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Creating humanitarian space: a case study of Somalia

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“What I’m trying to say, my dear Ingrid, is that a language is the product of a people’s attitude to the world in which they find themselves.”¹

Introduction

In the past few years, the situation in Somalia² has repeatedly been described as one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world (Menkhaus 2009, UNHCR 2009a). In early 2009 over three million people were estimated to be in need of aid, a 77% increase in less than a year (OCHA 2008, 2009).³

It has been estimated that as many as two-thirds of Mogadishu’s population might have fled their homes (Lindley 2009). Many of these forcibly displaced persons gathered along the roads outside Mogadishu in an area known as Afgooye, with numbers ranging from 200.000 to over 400.000 (ICG 2008, UNHCR 2009b). However, the amount of aid they have received is far from the largest in the world; in fact, it is closer to none. The starting point for this paper is to ask why this is so.

A key factor relates to the lack of humanitarian space in Somalia. This is a much used term, often used to describe the level of access for humanitarian agencies and the environment which they operate in. But the actual meaning of the term remains somewhat unclear. In this paper, I will investigate both why and how humanitarian needs can be put in focus and practically addressed through a clearer understanding of ‘humanitarian space’.

This paper is based on fieldwork and interviews carried out in 2009 in Europe and Nairobi (For a note on methodology, see⁴). It is divided in four main parts: in the first develops a conceptual understanding of ‘humanitarian space’; the second provides a brief overview of Somalia; the third represents an exploratory study of humanitarian operations in Somalia; and in the final part I seek to draw some analytical conclusions.

¹ From Nuruddin Farah’s book *Gifts* (1993:49) where Yussur, a Somali woman, is trying to explain Ingrid, an European aid worker, her resentment against portraying western aid as a ‘gift’.

² In this paper, unless otherwise stated, ‘Somalia’ will refer to the South-Central part of the internationally recognised Republic of Somalia.

³ Most, if not all, numbers quoted in this paper are inheritably problematic. For a discussion of this aspect, especially IDP numbers, see Dubernet (2001).

⁴ A note on methodology; It was while staying in Somaliland, in 2008, that I first read about Afgooye (Bloomberg 2008) and decided to write about the humanitarian response to the situation there (Abild 2008). In March/April 2009 I returned to Nairobi for interviews and met with representatives of 16 humanitarian agencies operating in Somalia. Taking into account those held in Europe and over phone, the total number of interviews conducted for the paper was 52. In the analysis of the information gathered from the interviews I used a method described as ‘thematic analysis’ (Boyatzis 1998, Bloor et al. 2001, Taylor & Board 1984). Anonymity was an important prerequisite both for me as a researcher and my informants as representatives of humanitarian agencies. I decided not to use any names of persons with operational connections. I also decided not to reference interviews directly unless cleared with the informant. Some agencies were also made anonymous, and a few interviews were rendered completely anonymous. For more information, see ‘List of Interviews.’ The obvious and crucial exception in relation to my fieldwork and informants was the lack of access to Somalia and perspectives from the actual people in need. An important critique of this focus is that it is part of trend towards policy oriented research (Bakewell 2008).

Part I: Conceptualising humanitarian space

Humanitarian space is a much used term, but its real meaning remains somewhat unclear. The most often credited source of the term is Rony Brauman, a former president of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), who used it in the early 1990s (Barnes 2009, Beauchamp 2008, Givoni 2008, IASC 2008, Lie 2008, Torrenté 2006, Thürer 2007, UNAMA 2009, von Pilar 1999, Wagner 2006). Brauman described it as a ‘space for humanitarian action’ where ‘we’ are free to operate. This is in line with what today seems to be the most commonly used meaning for the term, namely ‘operating environment’ (ECHO 2004) or ‘agency space’ (Leader 2000), distinct and separate from any political aspects or influence.

Another study which includes a separate annex specifically seeking to map out the meaning and origins of the term claims that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was the first entity to use the term in 1992 (Sida 2005). Moreover, yet another study, from one of the largest research projects on humanitarian action, the *Humanitarianism and War Project* (H&W), suggests that they were the first to coin and publish the term, in their study *Humanitarian Challenges in Central America* in the early 1990s (Eguizábal et al. 1993).

All of these claims regarding origin, however, appear to be inaccurate. The earliest published reference to the term that I have found is in the article *Humanitarianism and Politics in Central America* written by Gil Loescher, which was first published as a working paper in 1986.⁵ It was later published in *Political Science Quarterly* (1988) and subsequently as a chapter in a book (Nichols & Loescher 1989). The article touches upon several of the themes being raised in the current debate and explicitly mentions the shrinking of independent humanitarian space in the political landscape of nations. Humanitarian space is described as similar to what is termed ‘operating environment’ or ‘agency space’ today.

The geographic location of Loescher’s study matches the one by the H&W project, but more importantly, it confirms the view of a former staff member of the UNHCR in the region, who recalled that they used the term *espacio humanitario* (humanitarian space) in UNHCR operations in Central America during the 1980s (Durieux, interview 18.01.2009). However, Durieux’s conception of humanitarian space differs from that of Loescher. It seems the term was used more to describe a space for dialogue, focusing on the shared concern and different actors’ responsibility for humanitarian needs.

Durieux claims that the UNHCR used the term to describe how humanitarian issues could function as a topic that could open a political dialogue between parties in conflict. He described it as *un espacio dis-tension* (a space of ‘un-tension’ or ‘relaxation’) where conflicting parties could talk and agree on humanitarian issues as a common ground, a starting point, for a further political dialogue.

Durieux’s claim is confirmed by an article in *International Journal on Refugee Law* (IJRL) published in 1991 (Cuellar et al.). Importantly, this view of humanitarian space acknowledges that the space includes more actors than just agencies, focusing on different actors’ responsibility for humanitarian needs and that the actual humanitarian needs seem to be in the centre – not solely the role and access of agencies.

⁵ My thanks to due to Jean-Francois Durieux for helping me to find the article by Loescher as well as the later cited IJRL article.

There are two reasons why it is both important and interesting to consider these earlier origins of the term “humanitarian space”. The first is that this history clearly indicates that the challenge of creating an operating environment for humanitarian agencies is far from new. The second is that the two earliest sources uncovered, those of Loescher and Durieux, are not identical in their description of “humanitarian space”, and that both offer valuable contributions to the conceptualisation of humanitarian space.

*International humanitarian law*⁶

There is also a useful legal framework for the conceptualisation of humanitarian space in IHL. Although it is certainly not the case that all parties to conflict adhere to these laws, one can argue that the principles laid down in IHL compromise customary law (Henckaerts 2005)⁷. The rules that are particularly relevant for humanitarian space, all derived from the Geneva Conventions and its additional protocols, are:

- The authorities – either the state or the occupier – have the clear responsibility to ensure the survival and wellbeing of the civilian population. (Geneva Convention IV 1949:Art.55)
- The primary responsibility is the *de-facto* authority’, but if they cannot meet this responsibility, they are obliged to allow humanitarian and impartial relief to reach persons in need. (Protocol I 1977:Art.70(1))
- The first additional protocol of the Convention states that this is just as paramount if the civilians are belonging to the adverse party in a conflict. (Protocol I 1977:Art.70(1))
- The second protocol states that this is also the case if the conflict is an internal one, between non-state actors. (Protocol II 1977:Art.18(2))
- IHL clearly states that authorities retain the right to control certain aspects of humanitarian relief provided. (Geneva Convention IV 1949:Art.59 (4)).

There is one major difference between this framework and what seems to be the dominant understanding of humanitarian [agency] space in the literature: the role of authorities and armed groups. A major challenge often identified is that agencies are too closely associated with military forces, or that the military encroaches upon ‘their’ space by delivering aid themselves (Olson 2006, Wheeler & Harmer 2006). Afghanistan and Iraq are currently the most discussed cases where agencies ‘struggle for a humanitarian space’ (von Pilar 1999).

However, there are several earlier examples of military forces being involved in humanitarian operations, for example: the no-fly zones in Northern Iraq which sought to protect the

⁶ This part draws extensively on the following articles:

GROMBACH WAGNER, J. (2005) *An IHL/ICRC perspective on 'Humanitarian space*

STOFFELS, R.A. (2004) *Legal regulation of humanitarian assistance in armed conflict: Achievements and gaps*

BEAUCHAMP, S. (2008) *Defining the Humanitarian Space through Public International Law*

⁷ Unlike treaty law, customary law is not written, but considered to be widely accepted international norms.

humanitarian operations in the Kurdish areas (Landgren 1995); the UNISOM/'Restore Hope' operation in Somalia; and the NATO campaigns in the Balkans with the creation of so-called 'safe areas' - described by some as a 'humanitarian space' (Dubernet 2001, Yamashita 2004).⁸

All of these operations represent conflicts which have been fought by western countries and partly justified with 'humanitarian'⁹ arguments. In all the cases, western humanitarian agencies have been heavily involved in different aspects of the conflict, including advocating for intervention (Slim 2001).

Investigating this debate regarding the connections between humanitarian action and force is beyond the scope of this paper. However, the perception in the literature and amongst agencies that authorities and armed actors should not be involved in humanitarian issues. This ideal is problematic in relation to the framework outlined in IHL: if it is the *de-facto* authorities' responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of civilians, it is difficult to see how the United States for example could not be involved in humanitarian issues in Afghanistan or Iraq.

In fact, it is their obligation to do so, but it is also their obligation to deliver assistance based on humanitarian needs alone and not in a manner that is partial or discriminatory in any way.¹⁰ This means that the US cannot claim these operations to be a part of 'winning hearts and minds' (Powell 2001) much less describe implementing humanitarian agencies as 'part of the combat team' (Ibid). It is, however, difficult to see how humanitarian agencies can claim the humanitarian space as being 'theirs' and thereby claiming monopoly on the concern for human suffering.

The consequences of 'agency space'

In fact, such a claim can potentially be harmful. If humanitarian agencies take all the responsibility for humanitarian concerns, this can actually take responsibility away from the actors who both cause suffering and have the obligation to respond to it (Nightingale 1864)¹¹.¹² It has also been argued that aid not taking the political context into consideration can be

⁸ *Humanitarian Space and International Politics: The Creation of Safe Areas* (Yamashita 2004) and *The International Containment for Displaced Persons: Humanitarian Spaces without Exit* (Dubernet 2001) both focus on the concept of 'safe areas' as humanitarian spaces, and although they present contributions to the debate of what humanitarian space means, they do not focus on neither the operating environment of humanitarian agencies nor humanitarian principles. It is therefore debatable how valuable a contribution they represent for this paper.

⁹ As Terry (2002) and many others point out, this term is in itself highly problematic: if the word humanitarian refers to the equal value and importance of each human beings needs and dignity, the act of killing one in order to save another cannot be termed humanitarian.

¹⁰ Humanitarian and development assistance to the areas around Kabul, while bombing the southern parts of the country, is in this sense highly problematic.

¹¹ Interestingly, this concern was raised very early on in the history of humanitarian relief organisations. In a letter by Florence Nightingale to Thomas Longmore named 'on the Geneva Convention', sent July 23 1864, she specifically raises her concern that the voluntary provision of relief aid will take the responsibility away from governments (Nightingale 1864).

¹² Credit is due to Jacob McKnight, DPhil candidate at the University of Oxford and former staff member of MSF in Somalia, for pointing out this source.

seen as enabling warring parties to focus their resources on fighting, seeing that humanitarian agencies will deliver to the needs of their population (Anderson 1999, Terry 2002).¹³

Further, I would argue that for humanitarian agencies to claim such a responsibility is bordering on paternalism and trusteeship, a self proclaimed role as an outside guardian providing for all those in need: not to mention that it might promising more than agencies can deliver. More importantly, I would argue that this transfer of responsibility away from contextual actors to imagined outside-context agencies can be seen as depoliticising the consequences of conflict.

Another problematic aspect of agencies perceiving the humanitarian space as ‘theirs’ relates to the issue of discursive power (Foucault 1984). By characterising the humanitarian space solely as an operating environment for humanitarian agencies, it is these agencies themselves who end up controlling the understanding of this space. Agencies often hold information relating to a given situation and suggest how it should be solved, they do the actual operations and they evaluate them.

Obviously, this is an exaggeration, but arguably a useful and salient one since it is related to the wider debate regarding accountability, the fundamental debate regarding humanitarian assistance done by agencies: who are they accountable to? To the persons in humanitarian need? To the local authorities? To their donors? Or to themselves? (Harrell-Bond 1986, 2002, Marriage 2006, Slim 2002, Stein 2008, Terry 2002, HAP 2007,2008).

Addressing the humanitarian imperative

In this part of the paper I have identified two main different understandings of the term humanitarian space: 1) agency access and operating environment in a space outside politics; and 2) a metaphor for dialogue and humanitarian responsibility. I argue that both offer useful contributions to the conceptualisation of humanitarian space, but that it still requires a more contextual, beneficiary-focused approach.

There might only be small nuances in how humanitarian space is described in words, but the differences can be of fundamental significance. The view of Simon Springett, a long term humanitarian worker with Oxfam, captures this importance:

‘Humanitarian Space is often described as agencies ability to access communities in need, but this is flawed, it should be about communities ability to access relief’
(Springett, interview 04.03.2009)¹⁴

This captures what this paper will argue: humanitarian space should not primarily be about agencies, but rather about the people in need – it should be about addressing the humanitarian imperative in a way that enhances the capabilities of those in need.

¹³ This is a central part of the concept ‘Do No Harm’, referring to humanitarian agencies responsibility not to cause harm through their operations, a phrase and concept which will be central throughout this paper.

¹⁴ This view is in some way represented in an article by Bonwick published in *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine* (2003), where he asks ‘Who are we seeking access for – ourselves, or those we seek to assist?’

Part II: Somalia: an overview

A striking paradox about Somalia is how it is so internally divided when in cultural, ethnic, religious, language and historical terms it is highly homogenous (Lewis 2008). The primary division within Somalia is the clan system and between nomadic- and agro-pastoralists (Mukhtar 1996 in Ahmed & Green 1999). The colonial powers of Italy, Britain and France exploited the geographical areas dominated by clans to split the nation up into an Italian colony (today's South-Central Somalia and Puntland), the British protectorate Somaliland, the French Colony Djibouti, the North Eastern Province in Kenya and Ogaden in Ethiopia (Lewis 2004). The five-pointed star in the Somali flag today represents these five areas, which are often referred to as Pan-Somalia.

In 1960, the Somali Republic was formed by amalgamating the Italian and British territories. However, the Eurocentric state model that was introduced did not last, and in 1969 General Siyad Barre took power in a military coup wherein the army seized control without encountering opposition (Lewis 2008). After a few years, the coup had turned into a military regime.¹⁵

The Ogaden war, which commenced in 1977, is often referred to as the start of the collapse of the Somali state (Samtar 1994, Ahmad & Green 1995). The source of conflict was Siyad Barre's support to Somali rebels in the Ogaden region. This in turn forced the Soviet Union, a former ally of Somalia, to choose sides and support Ethiopia. Given Cold War dynamics, this led to America's support for Somalia's failing dictatorship (Meredith 2005).

The conflict caused the massive displacement of more than one million forced migrants, and defeat in the war led to the gradual weakening of the regime (Ahmed & Green 1995). When state stability – including the ability to provide security to its citizens – disintegrated, both the regime and the country as a whole became increasingly dependent on clan structures, paving the way for the destructive aftermath that came in the wake of the regime (Bestman 1999).

In 1988 Siyad Barre signed a peace agreement with Ethiopia in which both states promised not to support insurgent groups. In Somaliland, a strong independence movement had sprung up, but with the end of Ethiopian support the Somali state started a brutal campaign against the separatists. The main city of Hargeisa was heavily bombed and more than half a million people were internally displaced and another half a million sought refuge in Ethiopia (HRW 2007).

Despite this, by early 1991 the Somaliland forces overcame Siyad Barre's forces, declared independence (which until this day has not been internationally recognised) and started an impressive peace and reconciliation process involving the disarmament of militias – all without external involvement (Lewis 2008, Stremlau 2009).

¹⁵ Much has been written about the regime of Siyad Barre and his 'Scientific Socialism'. Most of it critical, but there are some of the state led initiatives worth recognising. One example is the national literacy campaign in 1973-74 and the state led response to the droughts of the same period. The government set up relief camps and introduced resettlement schemes on agricultural projects and fishing settlements. Another state led humanitarian initiative was the response to the displacement crisis from the Ogaden war. Many of the projects and camps were funded and run by Somalis and the state led Somali Refugee Commission, although UNHCR was also involved. (Lewis 2004, 2008)

Other parts of the country were also unravelling.¹⁶ In Mogadishu, inter-clan fighting threatened the President's rule and in a desperate attempt, he turned the State's weapons on its own capital city, causing a popular uprising which forced Siyad Barre to flee Mogadishu in January 1991 (Lewis 2008).

The era of the warlords

The severe insecurity of the early 1990s, combined with exceptional drought, led to an extreme humanitarian crisis where up to 500 000 people are estimated to have died, up to two million people were forcibly displaced, leading to a massive inflow of international aid into the volatile situation (Ahmed & Green 1995, HRW 2007, Lewis 2008).

It was in this environment that the UN Security Council, in April 1992, authorised the use of military force so as to be able to 'use all necessary means to establish ... a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia' (UNSCres.794:para.10,1992). In December the same year, the US launched the UNITAF operation known as 'Operation Restore Hope'.¹⁷ After a catastrophic military operation with heavy casualties, especially civilian, the US pulled out in 1994 and the UN withdrew in 1995. Most non-UN aid agencies followed shortly after.

The combination of no state authority, extreme insecurity and massive aid inflows created a new type of business people – 'the warlords' (Hartley 2004, 2008, Gundel 2002, 2003, 2006). A negative circle is a metaphor which aptly illustrates how these warlords gained from the continuation of insecurity: the first crucial part was that the warlords developed an interest in continuing conflict through exploiting aid, selling arms and grabbing land.

The next part of the circle was normal people who were forced to turn to what protection and stability they could obtain, often in the form of warlords associated with their own clans. Humanitarian agencies faced the same predicament, but not only regarding security, also in terms of the local partners and community representatives upon whom they were reliant in order to deliver aid.

Many of these partners and representatives either became, or already were, warlords. This scenario completed the circle: the very insecurity and instability that the warlords had caused also became their source of income – and the very problem agencies tried to address became worse because of their own operations – a situation that arguably continues today.¹⁸

¹⁶ Puntland did not declare itself an autonomous state until 1998, and is also not internationally recognised.

¹⁷ The operation would later be known as 'Black Hawk Down' from the incident where two US Black Hawk helicopters were shot down and 18 American Soldiers, 133 Somali militia men and an unknown number of civilians were killed (Church et al. 1993, PBS Frontline)

¹⁸ Many informants claimed that contemporary warlords were involved or benefitting from humanitarian operations in 2009, and several even claimed that some representatives of large international humanitarian organisations can be characterised as warlords themselves.

The Islamic Courts Union

In 2000, the President of Djibouti launched a peace initiative based around clan elders. This quickly failed, and in 2002 the regional body IGAD organised another initiative supported by western countries, this time based on former warlord (Lewis 2008). In 2004, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) was created, headed by President Abdullahi Yusuf, himself a former war lord (ibid).

By this time, a new type of authority had emerged in Mogadishu. In an aligning of interests, local businessmen and neighbourhood sharia courts co-operated in an attempt to curb the control of warlords and disarm militias (De Waal 2004 in Verhoeven 2008, Menkhaus 2007a). The courts, with roots that went as far back as 1994 (HRW 2007), were becoming increasingly popular by providing a degree of law and order as well as welfare services through religious charities. When the courts, together with the business community, proved capable of providing security – possibly the most highly prized commodity in Somalia – their popularity soared (Gundel 2006, Menkhaus 2007b, 2008).

In order to challenge the Islamic courts of Mogadishu the new President Yusuf and other former warlords created ‘The Alliance for Peace and Fight against Terrorism’ (APFT) which received support from America (Menkhaus 2008). In response, the Islamic courts formed the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) and a war for the control of Mogadishu broke out (Gundel 2006). Within a few months, the ICU had defeated the APFT and their authority subsequently spread throughout South-Central Somalia (Menkhaus 2008).

Under the ICU, South-Central Somalia received some semblance of a government which provided services and security for the first time in 16 years. Business was booming, the port of Mogadishu was reopened, school attendance increased, road blocks were removed and most importantly the rule of warlords was curbed (Hartley 2008, Menkhaus 2007b, 2008, ICG 2008). The ICU showed positive signs with regards to aid and worked to reduce clan tendencies (Marchal 2007a). Although far from representing a liberal, western model, the ICU was the first example of some sort of a local bottom-up authority with popular legitimacy.¹⁹

However, the ICU was not a closely united government. When the more hard-line elements of ICU started fuelling regional dynamics by supporting armed opposition forces against Ethiopia, including groups from Eritrea, another Muslim long term enemy of Ethiopia, regional tensions gradually increased. In December 2006 Ethiopia invaded Somalia under the pretext of supporting TFG and ousting ICU. America also backed the invasion, as part of their own counter-terrorism policy (ICG 2008, Marchal 2007b, Menkhaus 2008, Kagwanja & Juma 2008)

¹⁹ The ICU were popular, but not on all aspects, especially with regards to their gradually more religious policies of banning *qat* and music

*The self-fulfilling prophecy of a 'failed state'*²⁰

Arguably, the reason for American backing the Ethiopian invasion was fear of the Somali 'failed state' in which 'terrorism' and 'radicalisation' would grow. In this view, the ICU were seen as a neo-Taliban who had to be removed (Verhoeven 2008). The coalition did succeed in ousting the ICU, but instead of creating stability, they were perceived as an external occupier and created the optimal breeding ground for resistance based on Islamic nationalism (Menkhaus 2008).

At the time of the invasion, the ICU had serious internal tensions, and when the overall structure disappeared, numerous sub-groups emerged in the vacuum, many of them far more violent than the ICU had been. These groups were not a coherent front, but still had a very clear common cause of fighting the occupation by Ethiopia and its American backers – both considered to be arch-enemies.

One of the groups, or rather several groups, were called al-Shabaab (loosely meaning *the youth*). In the vacuum left by the demise of the ICU, al-Shabaab grew to become the main opposition against the foreign occupation, and despite their relatively strict public policies, their popularity became considerable both nationally and internationally as diaspora and sympathetic states supported them as the main resistance group (ICG 2008).

Al-Shabaab led the main insurgency against Ethiopian forces and the TFG, attacking civilian and humanitarian representatives connected to the TFG to undermine their authority (Amnesty 2008). When their leader, Ayro, was killed in an American missile strike, deemed a 'success' (NYT 2008), al-Shabaab splintered even further, with some parties starting a brutal retribution campaign of killing aid workers who they saw as representatives of the West, forcing humanitarian agencies to limit their operations even further (Amnesty 2008, Menkhaus 2008).

However, reports claimed that Ethiopian and TFG forces were behind the most numerous and serious human rights violations, including the blockage of aid (HRW 2007). The international actors who choose to work with the TFG, primarily the UN, ended up supporting an extremely unpopular regime, resulting in the UN being perceived as completely partial.

This had serious consequences for other humanitarian actors, enforcing the perception of them as political actors and partial in the conflict. The role of AMISOM – the African Union force of 4300 soldiers based in Mogadishu, mandated and supported by UN SC-resolutions, with the highly political mission of supporting TFG – was and *is* especially problematic.

To summarise, one can describe the 'American-Ethiopian invasion' (Marchal 2007b) as an absolute policy failure where most of the results were opposite to the purported objectives (Menkhaus 2008). Instead of ousting a radical authority and creating stability, the invasion gave rise to several more radical authorities, causing extreme insecurity and fuelling anti-western, anti-UN sentiments.

²⁰ Title borrowed from *The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy of Failed States: Somalia, State Collapse and the Global War on Terror* by Harry Verhoeven (2008) and *Somalia: A Country in Peril, a Policy Nightmare* by Ken Menkhaus (2008)

Developments in 2009

Eventually, the policies of the TFG and Ethiopia failed. At the end of 2008, President Yusuf stepped down and Ethiopia pulled out at the beginning of 2009. Soon after, Sheikh Sharif, a former leader of the ICU, was elected as president for the 'new' expanded TFG including the more 'moderate' parts of the former ICU.

Although this arguably represented a 'glimmer of hope' (Economist 2009), the parliament now included more than 500 representatives, many of them the same elites installed and funded by international donors, largely unaccountable to their own population. Different factions of al-Shabaab and other opposition groups still controlled most of the country, and heavy fighting between groups, involving AMISOM, were taking place.

By the beginning of 2009, there were over 1 million internally displaced, approximately 500,000 refugees and more than 3 million people estimated to be in need of aid (OCHA 2009, UNHCR2009a). Statistically, Somalia was also the most dangerous place for humanitarian workers (Stoddard et al. 2009). It was in this environment that my exploratory research on how humanitarian agencies were dealing with the situation took place.

In mid 2009, at the time of writing, fighting was once again peaking with tens of thousands fleeing Mogadishu. One of my informants in Mogadishu described the mix of hope and despair to me:

Today is a Friday, like a Sunday in Europe, the day you relax, go out and meet friends. Mogadishu has a beach, a beautiful beach, on a Friday 18 years ago I would go there to play football with my friends. Today you don't go anywhere. It is too dangerous. We are tired of this, but the situation looks very bad right now.

Part III: Humanitarian space in Somalia

The third part of this paper constitutes the empirical part, focusing on the challenges and methods involved in addressing the humanitarian imperative. It is based on exploratory research, including 52 interviews with representatives from 16 humanitarian organisations operating in Somalia.

Lack of access and its consequences

A major challenge with managing operations in Somalia from Nairobi is the quality of information and a lack of comprehensive understanding of the situation – including the impact and consequences of programmes. What may have started out as a temporary response to the volatile security situation in the 1990s, has today protracted into an accepted status quo. In general, most agencies seem to accept a lower level quality of operations in emergencies, but, in Somalia, where the crisis has been continuous and has, as of late, in fact worsened, many forms of operations and their problems have become accepted as the norm.

The SRSG, Ahmedou Ould-Abdalla, described the common acceptance of the situation, especially the acceptance of impunity for human rights abuses and aid's exacerbating role in conflict, as *the* biggest challenge (Interview 14.04.2009). He also claimed that even the

suggestion of a plan to move the UN offices from Nairobi to Somalia was considered to be far too radical as to be seriously discussed. This despite the fact that all the representatives of UN agencies that I met mentioned their frustration at the operational divide between Nairobi and the field.

Remote programming, also known as remote management, is the most commonly used term for describing the type of humanitarian operations taking place in Somalia. This method of working is not only relevant for Somalia, but is a central concept in operational circles in many other contexts.²¹ However, it has received little academic or policy attention (Springett, Interview 04.03.2009). In Somalia, there is seldom any clear-cut difference between these different forms of remote programming, as they are often mixed in practice. Still, it is useful to categorise them so as to differentiate, as there is major difference between ad-hoc and planned approaches.²²

Remote control is the most drastic form of remote programming. It is characterised by being emergency-driven and based on *ad-hoc* decisions. The basic scenario is that international staff are evacuated because of security concerns, and national staff stay to implement programmes. International staff continues to control and make decisions from afar with the objective of a return as soon as possible. However, this is not always the case, as in Somalia where, in some instances, the method has been used for more than a decade. When remote control continues for longer periods of time, problems accumulate and existing challenges get exacerbated. A major challenge in this form of operations is the obvious risk transfer, a serious ethical issue, to which I will return to shortly.

Remote support: the main difference between remote ‘control’ and ‘support’ is that some level of authority and decision-making is given to local staff. This form is often the result of a more strategic decision and better planned than emergency-driven remote control, although security concerns are still the principle reason for expatriate distance. The positive aspect of remote support is that it includes a more capacity-building approach. Negative issues include donor scepticism regarding financial accountability, as well as questions of partiality as a result of increased control by local staff, who might come under increased forms of pressure in the absence of international staff.

Remote partnership: this form of remote programming is operationally managed by local staff, or even local organisations, but funding and some monitoring is controlled from afar. The positive side of this approach is local capacity-building. However, the mentioned risks of partiality and local pressure are even more crucial here, as are difficulties regarding monitoring, evaluation and donor scepticism. The selection and screening of partner organisations is important, but with the lack of access, reliable information can be a major challenge. It is also a more time-consuming approach and not often used in crises.

²¹ For more policy literature on remote programming, see: Chkam 2006, Hansen 2004,2008, Rogers 2006, Springett 2004, Willits-King 2006.

²² Derived from *Remote Programming Modalities in Somalia* (Oxfam/Merlin 2009), which again is adapted from *Operational Modalities in Iraq* (Hansen 2008).

Risk transfer

A central critique of remote programming is the explicit or implicit risk transfer that occurs from international to local staff (Stoddard et al. 2006, 2009). This transfer of risk is often based on the assumption that local staff face a lesser risk than internationals. Statistically, however, there are approximately 7 national staff killed for every international (ibid, NGO-SPAS 2009).

Further, the risk to local staff actually increases in remote operations as a result of them being seen as decision-makers with more power, as well as them being the visible representatives of an agency, and therefore a potential target. Another form of risk transfer is organisational, e.g. the UN using NGOs for implementation, which again might use local NGOs or partners.

A problem that has been further complicated by remote operations is the heightened risk of the diversion of aid resources. A chain of negative issues mentioned by several informants was that there are Somalis, both staff and different types of authorities (warlords, community representatives, ‘gate keepers’), who are profiting from a situation in which there is less oversight and control, and further, that the level of international presence often is decided by these same persons.

Several of my informants accused local representatives of major humanitarian agencies as being close to what could be considered warlords, claiming that they wield considerable power and influence on the ground. The theory presented by some (both operational Somali and managerial international informants) was that the Nairobi-field divide was beneficial to too many people, and that the disengagement of international staff was being pushed by some of these individuals who had a vested interest in less oversight.

This theory of disengagement is related to another type of ‘transfer’ that I would argue is occurring in Somalia: responsibility transfer. As well as using security or emergency issues, agencies also blame local staff as a way to justify and explain problems related to their own operations.

In this sense, agencies transfer the responsibility for operations to local staff – even though they often have a very low level of decision-making authority. Seen in relation to the previous paragraphs, the Nairobi-field divide can thus be seen as serving *both* the interests of local actors as well as external ones, including donors who want to show that they are ‘doing something’, while simultaneously not taking responsibility for poor quality or negative consequences.

Both the Somalis and expatriates that I met described the cynicism born from the Nairobi-Field divide in very clear terms. In the ‘Nairobi Village’ –the third biggest UN centre in the world after New York and Geneva – international staff work and live relatively comfortable lives, many of them making considerable amounts of money in the process. By contrast, in Somalia, local staff, who actually implement the programs, and who are subject to pressure from many sides and live in very difficult conditions, are paid far less. It thus comes as no surprise that these stark differences in existence reality foster cynicism and mistrust.

Consequences for accountability

The Nairobi-field divide has serious consequences for accountability. Accountability is a broad topic, but in this section I will only briefly look at certain relevant aspects for Somalia. The main problem of accountability is the lack of direct contact between Nairobi and the intended beneficiaries²³ of programmes.

A problem recognised by most informants is that much aid is either diverted or re-sold. However, if food aid is re-sold by beneficiaries, it can be seen as a regular coping mechanism. It is a completely different matter when aid is diverted or re-sold by others. These can be powerful individuals claiming to be ‘community representatives’ or authorities such as land lords who exploit aid beneficiaries after they have received assistance.

In this case, aid is not supporting the people in need, but rather the elites in power. Some informants claimed that as much as 60-75% of all aid to Somalia was being diverted. Such claims are, obviously, difficult to verify – in itself a further illustration of the nature of the problem.

Agencies are using different approaches to counter these challenges. They include programme types where more direct cash transfers are used in order to reach beneficiaries and to avoid diversion, deemed by several as being a successful method. An example is ‘Livelihoods as Protection’, whereby broader protection goals can be met through the contribution of livelihoods and capabilities (Tyler 2008).

Regarding monitoring and evaluation, methods such as quick trips, consultancies, agency peer-review, phone and video contact, and picture evidence of deliveries and projects, are all used. A challenge identified by informants was how best to balance between accountability towards donors and beneficiaries. However, in such a situation, the focus will most likely be towards the donors, at least in terms of ‘producing results’, resulting in beneficiaries ending up further ‘down on the accountability chain,’ and therein receiving less attention (Sogge in Lubkemann 2005).

Conflict over resources

In a context like Somalia, where resources are extremely scarce, agencies are not only a livelihood provider in terms of the actual goods that they deliver to beneficiaries, but also in terms of the employment and contracts that they represent. No matter how neutral and impartial an agency might strive to be, they continuously risk getting caught up in conflicts over the resources associated with them. What further complicates matters in Somalia is the long term instability and absence of clear authority. In this environment, aid becomes one of the few ways to provide legitimacy to *de-facto* authority.

After the collapse of the Somali state in the early 1990s, aid has played an increasingly important role in the Somali economy. Aid is an important part of many Somalis livelihoods, but some have also profited from the instability and absence of the state through exploiting

²³ Beneficiaries – a somewhat problematic term – is in this paper used to refer to persons who are intended to benefit from humanitarian agencies actions.

the war economy, and some – importantly – have also profited through intuitive business initiatives (Little 2003).

In the absence of central authority, one of the few ways someone wanting to claim authority can gain legitimacy is by delivering security and livelihoods for the population that they control. These two highly-prized commodities are closely interlinked: if there is security and stability, aid agencies can operate and deliver relief and resources in terms of employment opportunities, renting property or cars, or paying for security services.

In this sense, aid agencies become an important part of local politics, despite principles of impartiality and neutrality. In fact, the more neutral and impartial an agency is, for example by working with all parties and authorities, the more they become a part of this local arena of politics through delivering aid to people under a contested authority.

This is a double-edged sword, which, according to my interviews, agencies are well aware of. I will return to this in the later ‘Insecurity’ section, but in brief, if an agency is legitimising a particular authority, then to attack the agency and their deliveries of aid, the belligerent will also be indirectly attacking the authority and community that benefits from their operations.

Al-Shabaab: becoming political through aid

An illustrative example of the role of aid in legitimising authority is the case of al-Shabaab. After Ethiopia had withdrawn from Somalia, one of the ways in which the different groups connected to al-Shabaab could maintain support was through the provision of security and livelihoods. They could no longer exist solely as an armed opposition force against the occupiers, but now had to politicise themselves. This was evident in the fighting over the Bay and Bakool areas north of Mogadishu in March 2009 (Holy Koran Radio 21.03.2009).

After the Ethiopian forces had pulled out, a faction associated with al-Shabaab took control of cities in the area, forcing agencies who had not yet evacuated to leave. Once they had departed, the group then proceeded to invite the international humanitarian agencies to return and to sign agreements with them regarding operations and security. In this way, the group first asserted authority through the expulsion of agencies, and then gained legitimacy for their authority by inviting them back.

The predicament that many aid agencies face is whether the consequences of their operations further legitimise and strengthen armed opposition groups. Conversely, another question many aid agencies have to confront is whether *not* giving aid might actually be *more* political and partial than giving aid. This is an important point in the context of Somalia – to analyse the consequences and choose to whom one gives, or not, will be seen by many as highly partial.

An interesting aspect here is to refer to beneficiaries: if one would ask them, what would they want? Would they prefer to get aid under the control of whoever controls them, or would they agree that agencies should only work with the government – which in the years of 2006-08 was extremely unrepresentative of the population. Such questions are, obviously, rhetorical, but nonetheless illustrate the dangers of outside actors such as humanitarian agencies claiming to know what is ‘best’ for the intended beneficiaries.

In relation to IHL and humanitarian principles, the case seems quite clear: one should work with the local authorities and deliver aid only based on the needs of people, and in the process not take any sides in the conflict. As the UN's humanitarian coordinator, Mark Bowden, pointed out (interview 09.04.2009), if al-Shabaab factions accept aid operations according to humanitarian principles, how can you not work with them? In his opinion, to *not* deliver aid in this case would be contrary to humanitarian principles and would be a conscious, partial, political choice. However, in the case of Somalia, where aid has played a negative role in many aspects, especially in supporting destructive authorities such as warlords, the question certainly is a legitimate one.

Neutrality becoming political

This point is worth expanding upon, especially with regards to UN agencies and state-building. As outlined in the preceding chapter, the UN chose to support the TFG during the 2006-2008 Ethiopian occupation. Their support for what they perceived to be the national government, a normal procedure in other humanitarian operations, was in Somalia interpreted as direct support for one side in the conflict.

This had consequences for other humanitarian agencies who were perceived as also being partial; as a result, many of them attempted to create a distance between themselves and the UN. However, most of the donor community supported the UN line in the misconceived idea that it would end up in a Somali state (Menkhaus 2008). For aid agencies to insist on impartiality and neutrality, and to operate in areas controlled by non-TFG actors, was seen as undermining the state-building efforts of the UN and donors, and thereby in opposition to their political agenda. In this sense, to be neutral, became political.

Another set of challenges identified by informants were those associated with clan and contractual issues. The usual practice of agencies seems to be to strive for clan-balance in hiring local staff: if an agency operates in an area where one clan is dominant in terms of relative numbers, this will also be reflected in the local staff of the agency.

It might be useful to briefly illustrate one example of hiring, so as to demonstrate both the importance that an agency holds in relation to hiring and livelihoods, as well as how they strive to be in balance with the local community. If an agency needs to rent a car or hire a cleaner, then the agency will approach the local community representatives who often will form a committee.

This committee will then decide who will rent out the car and who will be hired as a cleaner. Local clan balance is key in these situations. If the committee is a legitimate representative of the community, it can be seen as a useful participatory approach, but if the committee is controlled by an armed authority, it obviously raises many of the same issues previously discussed with regards to legitimating authorities and created perceptions of partiality.

Another illustrative example is the story of a hole in an agency's compound wall: a security adviser that I interviewed had told the agency that they should fix the hole for security reasons, whereupon the agency explained that fixing the hole was an even bigger security threat. They had been told by two competing clans that if they chose the other clan to do the maintenance job, they would attack them. This illuminates the point that many conflicts over

aid are not necessarily over the aid given to people in need, but *how* aid is being delivered and who benefits from the process.

From clan to agency

Clan and contractual challenges are well known, but are seemingly also an accepted part of humanitarian operations in Somalia. However, one agency has devised a highly conscious policy to counter clan tendencies within the agency structure. The stated success of the policy proves that there are alternatives to accepting the status quo, and as such, it is an important example.

The policy started with the hiring process. Instead of going to community and clan representatives and asking them to nominate candidates, the agency chose to publicly advertise available positions. Throughout the hiring process, transparency was emphasised as the agency's trademark, and although the agency admitted that it was not fully the case, the principal objective in hiring was that nobody should be hired based on their clan, but solely on their qualification.²⁴

The next step was to transform/shape the values of its staff members, both regarding accountability and corruption, but specifically around issues related to clan behaviour, such as countering preferential practices and underlining the importance of impartiality. In short, the objective was to shift the primary allegiance, at least inside the office, 'from clan to agency'.

This might seem a highly unlikely policy to succeed, and, in fact, I interviewed staff members who themselves did not believe it to be possible when they were new recruits to the agency, but who now said that they could confirm that the policy actually worked. A key methodology in order to make this policy effective was that the agency held all staff accountable. An example should be set from the managers and downwards, but an important agency principle was that all staff connected to the agency were fully responsible for their actions, and that with such responsibility, certain rights would also be bestowed.

This policy highlights one of the agency's main objectives, which was to institutionalise values, routines and priorities. Capacity-building was a central priority, and the very simple, yet profound, acknowledgment of the expatriate managing staff was that they – the expat managers – were merely temporary staff while the local staff, who were operating in their own communities, were the permanent ones, and therefore the agency's approach should focus on the local staff to ensure sustainability.

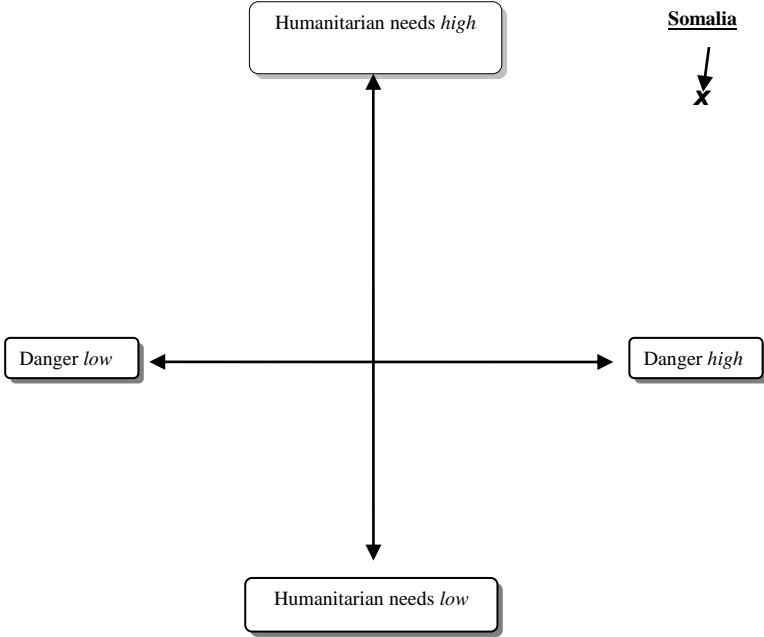
Insecurity and security management

Security is possibly the most serious challenge facing Somalia and Somalis. In 2008 there were a total of 154 direct attacks against aid workers, with 35 fatalities (NGO-SPAS 2009). These figures represent over 30% of the global total in aid worker deaths. In comparison to

²⁴ Security staff were an exception, where all clans were represented, but not according to relative numbers: all should be equal in number.

Darfur, where the average annual attack rate was 27 per 10 000, the rate for attack against UN national staff in Somalia was 467 per 10 000 (Stoddard et al. 2009:4).

The primary objective of security management is not to keep staff safe, but to be able to operate. This point was expressed by most of the security personnel that I interviewed in Nairobi. Put differently: if the primary concern was the security of staff, nobody would be in Somalia. However, in order to be able to operate, security of staff is important. This might seem contradictory, but the challenge is to balance humanitarian needs and staff security. This balance, and the particular challenge it represents in Somalia, can be illustrated by the following diagram:



This diagram provides a simple illustration of the situation facing humanitarian agencies in Somalia. The key point is that Somalia is *outside* the diagram. In 2008, the number of international aid workers in the field went down 50%²⁵ (Amnesty 2008) – in the same year, the estimated number of people in need of assistance went up by 77% (OCHA 2009). In other words, the X was pushed even further outside the diagram. It is important to note that the needs did not necessarily go up in the same areas as where the risks went up, but overall, it arguably demonstrates the unique and challenging situation facing humanitarian agencies.

There are three main security strategies in humanitarian operations: acceptance, protection and deterrence strategies. Together they are referred to as the ‘security triangle’ (GPR8-Van Brabandt 2000). In Somalia, acceptance strategies include transparency, community dialogue and communication of agency objectives/mandate.

²⁵ This number is somewhat unclear and OCHA operate with slight reducing numbers for South-Central Somalia, and an increase in staff numbers in Somaliland and Puntland.

The most common forms of protection strategies include remote programming, limitations on travel and protected compounds. In terms of deterrence strategies, the use of armed guards in all stages of operations is common and has been in use since the early 1990s. This is highly problematic in terms of humanitarian principles, but even the Red Cross movement has used armed guards for more than a decade in Somalia.

Most of my interviewees agreed that the most important part of security management is good contextual analysis based on reliable information – a point that is emphasized in the literature (ECHO 2004, GPR8-Van Brabant 2000). However, for several reasons, one of them being lack of capacity and resources, most analysis seem to be reactive in nature and primarily concerned with keeping up-to-date. The need for proactive, forward-looking, contextual analysis in the volatile context of Somalia is crucial in order to analyse where opportunities might arise and where threats might emerge.

This is related to the concept of ‘negative’ and ‘positive’ security analysis (Gundel 2006). Negative analysis is only to identify threats and risks, while positive analysis is to identify what opportunities there are. The role of traditional customary law (*xeer*) and the role of elders (*Oday*) are essential examples of existing, local structures which should be taken into consideration in positive security analysis (Gundel & Dharbaxo 2006).

The next step, which is equally important, is to have the capacity to translate analytical knowledge into practice. This requires considerable resources. However, one way of meeting this challenge is to institutionalise analysis and security as an integrated approach to operational security: to have all parts of an agency be concerned with security in the processes of planning programs, organisational outreach and communications, and the security of assets and staff.

Insurance is a good example of how security management affects accountability towards beneficiaries without actually contributing to actual security. Security guidelines are becoming increasingly common and required. The critique against these guidelines is that they are often standardised and function as ‘ticking the boxes’ and are in no way a substitute for an effective, contextual security policy.

Another critique is that it is often mainly or solely aimed at the security of international staff. In relation to insurance, security guidelines might reduce insurance premiums if insurance companies can refuse compensation in the case of an accident where the guidelines have not been followed.

The criticism is that in this scenario the priority becomes following a standardised plan rather than keeping up-to-date (or ahead) of the situation, and adapting organisational approaches accordingly. This can, first of all, lead to a false perception of security, as well as a shift in accountability. In the ‘tick the box’ scenario, the focus and accountability of management shifts towards a HQ produced list of criteria, and in the extreme case, to the requirements of an insurance company in Zurich – far from IDPs or other intended beneficiaries in Somalia

As explained in the last section, many security threats come from perceived partiality and/or clan and contractual issues. Other reasons might be to target the community or challenge the authority of the area, in this sense an attack might be a *display* of authority (Hammond 2008).

In addition, an attack might simply be for economic gain and opportunistic violence, as is most often the case with kidnappings, which have risen in number considerably in the last years (Stoddard et al. 2009). Until recently, this was the most common reason for why agencies were attacked, but in the last years, humanitarian staff in Somalia have experienced an increased threat from politically motivated attacks (ibid).

Politically motivated attacks were also identified as a difficult challenge by my informants. The greatest concern for most agencies is that they are perceived to be a part of a western agenda and connected to the American led “war on terror”. In terms of building positive perceptions, the most effective strategies identified by informants were to be impartial and operate transparently – and, crucially, to operate accountably, effectively and continuously. This builds trust and acceptance, while irregular and unaccountable operations could actually bring more distrust and negative perceptions.

This is a crucial point as consistency and quality can both be difficult to achieve in volatile situations. Several of my informants dwelled on this point, but most seemed to agree that continuity was most important, at least in terms of building acceptance. This might be a problematic and somewhat contradictory opinion, but one which should nevertheless be taken very seriously.

The predicament between continuity and quality is related to a point on ‘incident management’. As one agency noted, incidents will happen – the question is how you deal with them. In their view, incident management is one of the most important parts of a security policy, and it is in time of crisis that you ‘show who you are’. To evacuate might create distrust towards both local staff and beneficiary communities, while staying might have the opposite effect of creating respect and trust.

The challenge of perceptions is related to a broader co-ordination problem where different agencies are using different approaches. As a result, one strategy might undermine other strategies, for example the increase of armed guards by one agency might lead to more violent and heavily armed attackers facing all agencies. As described by one informant: ‘acceptance strategies take everyone, all the time – to ruin it takes one, one time’.

Finally, and possibly the most disturbing reason for targeting aid workers identified in the course of my research, was not that attacks were the result of perceptions of partiality or ineffectiveness, but rather precisely because aid workers are effective. As previously mentioned, aid can deliver legitimacy, and as such the targeting of aid workers can undermine sources of authority.

The impunity of such actions and the acceptance of the status quo seem to have given rise to a situation where aid workers are seen as legitimate targets. By targeting an aid worker, a belligerent party can be seen as attacking a broader authority structure or a community. This is a situation which is extremely hard to change, and it once again serves to illustrate the point that aid and agencies are part of the context in which they work.

World Food Programme

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the largest humanitarian actor in Somalia with a stated number of more than 3 million beneficiaries and an annual budget surpassing US\$400million,

which represents over 50% of the entire CAP²⁶ (WFP 2009). However, it is also possibly the most criticised agency in terms of their methodologies and their operational partners. In this sense, it is a very good example of the tensions between ‘Do No Harm’ and the humanitarian imperative, arguably the overarching dilemma regarding all humanitarian assistance in Somalia.

Throughout my exploratory study, it was striking how varied opinions of the WFP were: some described the agency as ‘the big bad wolf’, accusing it of supporting parallel structures and armed groups in opposition to the government to such an extent that they were doing more harm than good. Other informants cited the WFP as being possibly the best agency in the field and pointed to the fact that they were the most operational UN agency and ‘got the job done’.

A major challenge identified by many agencies is the transport of aid. Roadblocks, convoy attacks and hijackings are common. The WFP uses private contractors to transport their aid, using clan deterrence (fear of retribution) and distancing itself from responsibility in a controversial way (Gundel 2006). In brief, a transporter will pay a deposit equalling the value of the freight before receiving it and transporting it from A to B. If something is lost or stolen on the way, the value of the loss is subtracted from the deposit before the rest is returned together with the payment for the contract.

The contractor has full responsibility for the load and if something happens, the attacker will risk retaliation from the contractor, not the WFP. For the WFP, this means the goods are protected by clan or militia deterrence under transport. In this sense, it is in the common interest of both the WFP and the transporter that the latter represent as much of a deterrent as possible, which in turn means that the WFP is funding the contractor to be heavily armed and capable of retribution.

The WFP is not the only agency to use clan deterrence strategies. Most agencies rent cars from locals, thereby assuring that the vehicle will be protected from local interests and deterrence (Harmer 2008). In relation to armed protection the WFP is also far from alone, in fact, it seems that most, if not all, agencies use armed protection, even though this is highly problematic in relation to humanitarian principles and local perceptions.

In a situation of extreme needs, there is a point at which the humanitarian imperative becomes so urgent that agencies have to consider compromising some of their core principles. This is what I term the dilemma between ‘Do No Harm’ and the humanitarian imperative. An example of this might be the decision to use armed protection to reach people in need. The challenge for an agency in this situation is to decide whether the immediate humanitarian impact of an operation outweigh the long-term consequences for future humanitarian operations, as well as the overall context (Dennis, Interview 07.05.2009).

The issue here is whether by paying an actor to be heavily armed the WFP, or any other agency, is fuelling the conflict to such a degree that it is not justified to address the humanitarian imperative. My objective in this paper is not to make prescriptions or normative claims, but rather to draw attention to these issues for further consideration. In fact, I would argue that to make absolute claims in such dilemmas and thereby deciding who will get aid

²⁶ Consolidated Appeals Process

and not is tantamount to ‘playing god’ (Stockton, 1998). A possibly more constructive approach is to try to identify positive operational methodologies:

Positive operational methodologies

Throughout my study, I identified some operational methodologies which seem to have potentially positive effects on the context of Somalian aid. I would argue that the aforementioned principled policy regarding clan and contractual issues and the institutionalisation of proactive contextual analysis are two such positive operational methodologies. Two other possible methodologies can be best illustrated by outlining empirical examples. These examples might seem unrealistic, but they were both described to me by staff operational in South-Central Somalia as examples of how they were able to operate where others were not.

One methodology can be described as ‘responsibilisation.’ It can be illustrated by the example of an area where three factions are fighting over authority. All three factions will conceivably want to be consulted by the aid agencies with regards to access and security in order to be seen as the authority of the area and the provider for the people. However, instead of accepting security guarantees from each faction, the agency can insist on one common security guarantee which all three parties agree to.

There are several potential positive outcomes of this approach. First, I was told that it might prevent disguised attacks. Secondly, it encourages the factions or different *de-facto* authorities’ accountability towards the population that they claim to control. And thirdly, it creates a space in which conflicting parties can come together and talk on a subject they potentially all can, or would at least want to be perceived as able, to agree on: civilians’ humanitarian needs. This is closely overlapping with the conceptualisation of humanitarian space as a neutral space for dialogue.

However, there is a serious potential drawback. If the parties do not agree, this approach might exacerbate conflict with the end result of more fighting, no access for agencies and further human suffering.

The next method might be more ambitious, but also have potentially considerable long term positive consequences for humanitarian operations. A challenge already mentioned is that aid is controlled, exploited and diverted by different actors. The aim should be to cut out these ‘middle men’ and deliver aid directly to beneficiaries. Some of my informants explained to me that by insisting on not paying bribes and fees in any part of operations, including at the port, roadblocks and to officials/representatives, ‘middle men’ profiteering can be reduced. The most likely first outcome from this approach is that operations will stop.

Agencies will then turn directly to beneficiaries and explain why they are not able to deliver aid. The central point explained to me was not to underestimate the power of beneficiaries, which could put pressure on their authorities to allow aid. According to one agency, they have used this approach several times in IDP camps with the result that authorities have come to them and asked them to start deliveries after first demanding bribes. This is again connected to the point that aid and aid agencies are one of the few ways of gaining legitimacy for authorities.

There are two main positive outcomes from this approach. First of all, it puts beneficiaries at the centre of aid and encourages agencies and authorities' accountability towards civilians and beneficiaries. Also, if the approach works, it is a first step in the direction of breaking the previously described negative circle, wherein agencies are fuelling the war economy by the payment of bribes for security and access.

The challenges identified were several. For example, several informants noted that it is a time-consuming approach where the benefits are perhaps not initially visible. Moreover, it requires that agencies to accept that in not paying bribes they potentially will not be able to address the humanitarian imperative.

So how can agencies implement these methods? How do they reform structures of exploitation to foster responsibility and put beneficiaries at the centre of programmes? Some key points are first of all to understand the local context – requiring proactive, comprehensive analysis and sufficient presence in the field. Staff capacity and human resources are critical in this respect.

A second key point is humility. To build up acceptance and a solid reputation based on principled and effective operations takes time and resources. That an agency cannot reach all of South-Central Somalia with its reputation is obvious, but to even cover an IDP camp will also take time, resources and patience.

However, both these points – capacity and humility – are in some ways contradictory to the humanitarian imperative. In a situation with considerable humanitarian needs, focus will naturally be on the suffering and maximisation of impact. To allocate substantial sums to capacity-building and positive institutional practices, or to accept long delays and set humble objectives for operations, are not actions that directly address the humanitarian imperative.

In Somalia where needs are chronic and cyclical, and more importantly, where aid agencies and operations have been a part of exacerbating conflict and the war economy for a long time, to strive to have a positive impact should not be seen as a luxury, but an absolute necessity.

The role of the diaspora

“When it rains in Mogadishu, the umbrellas go up in Minneapolis”. This saying captures the close connection that the Somali diaspora around the world has to Somalia, in several ways. Estimates suggest that this diaspora sends back more than US\$1 billion²⁷ each year, a considerable amount in relation to international humanitarian aid (\$600mil, CAP-2008).²⁸ Despite this, remittances are rarely considered as humanitarian assistance, even though remittances play a critically important role in the livelihoods of Somalis (Sheikh & Healy-UNDP 2009, Gundel 2003b, Lindley 2006, Menkhaus 2008b).

Remittances can broadly be categorised into three main types: regular flow of remittances through personal/community networks, more developmental support of institutions such as

²⁷ These numbers are highly uncertain and the precise scale of Somali remittances is not known (Lindley 2009a).

²⁸ A critical challenge in the current financial climate is how this will affect remittances. Some estimates say that there was a 15% reduction in remittances only in the three first months of 2009 (OCHA 2009).

hospitals or schools, and remittances as a response to emergencies (Sheikh & Healy-UNDP 2009, Horst 2008a). This last form can be described as ‘humanitarian’ in the sense of the similar objectives as international ‘humanitarian’ agencies, but also in terms of how it is delivered more according to needs and across clan-lines, than other remittances.

In the case of a crisis, appeals and responses are often first communicated through the media.²⁹ Representatives of the diaspora might then gather to form committees in order to coordinate support. These committees are often very well organised and professional in relation to accountability, demanding proof that aid is reaching its intended beneficiaries.

However, the central aspect is that similar committees are often organised and created in the receiving areas, a crucial and rare example of an externally-driven process, but which still involves community based, bottom-up approach from the beneficiaries side. Examples include the severe droughts in 2006 when one single committee received US\$600 000 (UNDP 2009), or the peak in violence in Mogadishu 2007 when remittances also went up considerably (Horst, Interview 29.03.1009).

A problematic issue of overlooking these remittances and the contribution that they represent is discursive power in terms of defining what is, and what is not, humanitarian assistance. One consequence might be the international aid community attempting to classify and categorise Somali organisations, risking overlooking genuine and effective organisations and instead funding so-called ‘briefcase organisations’³⁰ (Horst, Interview 29.03.1009; Lindley, Interview 28.01.2009).

A similar problem with relation to defining power is the closure of so-called ‘terrorist money networks’ (Lindley 2009b). The sending of remittances is often done through *Xawilaad*³¹ networks or money transfer organisations. Such networks are often scrutinised for wiring money to Islamic resistance groups. This might be the case, but according to my informants most resistance groups have their own financial channel and in any case, the international community’s own record (for example sixteen years of well documented breach of the arms embargo (UNSC S/2008/769)) does not hold up to close scrutiny.

Despite the argument that some remittances might be seen as humanitarian, most diaspora support is done through community or clan connections and can hardly be described as impartial. In fact, it can often be highly political and remittances can be used to further local conflicts (Horst 2008b). In general, the Somali diaspora is very active in politics.

This can be problematic, but could also be seen as a potential positive aspect (Lubkeman 2008). A workshop on assessing the diaspora’s contribution in Somalia organised by UNDP, in March 2009, summarised one of their recommendation as ‘the UN and the international community could support the Diaspora to be more systematically engaged in peace building through closer participation and involvement in international processes and effective support to traditional mechanisms’ (Sheikh & Healy-UNDP 2009: 36).

An interesting case of how the international aid community is trying to utilise the diaspora is the QUEST project run by UNDP where persons from the diaspora are encouraged to take

²⁹ Much of the media is also diaspora-run.

³⁰ Organisations that are created and run primarily to attract maximum funding.

³¹ Somali, derived from the more commonly known Arabic *Hawala*, meaning *transfer of debt* (Lindley 2009b:3)

part in different NGO and governmental projects in Somalia. This is an example of an initiative attempting to link the capacity of the diaspora with international agencies capacities. Other agencies such as Oxfam and Horn Relief³² are also involving diaspora and remittances in their operations.

However, ownership is a key challenge in relation to collaboration between the international agencies and diaspora organisation. As several sources point out, the sense of ownership and connection between the diaspora and receiving Somalis is an important aspect for the quality, accountability and sustainability of the contribution from remittances. If international donors or agencies were to ‘take over’ and control remittances, several of these positive aspects might be lost (Horst, Interview 29.03.2009. Bowden, Interview 09.04.2009).

Finally, what was described to me as a highly successful policy used and pioneered by one agency, but currently used by several others, is the hiring of diaspora Somalis as expat managers. These managers have the same role and conditions as other international staff, but the crucial difference is their capacity to understand and analyse the local context, use personal networks and language skills to create and expand organisational and personal networks, and to be able to translate information or analysis into practical action. These issues are key in what I termed proactive contextual analysis, identified by informants from agencies with considerable presence in Somalia as the most important aspect in order to be able to operate inside the country.

Part IV: Analysis and conclusions

In the conceptual part of this paper, I outlined two main different understandings of humanitarian space: agency access and operating environment in a space outside politics; and a metaphor for a space for dialogue and humanitarian responsibility. However, I still argued that humanitarian space should not primarily be about agencies, but about the people in need – it should be about addressing the humanitarian imperative in a way that enhances the capabilities of those in need.

In terms of what the empirical part added to this, first of all, it clearly illustrated that there is no such thing as an exclusive space, outside politics, where agencies are free to operate as they please with all other actors on the periphery of ‘their’ space. I have argued that agencies, and the delivery of assistance, is very much part of a complex context, and that, in fact, operations might be seen as most effective, and agencies might gain more access, when other actors are taken into consideration.

In terms of operating environment, however, this can be used to describe the meticulous and time-consuming process to create an environment where agencies are able to operate. The findings from my research suggest that in order to create such an operating environment several factors are important: beneficiary accountability, individual and institutional capacity-building, a principled impartial approach to contractual issues, and a committed and

³² Horn Relief was founded by a US-Somali woman who wanted to help with a crisis in her own area. The organisation has now grown to become an international agency and the oldest African-led humanitarian agency. They have 40 international staff, mostly Somali expats. It was founded as a local grassroots organisation, focusing on the importance of local ownership.

comprehensive focus on contextual analysis. In addition, humility emerged as an important virtue in order to gain access and community acceptance built on transparency and trust.

In terms of a 'space' for humanitarian dialogue, this is highly relevant and overlapping with what I have identified as one of the main positive contributions humanitarian operations can have on the context, namely the approach I have termed 'responsibilisation'. That is, to encourage authorities' to become accountable to their own constituency and to cautiously contribute towards stability on a local scale through interaction with competing authorities.

As noted repeatedly, particularly in the contextual chapter, aid agencies have often played a negative role in Somalia. If, instead, humanitarian agencies can play a positive role by encouraging dialogue, no matter how small or local, this would be a considerable contribution.

However, the point that humanitarian operations could have positive consequences, and that the broader political context should be taken into consideration, does not mean I am advocating that humanitarian operations should be more political in relation to the debates of 'new humanitarianism' and political agendas. In fact, I would rather argue that to combine political with humanitarian objectives, such as the state-building agenda of the UN and the implicit support of the Ethiopian occupation, has negative consequences.

International agendas, such as global security and counter-terrorism, or state-building and the containment/repatriation of refugees, cannot be achieved through the same means and by the same agencies who are addressing immediate humanitarian needs. However, this does not mean that different issues are not part of the same context, and thus the argument seems justified that aid, at least, should not undermine stability and build parallel structures.

Further, I would also argue that humanitarian space and the lack thereof is often used as a discourse to explain and justify the current status quo and lack of aid agencies in places such as Afgooye. Agencies based in Nairobi, pressured by funding cycles, have to explain what, how and why they operate. The problem in this case is that agencies might sit on the outside and explain why they cannot operate on the inside.

This is problematic, not least because there *are* agencies operating in Somalia. The paradox here is that several of the agencies interviewed who had international presence mention this very presence as key for their ability to operate, understand the context, negotiate with partners and authorities, and create perceptions built on trust leading to acceptance and *more* access.

What can be derived from this is that humanitarian space and how it is perceived is dependent on where you see it from, and how. This is problematic in relation to the mentioned discursive power: agencies are able to use the concept of humanitarian space to construct the situation as they want to see it.

By treating humanitarian space as an exogenous variable over which they have no control, especially by using the argument of security, agencies construct it as a constraining factor and a defence of the status quo. In contrast, I argue that by thinking about humanitarian space as something that agencies themselves play an important part in creating, this forces agencies to re-think operations and their consequences, especially if there are negative consequences involved.

However, although I argue here that security is used as a primary argument for not operating in Somalia, it is important to underline that these dilemmas and threats are very real and not simply solved by academic exercises. One of the most challenging aspects identified in this thesis is that humanitarian staff and agencies might not be targeted because they are ineffective or unprincipled, but exactly *because* they are effective and make a difference in peoples' lives.

Aid agencies have become legitimate targets in political struggles for control and legitimacy. This extreme insecure situation for humanitarian staff should not be underestimated and represents a challenge which is not easily solved, and which is the result of decades of conflict – conflicts where agencies and the international world have serious responsibility.

There are several problematic issues arising from the Nairobi-field divide, especially ethical issues related to risk and responsibility transfer, as well as issues regarding accountability and the quality of information. A major issue here is to rethink the role and understanding of local staff. Some informants identified their local staff as the major problem, while others identified them as their major asset. In a chronic and protracted remote operation situation such as Somalia, capacity building should be a major focus.

Finally, the role of the diaspora also deserves more scholarly and policy attention. Remittances are already playing a major role in the lives of Somalis, but the international aid community should further explore how it can gain and learn from the capacity of the Somali diaspora – for example through hiring them as international managerial staff which has been identified as a highly successful policy. Similarly, a related issue I have not discussed in this thesis, but which should be the subject for further studies, is the role of local and Islamic organisations in addressing humanitarian needs.³³

Creating humanitarian space

The description of *creating* a humanitarian space is useful in terms of how this study can be relevant for humanitarian agencies operating in other contexts. Challenges regarding humanitarian principles, accountability, political funding, and issues of legitimacy and interaction with *de-facto* authorities identified in this thesis is neither new nor unique to Somalia. Many other issues raised in this thesis such as the importance of presence, contextual analysis, capacity building and critical issues of perceptions and security are important questions for agencies in several contemporary situations such as Sudan, Afghanistan, the DRC, Iraq, Haiti, Sri Lanka, Chechnya and others.³⁴

Some of the issues raised in this thesis are framed in ways that might be viewed as controversial. For example, my argument that military actors cannot be excluded from the operational context does not mean that I am arguing for either a military humanitarianism or

³³ I did meet and interview representatives of Horn Relief, Islamic Relief and Muslim Aid. In terms of literature, see Benthall 2007, De Cordier 2008,2009, Harmsen 2007, Kent et al. 2004, Kirmani & Ahmed Khan 2008, Mohamed Salih 2004, Van Bruinessen 2007

³⁴ One should be very cautious about making to broad generalisations between contexts. The places mentioned here are highly diverse in relation to innumerable social, political and historical aspects. As has been pointed out repeatedly in this paper, the importance of contextual understanding is crucial. To then make generalisations too broadly, would be contradictory.

asserting that agencies should always work with such parties, but rather that military actors – including those that are non-western and non-state – are a reality in the contexts where humanitarian agencies operate, and therefore should be taken into consideration when addressing humanitarian needs.

My exploratory study of Somalia illustrates that it is not enough for agencies to define a humanitarian space, claim it as their own and expect that everyone should adhere to their definitions and principles. This is relevant for other contexts as well. To meet humanitarian needs in a non-discriminatory manner is not simply an exercise of policy statements. In a conflict-ridden context, with scarce resources and many stakeholders, aid will have an impact on the situation and humanitarian agencies will be a part of the context.

Agencies cannot believe that they will be able to fully control the environment in which they operate, but have to accept that they will become part of a complex situation whether they like it or not. In this situation, the role and perceptions of agencies have to be *created* on a context-to-context, day-by-day basis. It involves continuous adaptation, while still struggling to remain faithful to principles. In short, agencies have to be a part of creating the space in which they operate.

The crucial issue is what role agencies play and how they affect the context in which they operate. A central dilemma identified in this thesis is between ‘Do No Harm’ and the humanitarian imperative, between short- and long-term consequences. Another dilemma identified is between humanitarian needs and staff security. However, what is also shown in this thesis is that both these dilemmas are not either/ or – what this thesis has shown is that by actually taking the context and larger situation into consideration and striving to adhere to principles, operations can be more effective – and, secondly, operating effectively and in a principled manner might contribute positively towards security.

To conclude, I would argue that the creation of humanitarian space – a space in which humanitarian needs are addressed – requires a contextual approach and a form of interface between humanitarian agencies, *de-facto* authorities and the persons who are in need. Of these actors, it is this last group – the actual inhabitants of the space where humanitarian needs arise – that are most important, but who far too often become the victims or pawns in inherently political acts, be it war or humanitarianism.

Final thoughts

It is too simplistic to conclude that by not delivering aid, there will be no harm done. The human needs in Somalia are very real, and there is a humanitarian imperative to respond to them. As such, the question of how one should respond remains an important and valid one.

This paper has offered some thoughts on the matter. However, during my research, it was clear many agencies are already aware of many of these challenges. The problem then seems not to be that there are not enough lessons learned, but rather that they are not acted upon.

The situation in Somalia is intricately complex and cannot be seen as solely a humanitarian crisis, thereby depoliticising it. More importantly, the Somali people should not be reduced into humanitarian objects. This is not only paternalistic, but it is also reductionist in terms of overlooking Somali agency. Somalia cannot be ‘solved’ by humanitarian aid or external

actors. The challenge must be to support positive structures instead of negative ones, instead of destructive practices of exploitation and a culture of armament, to support Somali ingenuity and human capabilities.

List of Abbreviations

AMISOM	-	African Union Mission in Somalia
APFT	-	Alliance for Peace and Fight against Terrorism
CAP	-	Consolidated Appeals Process
DRC	-	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO	-	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office
GPR8	-	Good Practice Review 8 (Humanitarian Practice Network)
HAP	-	Humanitarian Accountability Partnership
HRW	-	Human Rights Watch
HQ	-	Head Quarters
H&W	-	Humanitarianism and War Project (Tufts University)
IASC	-	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICG	-	International Crisis Group
ICRC	-	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICU	-	Islamic Courts Union
IDP	-	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	-	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IHL	-	International Humanitarian Law
IJRL	-	International Journal of Refugee Law
IMI	-	International Migration Institute
MSc	-	Master of Science
MSF	-	Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders)
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	-	Non-Governmental Organisation
NGO-SPAS	-	NGO Security Preparedness and Support Project (NGO Consortium)
NYT	-	New York Times
OCHA	-	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN)
PRIO	-	International Peace Research Institute, Oslo
QUEST	-	Qualified Somali Technical Support
RSC	-	Refugee Studies Centre
R2P	-	Responsibility to Protect
SRSG	-	Special Representative for the Secretary-General (in Somalia)
TFG	-	Transitional Federal Government
UN	-	United Nations
UNAMA	-	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	-	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIOSM	-	United Nations Operations in Somalia
UNITAF	-	Unified Task Force
UNPOS	-	United Nations Political Office for Somalia
UNSC	-	United Nations Security Council
US	-	United States (of America)
WFP	-	World Food Programme

List of Interviews

- **ADEN, Mohamed Osman** – Deputy Somali Ambassador to Kenya. 4th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **BREDE, Erik** – Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, Somalia Desk. 19th March 2009. Oslo, Norway
- **DENNIS, Geoffrey** – Chief Executive CARE International UK, Former Director of British Red Cross (operations in Somalia 1992/3). 7th May 2009. By phone, London, UK
- **DFID - Department of International Development (UK), Regional Humanitarian Adviser.** 6th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **HARMER, Adele** – Research Associate, Humanitarian Policy Group. 17th March 2009. By phone, New York, USA
- **HORST, Cindy** – Senior Researcher, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO). 19th March 2009. Oslo, Norway
- **ICG - International Crisis Group, Senior Analyst on Somalia.** 1st April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **KRISTMOEN, Rina** – Counsellor, Somali Affairs, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kenya. 14th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **LUBKEMANN, Stephen C.** – Associate Professor of Anthropology and International Affairs. Personal communication by mail. 12th April 2009. Washington, USA
- **MCKNIGHT, Jacob** – Currently Dphil candidate at the University of Oxford, Former Field Staff for MSF in South Central Somalia. 16th March 2009. Oxford, UK
- **SOLBAKKEN, Hilde** – Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peace and Reconciliation, Senior Analyst. 19th March 2009. Oslo, Norway
- **SPRINGETT, Simon** – Specialist on Remote Management. Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for Oxfam. 4th March 2009. Oxford, UK
- **WALDO, Mohamed Abshir** – Former director of Somali Broadcast System – SBS, former BBC Somali Service producer. 6th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

Action Contre la Faim – ACF

- **Head of Mission, ACF.** 7th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

CARE International

- **Africa Security Advisor.** 8th April, 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

Horn Relief

- **Deputy Director, Horn Relief.** 30th March 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **Support Officer, Horn Relief.** 30th March 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

Islamic Relief

- **Country Director.** 2nd April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

International Committee of the Red Cross - ICRC

- **Head of Mission, Somalia.** 1st April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

Muslim Aid

- **Former Programme Coordinator.** 10th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

NGO Consortium Somalia

- **Focal Point for Somalia NGO Consortium.** 3rd April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **Director NGO SPAS – Safety Preparedness and Support Project.** 3rd April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- + 14th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

Oxfam Novib

- **Policy Advisor.** 3rd April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

UN – United Nations

- **OULD-ABDALLA, Ahmedou** – UN Special Representative for the Secretary-General in Somalia (SRSG), Head of UNPOS. 14th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **BOWDEN, Mark** – UN Resident Representative, UN Humanitarian Coordinator, Somalia Resident Representative UNDP. 9th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

UNHCR Somalia

- **Protection Officer South Central Somalia.** 31st March 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

OCHA Somalia

- **Humanitarian Affairs Officer – Protection.** 9th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

WFP Somalia

- **Head of Programme.** 8th April, 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

Agency A

- **Head of International Operations,** 5th January 2009. Europe
- + 18th March 2009. Europe
- **Country Director,** 7th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **Head of Office, Mogadishu, South-Central Somalia,** 6th January 2009. Europe
- + 7th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **International Coordinator,** 6th January 2009. Europe
- **International Security Advisor,** 18th March 2009. Europe

Agency B

- **Country Director Somalia,** Agency B. 10th April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **Humanitarian Desk Officer,** Agency B. 16th March 2009. Europe
- **Security Adviser,** Agency B. 16th March 2009. Europe

Anonymous

- **Anonymous 1** - Security specialist, March & April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **Anonymous 2** - Long term agency staff, March & April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **Anonymous 3** - Agency representative in direct negotiations with al-Shabaab, March & April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **Anonymous 4** - Head of Mission, March & April 2009. Nairobi, Kenya
- **Anonymous 5,** Country Director, March & April 2009. By Phone. Mogadishu, Som.
- + May 2009. By Phone. Mogadishu, Somalia

Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford

- **ADDISON, Simon** – Senior Research Fellow, RSC. 9th December 2008. Oxford, UK
- + 16th January 2009. Oxford, UK
- **BAKEWELL, Oliver** – Research Officer at International Migration Institute, University of Oxford. Thesis Supervisor
- **BENSON, Edward** – Former UNHCR, visiting fellow at RSC. 3rd March 2009
- **DURIEUX, Jean-Francois** – Currently Deputy Director of Operations UNHCR Geneva. At the time of interview Departmental Lecturer in International Human Rights & Refugee Law, RSC. 18th January 2009. Oxford, UK
- + 27th February 2009. Oxford, UK
- **LINDLEY, Anna** – Research Officer at RSC. 28th January 2009. Oxford, UK
- **LOESCHER, Gil** – Visiting Professor, RSC. 16th December 2008. Oxford, UK
- + 2nd May 2009. Oxford, UK
- **ZETTER, Roger** – Director of RSC, Chair of Examiners. Personal communication, 27th May 2009. Oxford, UK

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