as well as decisions relating to the strategies, programmes and activities of the whole UN presence, should be based on an appropriate evaluation of this risk in addition to all the other risk factors prevalent in a particular context.

There are a number of instances where UN integration arrangements, in particular the DSRSG/RC/HC role and integrated coordination mechanisms or structures, have facilitated the use of mission civilian and military assets to support increased humanitarian access. In Darfur, DRC and Liberia, UN humanitarian actors and some of their NGO partners have benefited from area security patrolling and the use of transportation assets provided by the mission. However, access to civilian and military assets was not always consistent or desirable and greater efforts are required to ensure that mission military assets are used only as a last resort.

UN integration arrangements and UN operational security management are linked through the DO function. Some experiences on the ground, particularly in integrated UN peacekeeping missions, suggest that this link may have contributed to a more risk-averse approach to managing security, which in turn affects the ability of UN humanitarian actors to engage with non-state armed actors and other stakeholders to negotiate access to populations in need. However, it remains unclear to what extent the risk-averse approach is due to operational security management policies and practices as against UN integration arrangements; this issue requires further exploration.

The research team did not find evidence of a consistent practice of political interference in humanitarian engagement with non-state armed actors. However, the research team documented some examples where the leadership or individual staff of UN political or peacekeeping missions had sought to limit humanitarian engagement with certain groups regarded as 'spoilers'. In one instance there was an operational impact, but even where this was not the case these experiences undermined the relationship between the mission and the UNCT and NGO partners, and have contributed to negative views of integration amongst many humanitarian actors more broadly. The examples documented also highlight the need to strengthen the skills and competencies of senior UN managers with respect to the operational importance of humanitarian principles, the need for greater accountability for poor performance in this regard and more effective use of the DSRG/RC/HC's dual reporting line to both the ERC and SRSG.

Evidence on the extent to which UN integration arrangements influence perceptions of humanitarian workers is limited as the research team was unable to undertake a comprehensive survey amongst local communities, state officials and armed

groups of how they perceived humanitarian actors because the necessary budget, time and security conditions were not available within the scope of this study. Whilst perceptions are extremely dynamic and surveys can only provide a snapshot in time, regular monitoring of perceptions is important to inform security management, access, humanitarian engagement, advocacy strategies and, in particular, decision-making on the most appropriate integration arrangements in a particular context.

Integration coordination mechanisms and structures made feasible complementary advocacy efforts by the various components of the UN integrated presence. In a number of instances, this advocacy has been used effectively to reinforce humanitarian messages on key issues such as the protection of civilians and humanitarian access. There are also a number of examples of how integration arrangements have increased the influence of UN humanitarian actors in decision-making processes inside the UN integrated presence, as evidenced in relation to protection of civilians in the DRC. Experiences in Afghanistan, DRC, Liberia and the CAR regarding complementary advocacy are promising and demonstrate that, with a degree of trust and confidence, strong leadership and effective mechanisms for developing joint strategies, consensual efforts can be highly effective.

There are examples where UN mission staff have either sought to limit humanitarian advocacy or had undermined advocacy efforts of humanitarian actors. This was not widespread but has, in some instances, had operational impact and has affected relations between the mission and the UNCT and its partners.

Context and risk analysis is fundamental to developing effective humanitarian response strategies. As demonstrated in DRC, CAR and Liberia, UN integration arrangements that strengthen exchange of information and analysis between humanitarian and political/peacekeeping components can facilitate a more comprehensive context and risk analysis by the humanitarian community and ensure more informed decision-making by the whole UN integrated presence on issues pertinent to humanitarian space. In practice, however, opportunities to exchange information and analysis were often limited by a general lack of trust and confidence between the mission and the UNCT and its partners in many of the contexts reviewed.

This lack of trust has wider implications. The Secretary-General's 2008 Decision on integration indicates that integration arrangements should 'facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors'. However, as noted earlier, the relationship between many in the NGO community and the UN system has been characterised by suspicion and a lack of trust resulting from objections to the concept on principle, a lack of understanding of the policy and poor implementation of UN integration in practice. There has been insufficient constructive dialogue between NGOs and the UN on this issue. As a result, some NGOs have begun withdrawing from UN humanitarian coordination mechanisms in Afghanistan, and have threatened to do so in Somalia. This could have serious operational implications for UN agencies, which rely on NGO partners for delivery in many contexts. It may also undermine the humanitarian reform process – which has sought to strengthen partnerships and coordination within the humanitarian community.

6.1.3 Managing the relationship between UN integration and humanitarian space

Integration is the modus operandi of the UN system in crisis contexts where there is a UN peacekeeping or political mission and a UN Country Team presence. Noting the evidence of both positive and negative impacts of UN integration arrangements on humanitarian space, there is evidently a need to more effectively manage the tensions between humanitarian and political/peacekeeping priorities. A number of factors must be considered in this regard.

First and foremost, UN integration arrangements should be determined by the context, as reflected in UN integration policy since 2006 and repeatedly reiterated (including most recently in the SG Decision of May 2011). The nature, dynamics and stage of the conflict, the geopolitical context and the history of UN engagement all have a bearing on how UN integration arrangements affect humanitarian space. All of these factors should inform the design, implementation and review of UN integration arrangements. While recent mission planning processes have taken the context into account during the design of integration arrangements, the analysis should be improved and broadened to include the factors this study has found to be particularly relevant.

The Secretary-General's Decision of 2008 emphasised the strategic partnership between the field mission and UN Country Team. This approach, of working towards the achievement of a jointly agreed vision, has benefits in both post-conflict and conflict contexts. Country-level arrangements, including strategic coordination or more formal structures, developed to support implementation of this vision should be determined by a comprehensive assessment of the context and risks, including as they relate to the achievement of the UN's humanitarian objectives.

In high-risk environments where the UN political or peacekeeping mandate and activities are challenged or contested, violent conflict is highly likely or ongoing and actors are able and willing to distinguish between humanitarian and other entities, greater caution in establishing certain integrated structures is required. Particular structural arrangements, such as the integration of OCHA into the mission or the creation of the triple-hat DSRSG/RC/HC function, are not likely to be appropriate in such environments since a more distinct identity for UN humanitarian programming and coordination may be necessary to ensure more effective operations. In more

stable environments, where the UN's political or peacekeeping mandate and activities are not generally challenged by armed actors on the ground, structural arrangements such as DSRSG/RC/HCs and joint programmes can harness the efforts of the UN family towards peacebuilding and peace consolidation. These structural arrangements do not, however, negate the importance of a shared strategic vision for the UN presence: this is essential in ensuring a more informed and coherent approach to the UN's objectives and to maximise the collective and individual impact of the UN presence towards peace consolidation. The primary emphasis should be on developing shared objectives and establishing SPGs, JPUs and mechanisms for shared analysis and regular and open communication and information exchange.

Second, in contexts where there is significant humanitarian need, the mandate, scope and nature of the political and peacekeeping mission should be informed by humanitarian considerations. Mandates provided by the Security Council can blur the distinction between political/peacekeeping and humanitarian responsibilities within the UN integrated presence. Coordinated sensitisation of member states is needed to ensure that the language used in mandates supports rather than undermines the distinction between the UN's humanitarian and political or peacekeeping objectives and to minimise overlap between mission and UN agency or OCHA functions.

Where there are appropriate shared objectives between humanitarian, political and peacekeeping components, such as the protection of civilians and support to durable solutions for displaced populations, the need for a coherent and complementary approach is evident. Shared objectives of this nature provide a common platform on which to build confidence and identify the respective contributions that each component of the UN integrated presence can make in realising those objectives. As noted in the recent Secretary-General's report on civilian capacity in the aftermath of conflict, it is important to ensure that, where there are shared objectives, the division of labour is based on the respective competencies of the various components of the UN, thereby avoiding duplication of effort and resources.

Third, effective leadership at all levels of the UN system is crucial to the success of integrated arrangements. Decisions and risks must be informed, shared and supported by stakeholders from the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary Generals, heads of agencies, funds and programmes, down through all levels of leadership at headquarters and in the field. In particular, senior UN staff operating in UN integrated presences (both in missions and UN agencies) should have the appropriate skills and competencies to lead or support the humanitarian response, including the ability to manage competing priorities. Noting the scale and nature of the tasks being asked of SRSGs and DSRSG/RC/HCs and the weaknesses of many senior managers in understanding both the operational relevance of humanitarian principles and how to manage them in relation to other mission priorities, informal and formal mechanisms should be put in place to support senior mission staff.

Fourth, guidance should clarify how integration arrangements should take account of humanitarian principles and allow for the protection of humanitarian space. Greater clarity is necessary on minimum requirements relating to humanitarian space issues in integration arrangements. The upcoming revision of the IMPP should more explicitly and clearly define how decision-making processes can be more inclusive and what type of integration arrangements can help to protect humanitarian space. More consistent and strategic engagement from humanitarian actors in the design, implementation, monitoring and review of integration arrangements is also necessary to ensure more informed decision-making. Greater sensitisation of non-humanitarian UN staff on the operational relevance of humanitarian principles may also help mitigate tensions arising at both HQ and field levels.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Capacities, awareness-raising and accountability

1. The ISG should consider how additional dedicated capacity can be created to support more consistent implementation of context-specific UN integration policy and guidance, including on issues related to humanitarian space.
2. The ISG should develop a more streamlined package of policy and guidance and a more comprehensive dissemination strategy for all UN staff. This should include greater clarity on how integration arrangements can protect humanitarian space and good practices to illustrate this. The guidance package should also specify what dispute resolution mechanisms are in place for disagreements arising at HQ and in the field, and how these mechanisms should be utilised. Lead departments, agencies, funds and programmes (in particular the members of the ISG) should ensure comprehensive dissemination of this guidance and related training for all levels of staff at HQ and in the field, including pre-departure briefings for staff deploying to UN integrated presences for the first time.
3. The scenario-based exercises for in-mission integrated planning and training which are currently under development should include scenarios that help participants to identify and manage tensions between humanitarian and other mission objectives.
4. As UN integration is an institutional priority, lead departments and UN agencies should make it clear to all staff that this is the modus operandi in the relevant contexts. This should be reflected in internal communications and training. In line with the practice for senior DPA, DPKO and OCHA managers in UN integrated contexts, promotion of and compliance with the policy should be integrated into the terms of reference of relevant senior UN agency staff (e.g. country directors and their deputies) serving in UN integrated presences. This

includes compliance with the provisions on humanitarian principles and protecting humanitarian space.

5. The accountability and performance evaluation-related aspects of the SG Decision of May 2011 should be implemented by all ISG members, thereby ensuring more robust accountability for non-compliance with the UN integration policy, including as it relates to the protection of humanitarian space.
6. The IASC, through global cluster leads, should develop and disseminate a guidance template on the interaction between UN integrated presences and relevant clusters (e.g. protection, emergency telecommunications, logistics) to be adapted, where relevant, at the field level in UN integrated presences.

6.2.2 Confidence-building

7. The ISG should consider how its members can help build confidence and trust between the humanitarian (UN and non-UN) and political/peacekeeping communities, both at the HQ level (New York, Geneva and Rome) and in the field. This should include extending a standing invitation for an NGO representative to join the ISG principals' meetings. The ISG and IASC should also consider mechanisms for greater engagement and information exchange, including thematic or country-specific briefings by lead departments in IASC meetings and joint field workshops in UN integrated contexts.
8. Lead departments must ensure consistent engagement with the UNCT and HCT in each country context in the design, planning, implementation and review of UN integrated presences.

6.2.3 Leadership

9. Lead departments and OCHA should ensure that staff in senior mission management posts in UN integrated presences, particularly DSRSG/RC/HCs, have the necessary skills and competencies (e.g. as outlined in the HC competency framework) to effectively manage competing humanitarian and political or peacekeeping priorities. Where missions have mandated responsibilities which relate to humanitarian objectives, for example protection of civilians, mission leaders should be selected taking into account, among other factors, competencies related to these objectives. Similarly, other key leaders, including Force and Deputy Force Commanders, heads of UN agencies and in particular the head of OCHA should have the experience and training to work effectively in UN integrated presences.
10. Existing initiatives, including DSRSG and RC/HC retreats and peer networks, should be strengthened to ensure more effective mentoring and greater exchange of experiences and advice between senior managers, including current and former staff serving in leadership posts.

6.2.4 UN integration arrangements

11. The provision in the SG's 2008 Decision on integration stating that the context is the determining factor for UN integration arrangements must be more consistently implemented in practice. This should be facilitated through a more comprehensive and inclusive assessment of the context and the various risk factors prevalent in it, including in relation to humanitarian space. Such assessments should take place during initial planning and throughout the duration of the integrated presence in order to ensure appropriate adaptation to changes in the mission mandate and/or the context on the ground. The revised IMPP guidance should include frameworks that can assist planners and decision-makers to identify and assess risk factors that integrated arrangements should seek to prevent or mitigate.
12. Revised guidance on integration should also reflect the fact that highly visible integration arrangements, including integration of the RC/HC and OCHA functions, can become an additional risk factor for humanitarian space in particular circumstances, namely when violent conflict is ongoing, a UN peacekeeping or political mission's mandate and activities are opposed or contested by one of the parties to the conflict and that party is able and willing to distinguish between humanitarian and political international actors.
13. In all circumstances, adequate mechanisms and processes should be established to facilitate strategic coordination, communication and exchange of information and analysis within the UN system, including on context and risk analysis, security and other operational issues. Agreed confidentiality protocols that clarify what information/analysis can and cannot be shared should be established. In addition, standing capacities that facilitate information gathering, analysis and dissemination across and beyond the UN system (a JMAC or similar structure) should be established in each integrated context to support more comprehensive and informed decision-making across the UN integrated presence, including in support of humanitarian considerations.
14. IMTFs should be used more consistently, effectively and transparently for arbitration and dispute resolution on country-specific issues. Although the ISG should continue to focus primarily on thematic issues related to integration, it should be used as an alternative mechanism for dispute resolution when an IMTF cannot resolve the issue or the Policy Committee is unable to address it in a timely manner.

6.2.5 Security Council mandates and mission components

15. The ISG, in consultation with non-UN humanitarian actors, should identify and agree on appropriate terminology for Security Council mandates relating to humanitarian objectives. Once identified, the relevant ISG members should undertake more coherent advocacy with Security Council members to ensure consistent use of appropriate terminology. The ISG should also review relevant components within UN integrated missions (e.g. related to humanitarian coordination or the return of displaced populations) and provide guidance to Member States on related budgetary issues, with a view to minimising

overlapping functions and the duplication of resources with UN humanitarian agencies.

6.2.6 Security of humanitarian workers

16. Current guidance on UN operational security management should be reviewed with the aim of ensuring that UN integration arrangements are taken into consideration in security risk assessments, analysis and mitigation strategies. The risk of association should be considered for both UN agencies and NGOs.
17. UNDSS and NGO Security Focal Points (including through the Saving Lives Together initiative) should ensure more regular interaction and exchange of information and analysis, particularly in relation to the potential risks for non-UN humanitarian actors of association with the UN integrated presence. Given concerns regarding confidentiality and the inappropriate use of information, confidentiality protocols should be developed between OCHA and UN agencies and the UN political/peacekeeping components.

6.2.7 Humanitarian access

18. The Department of Field Support-led Support Working Group of the ISG should step up efforts to develop templates and procedures that allow for greater interoperability and sharing of assets, including to non-UN partners, where appropriate and in line with existing guidance on the use of military assets.
19. In line with existing guidance on the use of military escorts, a comprehensive risk assessment (by all relevant stakeholders) should be undertaken prior to use of UN military escorts to understand the potential short- and longer-term risks relating to perceptions of humanitarian workers.

6.2.8 Engagement with non-state armed actors

20. Senior UN leadership at HQ and field level should uphold the ability of humanitarian actors (both UN agencies and NGOs) to engage with all parties to a conflict for humanitarian purposes. The HC should ensure that other mission leaders, including SRSGs and DSRSGs (political), are kept abreast of humanitarian engagement strategies, so as to inform their own engagement strategies and to facilitate appropriate sharing of analysis. Within the UN integrated presence, the DSRSG/RC/HC (or RC/HC) should reinforce the importance of humanitarian engagement through internal meetings, policies and guidance, and through leading by example.
21. Under the leadership of the HC, the HCT, in consultation with senior UN mission leadership, should develop a strategy in each UN integrated presence to engage non-state armed actors, outlining roles and responsibilities and adhering to principles of 'do no harm'.

6.2.9 Perceptions of humanitarian workers

22. Regular surveys should be undertaken of how local communities and, where feasible, non-state armed actors perceive different categories of international actors, including humanitarian workers, and to what extent these perceptions are influenced by association with the UN political or peacekeeping mission. In conjunction with other data, survey findings should be used to inform security, humanitarian access, advocacy and humanitarian engagement strategies. Where appropriate, and in line with existing guidance, these should be undertaken with integrated mission actors, such as joint mission analysis centres, joint planning units and civil affairs sections.
23. HCTs in UN integrated contexts should ensure greater investment in public information and outreach to local populations aimed at increasing awareness/sensitising communities to humanitarian principles, objectives and ways of working. This should be carried out in consultation with and, when appropriate, in coordination/collaboration with communications staff from the UN mission.

6.2.10 Humanitarian advocacy

24. Under the leadership of the HC, HCTs in UN integrated contexts should develop humanitarian advocacy strategies and decide on the mechanisms for delivering those messages. Where the comparative advantage is clear, and in agreement with the DSRSG/RC/HC (or RC/HC) and HCT, other UN mission leadership (e.g. the SRSG) should privately and where appropriate publicly support humanitarian advocacy.
25. The dual reporting line of the DSRSG/RC/HC to the ERC – for his/her HC role – should be utilised more consistently and effectively to facilitate an additional channel for humanitarian messages.

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Annex 1

Secretary-General Decision No. 2008/24 – Integration

United Nations Nations Unies
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: Members of the Policy Committee
A: Participants at the 25 June Policy Committee meeting
(see distribution list)

DATE: 26 June 2008

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

FROM: The Secretary-General
DE:

SUBJECT: **Decisions of the Secretary-General – 25 June meeting of the Policy Committee**
OBJET:

Decision No. 2008/24 – Integration

i. Building on existing guidance, the Secretary-General reaffirms integration as the guiding principle for all conflict and post-conflict situations where the UN has a Country Team and a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation or political mission/office, whether or not these presences are structurally integrated. A list of situations where the principle should be applied is attached. The following are endorsed as defining elements of integration:

a. The main purpose of integration is to maximize the individual and collective impact of the UN's response, concentrating on those activities required to consolidate peace.
b. To achieve this main purpose at the country level, there should be an effective strategic partnership between the UN mission/office and the Country Team, under the leadership of the SRSG (or ERSG), that ensures that all components of the UN mission/office and the Country Team operate in a coherent and mutually supportive manner, and in close collaboration with other partners.
c. The country level arrangements should reflect the specific requirements and circumstances and can take different structural forms. In all cases they should include (i) a shared vision of the UN's strategic objectives, (ii) closely aligned or integrated planning, (iii) a set of agreed results, timelines and responsibilities for the delivery of tasks critical to consolidating peace, and (iv) agreed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation.
d. An integrated approach and integration arrangements can yield significant benefits for humanitarian operations. Integration arrangements should take full account of recognized humanitarian principles, allow for the protection of humanitarian space, and facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors.

ii. To ensure that the elements listed in recommendation (i)(c) are in place, all integrated UN presences should have a shared analytical and planning capacity, as well as an integrated strategic framework that should be reflected in and draw on all other UN planning, programming and budget instruments. **(Action: all integrated UN presences, supported by relevant HQ entities)**

iii. Lead departments will maintain Headquarters level task forces for each integrated UN presence to ensure coherent and consistent support and policy guidance. The PBSO will support the lead departments, as appropriate, particularly in relation to countries before the PBC. The task forces will include relevant Secretariat departments and offices, agencies, funds and programmes and consider all issues that have strategic significance or programmatic impact for the UN presence in the relevant country. They will meet at the Director level as needed. **(Action: DPKO, DPA)**

iv. An Integration Steering Group, convened by DPKO, consisting of the key UN entities and meeting at the ASG level at least on a quarterly basis, should help ensure implementation and progress on integration related issues. Initial follow-up recommendations will be presented to the Policy Committee by December 2008. **(Action: DPKO)**

v. DPA, in coordination with relevant UN Country Teams and UN entities at headquarters, will review current arrangements in countries with DPA led missions/offices and agree on steps to implement the above and other relevant guidance, as necessary, by the end of 2008. **(Action: DPA)**

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cc: Deputy Secretary-General
Mr. Nambiar
Mr. Kim
Mr. Pascoe
Mr. Guéhenno
Mr. Holmes
Ms. Arbour
Mr. Akasaka
Mr. Sha
Mr. Michel
Mr. Dervis
Mr. Duarte
Mr. Guterres
Ms. Venemen
Ms. Sheeran
Ms. McAskie
Mr. Orr

Annex

List of current countries/areas where the principle of integration should be applied[1]

Africa

Burundi (BINUB)
Central African Republic (BONUCA/MINURCAT)
Chad (MINURCAT)
Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI)
DRC (MONUC)
Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS)
Liberia (UNMIL)
Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL)
Somalia (UNPOS)
Sudan (UNMIS/UNAMID)
Uganda (Office of the Special Envoy)

Middle East

Iraq (UNAMI)
Israel/oPt (UNSCO)
Lebanon (UNSCOL)

Asia

Afghanistan (UNAMA)
Nepal (UNMIN)
Timor-Leste (UNMIT)

Europe

Kosovo (UNMIK)

Americas

Haiti (MINUSTAH)

[1] The following countries/areas with UN peacekeeping mission are not included since the relevant missions are not multi-dimensional, as required by decision (i): Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), Georgia (UNOMIG), Cyprus (UNFICYP), Pakistan and India (UNMOGIP), and Western Sahara (MINURSO). Also not included are countries with Special Representatives/Envoys that do not have a presence at the country level, e.g. Myanmar, or countries where the UN has some political involvement but no formal political mission/office/envoy (e.g., Kenya). Lastly, political offices with a regional mandate are not included (e.g., Central Asia and West Africa).

Annex 2
Terms of Reference

Study on Integration and Humanitarian Space

Background

The Secretary-General's June 2008 Policy Committee Decision on Integration reaffirmed integration as a guiding principle for all conflict and post conflict situations where the UN has a Country Team and a multi-dimensional peacekeeping operation or political mission/office. The decision specifically stated that "an integrated approach and integration arrangements can yield significant benefits for humanitarian operations", and that "integration arrangements should take full account of recognized humanitarian principles, allow for the protection of humanitarian space, and facilitate effective humanitarian coordination with all humanitarian actors".

While humanitarian actors recognize that the challenges to humanitarian space are many and varied, when it comes to integration, there continue to be serious concerns for humanitarian operations in four key areas: (i) the impact of integration on the security of humanitarian workers (ii) the impact of integration on access to and of beneficiaries and the ability of humanitarians to interact with non-state armed groups (in some instances labeled as "terrorist" groups); (iii) the related issue of how integration arrangements may influence the perception of humanitarian actors by beneficiaries, state, non state-actors, etc.; (iv) humanitarian advocacy or the 'humanitarian voice' in integration contexts.

Additional areas of concern are the impact of integration on the functioning and effectiveness of humanitarian leadership, humanitarian coordination arrangements and information exchange, particularly with regard to non-UN humanitarian actors.

In its meeting of 12 March 2010, the Integration Steering Group (ISG) considered the issue of "Humanitarian Space and Integration" and agreed on the need for an analytical study aimed at assessing the positive or negative impact of specific integration arrangements on humanitarian space.

Objectives of the Study

The proposed study will aim to:

- Analyse HQ and field practices in an effort to document the positive and/or negative impacts of integration arrangements on humanitarian space, particularly in the priority areas of security, access, negotiations with non-state actors, perception, humanitarian advocacy, coordination, information management and leadership;
- Identify practices whereby integrated approaches have yielded significant benefits to humanitarian operations and conversely where they have negatively impacted humanitarian operations;
- Establish a shared understanding of concerns related to integration and humanitarian space;
- Make recommendations towards the improved management of the positive and negative impacts of integration arrangements on humanitarian space considerations.

Methodology

The study will begin with a desk review of existing documentation on the issue of integration and humanitarian space (e.g. country analysis, policies, studies and lessons learned,[69] evaluations, after action reviews, end of assignment reviews, etc.)

The review, which will be undertaken by the focal point departments (DPKO, DPA and OCHA), in collaboration with ISG members and in consultation with key stakeholders (UN, international organizations, NGOs, etc.) will aim to develop the study's research questions.

On the basis of the desk review and the research questions, an external and independent Study Team will be commissioned to undertake an analytical study of the issue. The study phases will include stakeholder consultations, focused interviewing and four field reviews of integrated UN presences.

With regard to field reviews, these will include peacekeeping and special political missions' contexts and aim to cover different integration arrangements (i.e. structural and non-structural) and represent the scope of humanitarian space challenges. Possible countries for review include Afghanistan, DRC, Haiti, Lebanon, OPT, Somalia and Sudan.

Outputs/Products

The exercise will culminate in the preparation of a study to be submitted to the ISG, and other relevant stakeholder fora, presenting challenges and considerations related to integration and humanitarian space.

The study will propose strategic approaches and practical modalities to safeguard the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver effectively on their humanitarian mandates and missions in contexts where the concept of integration applies.

In particular, the study will aim to provide system-wide analysis, guidance or compilation of good practices and lessons learned on initiatives, mechanisms, procedures, arrangements or policies that have supported addressing humanitarian space concerns in relation to integration.

69 The study will review and aim to build on existing analysis, for example the Independent Study for the Expanded UN ECHA Core Group (May 2005).

Management of the Study

Under the aegis of the ISG, the study will be jointly managed by DPKO's Policy Evaluation and Training Division, DPA's Policy and Mediation Division and OCHA's Policy Development and Studies Branch. The management team will work in close coordination with the ISG Focal Point Group. OCHA will also ensure close collaboration with the IASC Focal Points on Integration and the IASC Core Group on Humanitarian Space.

An external consultant team will be selected to carry out the review. The report will be submitted to the ISG and relevant stakeholder foras and disseminated publicly.

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hpg
Humanitarian
Policy Group