Helpdesk Research Report

Humanitarian contingency plans in advance of military operations

Brigitte Rohwerder

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Question

What lessons have been identified from previous humanitarian contingency planning exercises in advance of large scale military operations?

Contents

1. Overview

This rapid review looks at lessons from previous cases of humanitarian contingency planning and preparations in advance of large scale military operations. The majority of the literature seems to focus on humanitarian contingency planning for the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and other older cases such as Kosovo. Few specific details of these humanitarian contingency plans seem to be publicly available, especially in relation to co-ordination and the civil-military interface with local actors and international coalitions. Due to the political sensitivities that may exist around humanitarian contingency planning prior to large scale military operations and tendency for secrecy from the military around these operations, it is likely that much more planning and lesson learning has occurred than can be found using open source searches which makes it difficult to gauge accurately or clearly what pre-planning may or may not have been undertaken. However, a number of organisations (mainly the UN) have conducted evaluations, including independent evaluations, of their planning and preparation, while others have also reflected on lessons learned in grey and academic literature. It should be noted that each context and conflict is different, with various challenges for humanitarian contingency planning in each case.

Lessons learned include:

- Good **expertise and political analysis**, from local actors, UN agencies, Red Cross organisations, and humanitarian NGOs, and the military, is required to properly assess the situation on the ground (Burkle & Noji, 2004; OCHA, 2003; Lawry-White, 2004; Graham, 2003; HPN staff, 2000). Decisions made at higher levels may be less accurate as to the situation on the ground (Lawry-White, 2004).

- All agencies, including the military, need to engage in **transparent planning** for effective coordination (Burkle and Noji, 2004; Graham, 2003; Burkle and Noji, 2004; Bishop, 2003; Suhrke et al, 2000).

- **Coordination mechanisms** should be clear and roles should be clarified to avoid confusion in planning and in the field (Burkle and Noji, 2004; OCHA, 2003; Lawry-White, 2004; Graham, 2003; Solomon, 2014; Choularton, 2007). A memorandum of understanding and the set-up of a UN-CMCoord (Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination) mechanism may be helpful (OCHA, 2003; Solomon, 2014).

- **NGOs and local partners should be involved in planning** to ensure better partnerships and improved coordination in the field (OCHA, 2004; Lawry-White, 2004; tan Berge, 2014). Local actors often have greater acceptance within communities than new agencies coming to deliver aid, and should be identified as potential partners in advance (Turlan & Mofarah, 2006). An established presence and existing relationships with local partners are important for preparedness and response (HPN staff, 2000).

- **Mapping:** Local market surveys can indicate what supplies are available locally (Lawry-White, 2004). Cities and surrounding villages to which IDPs may flee to should be mapped to plan for the anticipated humanitarian emergency as a result of military action (Turlan & Mofarah, 2006).

- **Impartiality and humanitarian principles:** Humanitarian NGOs and UN agencies are often reluctant to plan together with the military, especially if the military attempts to take control, as a result of concerns over impartiality, neutrality and security (Burkle & Noji, 2004; Solomon, 2014; Jackson & Maysom, 2013; Suhrke et al, 2000).

- **Capacity building:** Military forces should have a good knowledge of how international relief operations function and respect their principles in order to work well together (Burkle and Noji, 2004; Bishop, 2003; Solomon, 2014; tan Berge, 2014). This may require frequent training of new military actors in how to engage with humanitarian actors due to the high turnover of troops, as was the case in Mali (Solomon, 2014).

- **Contingency planning** can be negatively affected when the military action is political, as there may be a reluctance to acknowledge the need for contingency planning due to ongoing attempts to prevent conflict or a desire to not undermine the planned military action (Lawry-White, 2004; Graham, 2003; Choularton, 2007; Suhrke et al, 2000). Further, planning should consider ways to prevent confusion between military and civilian actors to avoid placing humanitarian workers at risk (OCHA, 2003).

- **Capacity and funding:** Planning needs to take into account realities of capacity to respond in each country and the availability of funds (Lawry-White, 2004; Suhrke et al, 2000). The availability of funding is also important for freeing up resources to engage in contingency planning (Lawry-White, 2004; Graham, 2003; Turlan and Mofarah, 2006). Engaging in and

supporting inter-agency planning may be time-consuming (Lawry-White, 2004; Choularton, 2007).

- **Pre-positioning** humanitarian supplies at the local level and in neighbouring countries prior to military action can be helpful when responding to the subsequent humanitarian emergency (Lawry-White, 2004; Turlan and Mofarah, 2006).

Other factors to consider:

- Consistent integration of gender and protection issues (OCHA, 2003; HPN staff, 2000).

- Low probability events that would entail high risk and large outflows of refugees where there are large numbers of internally displaced persons (Suhrke et al, 2000; The Kosovo Commission, 2000).

- Medium and longer term planning (Lawry-White, 2004).

2. Previous experiences and lessons learned: 2003 Iraq war

US Government contingency planning and preparedness

In an article for the Lancet, [1] Burkle and Noji, Visiting Professors at the Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, who have worked for the State Department's US Agency for International Development (USAID), examined the experiences of the US government with contingency planning and preparedness in relation to the 2003 Iraq war. Prior to the invasion of Iraq, the US administration gave the task of planning and execution of humanitarian relief to the Department of Defence – a relief effort that was 'widely perceived to have been mismanaged' (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1371). As was normally the case, USAID and its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance set up an operational on-site Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to undertake assessments, coordinate technical assistance, develop project proposals, procure relief material, liaise with the armed forces, and liaise and fund UN and international relief organisation programmes for immediate relief (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1371). The team planned to provide emergency lifesaving interventions to serve as a bridge for up to 30 days until the UN agencies, NGOs, and Iraqi national technical staff could fully resume their services (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1371). The team was larger than usual,[2] with previous experience of complex emergencies, and received extensive training (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1371). At the same time the Department of Defence established a humanitarian planning team to undertake pre-war planning of the military central command's humanitarian response, and to coordinate responses during the conflict (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1371).

Confusion arose when the humanitarian planning team claimed to international relief organisations that it was the official humanitarian liaison for the US government (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1371). Many NGOs chose not to work with the military and some relief organisations questioned why USAID and other State Department offices, with which many had good relations, were not being used (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1371). The humanitarian planning team's refusal to disclose crucial information needed for planning, citing secrecy, to international relief organisations, US military, government, and civilian agencies working on humanitarian relief further complicated the situation (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1371). Unknown to USAID the two planning bodies took increasingly divergent paths (Burkle and Noji,

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[1] Based on a previous series of papers published by USAID.
[2] 80 as opposed to fewer than ten.

2004, p. 1372). In addition, in January 2003, the Pentagon created the Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance, whose job was to coordinate relief and reconstruction efforts in Iraq with other US, coalition, and international relief organisations (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1372). This office became the central US authority overseeing the efforts of the coalition forces to provide humanitarian assistance during the crisis, despite concerns from the State Department and USAID (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1372). It was mainly staffed by policy experts with little field experience in relief operations, who were generally unaware of the functions, charter and capabilities of UN agencies, Red Cross organisations, or NGOs (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1373). This contributed to the failure to properly assess the situation (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1374).

The Department of Defence and coalition forces established a humanitarian operations centre in Kuwait City with the assistance of the Kuwait government. This was to act as a clearing house for liaison and coordination of civilian and military organisations providing humanitarian assistance (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1372). At the start of hostilities, planners in the Department of Defence assumed the war would be short and unlikely to cause a major humanitarian crisis and the agencies that would provide most of the immediate humanitarian relief were the disaster assistance response team and civil affairs units of the US armed forces (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1372). These units mainly consisted of reservists trained to work with US military commanders and local civil authorities to lessen the effect of military operations on the civilian population (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1372). Humanitarian supplies were stockpiled and moved to advance positions (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1373). The widespread looting and social disorder which led to the destruction of public facilities and disruption of essential public services were not anticipated (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1373).

Burkle and Noji (2004, p. 1374) outline a number of **lessons learned** from this experience, including:

- planning by all agencies needs to be transparent for coordination, which is essential for avoiding duplication of efforts and leaving gaps in essential services;
- roles should be clarified to avoid confusion in the field;
- good expertise is needed to properly assess the situation, including differences in decision making processes between military and civilian organisations;
- expertise is helped by having good working relations with UN agencies, Red Cross organisations, and humanitarian NGOs; and
- a unilateral military model would make it hard for humanitarian organisations to work with the disaster assistance response teams.

As a result Burkle and Noji (2004, p. 1374) suggest that armed forces should be prevented from dominating humanitarian assistance as much as possible and should leave the task to agencies which have traditionally handled humanitarian crises. If armed forces want to retain control they have to improve their knowledge of how international relief operations function and build up a large cadre of civil affairs officers who are knowledgeable, have experience with complex emergencies, and who are formally trained to work with international humanitarian organisations (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1374). In addition, military leaders must be sensitive to humanitarian organisation need to maintain their neutrality (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1374).

OCHA contingency planning and preparedness

Before the conflict erupted in Iraq, UN agencies through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee met several times during 2002 and early 2003 to put together a comprehensive interagency preparedness plan (OCHA, 2003, p. 1). OCHA (2003, p. 1) notes that partly as a result of lessons learned from

Afghanistan, the Iraq Crisis Task Team, was established at OCHA for dealing with the Iraq crisis.[3] Before this task team was created, the humanitarian situation was monitored and contingency plans refined (OCHA, 2003, p. 1). In addition, the Steering Committee, chaired by the Deputy-Sectary General (comprising the main UN Departments and agencies), coordinated UN activities in Iraq. OCHA created and chaired a Humanitarian Action Sub-Group, the 'primary forum for timely exchange of relevant information and action on key policy issues related to the UN response' (with the World Food Program, UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR, United Nations Security Coordinator, IOM, FAO, UN Relief and Works Agency, and UN Office of Iraq Programme). A Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq was appointed and operated from the Regional Coordination Office in Larnaca, Cyprus, which was established by the UN in advance of the outbreak of the crisis to serve as a focal point for its humanitarian activities (OCHA, 2003, p. 2). The UN also prepositioned supplies towards the end of 2002 (Graham, 2003, p. 38).

The contingency plans were used to inform a Flash Appeal which was issued immediately after the eruption of the war (OCHA, 2003, p. 2). As the expected scenarios did not occur the amount required was revised down as events unfolded and the credibility of the UN's appeals process was damaged (OCHA, 2003, p. 2, 4).

An internal lessons learning review of OCHA's response based on a desk review, interviews, and a two-day workshop, found that:

i. Alack of contextual and political analysis meant that the contingency planning process failed to "prepare" and address the reality on the ground.

ii. Some felt that the withdrawal of humanitarian staff in March 2003 made the return and credibility of humanitarian actors difficult and translated into lost humanitarian space for OCHA.

iii. The lack of a memorandum of understanding between the UN and occupying powers meant that there was a lack of clarity and acknowledgement of humanitarian role, as well as lack of formalisation in relation to the issue of humanitarian access.

iv. Local perceptions of the UN were tarnished by its previous involvement and there was a lack of clear communication to the Iraqi people of the UN's role, responsibilities and functions in the country as separate from those of the Occupying Power, which placed international humanitarian workers at risk – more needs to be done to avoid confusion between military and civilian actors.

v. The precarious security situation and general lack of commitment on the part of both UN and NGO headquarters and field personnel to call on Occupying Power to account resulted in the humanitarian community failing to advocate for the application of key humanitarian laws and principles, including humanitarian access and the protection of civilians – more training and capacity building of building is needed to prevent this recurring.

vi. More attention needed to have been given to better identifying interlocutors within the Occupying Power to address coordination issues in the field.

vii. NGOs should be involved throughout in order to better partner with them and improve coordination in the field.

viii. Contingency plans need to consistently integrate gender and protection issues (OCHA, 2003, 4-7, 9, 18).

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[3] No detail is provided about these lessons.

UNICEF contingency planning and preparedness

UNICEF commissioned an independent evaluation of its emergency preparedness and early response in Iraq which was based on more than 80 interviews, a desk review, a two-day workshop, presentation and discussion, as well as regular consolations (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 26). UNICEF prepared contingency plans prior to the Iraq war through its Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning process (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 1). They had a long lead time (almost 18 months), with the war anticipated but with uncertain timing and unpredictable outcomes (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2). Preparedness had to be based on the realities of capacity to respond in each country and the availability of funds (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 43). The high political profile of the situation in Iraq and the reluctance of governments to be seen to be preparing for the humanitarian consequences of a conflict the UN was trying to prevent further complicated planning efforts (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2, 46). As a result, donors were unwilling to fund preparedness until a late stage (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 46). Contingency plans were prepared and updated for the sub-region and individual countries (Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Syria, Turkey) (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2).

UNICEF also made a substantial contribution to inter-agency planning and coordination at country, regional, Geneva, and headquarter levels and took on coordination roles for a number of different sectors (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 5). The hiring of high-level specialists into the inter-agency coordinating roles added credibility to UNICEF's role in inter-agency preparedness and emergency response in Iraq (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 80).[4] However, inter-agency planning in Iraq was found to be weak and inconsistent across the different sectors, while the UN country team engaged very late (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 46). Planning was weak in terms of fully working out structures for implementation across agencies (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 46). One of the 'least productive aspects of inter-agency contingency planning was the recurrent debates over numbers of people to be assisted' as many preparedness actions would be required for any serious emergency (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 46). The outcomes of the war were different from those anticipated in UNICEF and UN contingency plans (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2). Lawry-White (2004, p. 47, 85) 'leans towards the view that the further decision-making moved from the sub-region, the less accurate the scenario planning became'.

The independent evaluation of UNICEF's preparedness and response was carried out between September 2003 and January 2004 and found that despite this, UNICEF's sub-regional and country contingency planning was found to be effective (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2). This was as a result of:

i.   the leadership of the Emergency Preparedness and Response Planning process by the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office;
ii.   the preparation of detailed "to do" lists for each Country Office;
iii. the inclusion of all aspects of operations from the beginning;
iv.   UNICEF's corporate commitment to strengthen its emergency response capability, backed by DFID funding;
v.   the presence in the sub-region of a cadre of staff with emergency experience;
vi.   UNICEF's active engagement on inter-agency preparedness planning;
vii. key partnerships with NGOs prepared; and
viii. the availability of Emergency Programme Fund and Central Emergency Revolving Fund funding for preparedness (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2, 44).

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[4] Although sector coordinators should not also be expected to double as manager of UNICEF's sectoral programmes (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 80).

While the planning processes of each country office were productive, they were also drawn out and time-consuming, especially when combined with the effort needed to support inter-agency planning (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2, 45). A lack of clarity of roles and communication with head office also constrained planning (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 46). Relations with government posed a problem in a number of countries, not helped by the atmosphere of secrecy and sensitivity around preparedness planning (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 46). The focus on the war and its immediate aftermath meant that the UN and UNICEF were relatively unprepared for the medium term planning (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 45). In addition, had a major refugee emergency occurred as a result of the war, UNICEF might not have had enough human resources available to meet its commitments (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 4).

In order to mitigate the possible effects of the war, UNICEF supported the Iraq government in pre-positioning thousands of tonnes of nutritional supplies (therapeutic milk and high protein biscuits) at the community level (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2). Fuel, nutrition, health equipment and supplies, education and water, environment and sanitation supplies were also pre-positioned (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 31). In addition, UNICEF supported the national breast feeding programme and vaccination campaigns, as well as contracting mobile maintenance teams to repair water and sanitation facilities both before and during the war (these teams were pre-paid) (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2, 32). Other critical infrastructure such as generators and schools were also rehabilitated (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 31). Pre-positioning supplies at the community level both inside and outside Iraq's borders gave UNICEF the flexibility to cope with a range of possible outcomes and spread risk with regard to possible losses (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2-3). Local market surveys were also a useful innovation in providing detail on local purchase and supply options (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 64). UNICEF had mixed experiences working with neighbouring governments, and other UN organisations in those countries, to prepare for the anticipated influx of Iraqi refugees (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 35-39).[5] In these countries, they also pre-positioned supplies, as well as supporting the preparation of refugee camps (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 35-39). Experiences of coordinating with other UN agencies was mixed, but where the organisations worked together at regional and country levels organisational coordination was improved (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 84). Problems seemed to arise from late arrivals, weak resourcing and roles, and lack of capacity and inclination amongst individuals within the different organisations (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 84, 97).

UNICEF was one of the few agencies to continue working in Iraq throughout the war as a result of careful preparation and training, and the commitment and professionalism of national staff in Iraq who ran the office and UNICEF response during the war (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 3, 31). However, security planning for national staff was deemed to be inadequate (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 5). In addition, security was the main limitation to humanitarian work during and after the war (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 67). Using Kuwait as one of the supply routes was contentious because it gave the appearance of working in collaboration with the Coalition forces invading Iraq from the south (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 2-3). The negative image the UN had with the Iraqi people meant that it was also seen as a target for attack (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 74, 88). It was found that more guidance was needed on civil-military relations, especially as the challenge of needing security cover from military forces to conduct humanitarian operations called into question the humanitarian principle of neutrality and the idea of "humanitarian space" (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 4, 88).

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[5] In Iran, UNICEF and the government worked well together to prepare. Some UN organisations, such as OCHA, struggled to find a role there. In Jordan, the government was more reluctant to discuss preparedness until a very late stage, which wasted valuable lead time and impeded cooperation between the government and the UN country team. Here OCHA was able to provide good support. In Syria, the government first cooperated informally on contingency plans. Inter-agency coordination did not seem to have worked well in Syria, including as a result of differences over an agreement with NGOs. In Turkey, the government prepared separately from the UN system. The multiplicity of UN actors confused local actors. Late and limited information from Iraq resulted in weakened contingency planning.

The independent evaluation suggests that UN and NGO partners need to be involved in the planning process as they form an important part of UNICEF's response capability (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 48, 95). However, NGOs who are not familiar with the context can complicate sector coordination and require heavy investment in briefing and coordination which is time consuming but important (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 80).

Before March 2003 there was no open discussion with the military and whatever behind the scene discussions occurred did not result in a clear understanding between the two parties as to how humanitarian assistance could be provided and protected (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 88). UNICEF feels this resulted in a waste of time and energy on both sides in relation to providing humanitarian assistance, as a result of poor planning and blurred roles (Lawry-White, 2004, p. 88).

UN contingency planning and preparedness

An article based on the experiences of a UNHCR staff member looking at the dilemmas in relation to contingency planning for Iraq prior to 2003 found that due to its political nature there was a pressure for planners not to engage overtly (Graham, 2003, p. 38). This confined what UN humanitarian programmes could do (Graham, 2003, p. 38). Planners had to deal with the issue of how to ensure that any planning, locally or elsewhere (including neighbouring countries), would not be misconstrued as a prediction of an emergency, rather than the organisations duty to plan (Graham, 2003, p. 38). Failure to plan in the lead up to the 1991 Gulf War led to a massive humanitarian emergency, with more than 500 Iraqis a day dying in the remote border regions of Turkey and Iran, which influenced the UN's decision to put in place contingency plans for the 2003 Iraq war (Graham, 2003, p. 38). Limited international NGO presence within Iraq and the lack of insight from local NGOs, as well as political and funding limitations, hindered planning (Graham, 2003, p. 38, 40).

Planning for displacement was complicated as it was not clear who the lead agency for internal displacement would be, while accurate assessments of IDPs needs were not possible due to the security situation (Graham, 2003, p. 38). In addition, neighbouring countries were reluctant to host refugees, especially as they were still coping with the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War (Graham, 2003, p. 39). The NGO community felt that it lacked the resources and information to prepare for anything other than the widely held and optimistic scenario of a quick campaign (Graham, 2003, p. 40).

NGOs contingency planning and preparedness

The director for humanitarian response of a 160 member NGO coalition outlined their experience with contingency planning and the relationship with the US government. Some humanitarian NGOs had provided training on humanitarian values and principles and role playing, for instance, to help the US military prepare for humanitarian and peacekeeping missions (Bishop, 2003, p. 27). However, when the American military went to war in Afghanistan, US leaders came to regard humanitarian NGOs as "force extenders" and ignored their need to preserve their independence, while blurring the necessary distinction between members of the military and humanitarian workers by engaging in humanitarian activities (Bishop, 2003, p. 28). In autumn 2002, the estrangement between NGOs and the American military was another important part of the backdrop to initial NGO preparations for the humanitarian crisis expected to follow a war with Iraq (Bishop, 2003, p. 29).

Humanitarian organisations, especially those already working in Iraq, tried to plan for the probable humanitarian consequences of the war. However not knowing if the war would actually happen, made it

difficult to invest substantial time and resources in planning (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1372). The humanitarian planning of the largest potential donor, the US government, was done in secret by the military, which made coordinated planning difficult (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1372). A gag order on US officials frustrated efforts to set up an information sharing arrangement to assist adequate humanitarian contingency planning (Bishop, 2003, p. 29). NGO members of the InterAction Working Group on Iraq only met with USAID and the State Department in November 2002 after the UN resolution was passed (Bishop, 2003, p. 29). NGO requests for declassification of the government's humanitarian contingency plans were rebuffed, before they were told that the Pentagon had no contingency plan for humanitarian operations to share (Bishop, 2003, p. 30). Another factor was that The Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance's position as part of the military force initiating the war meant that many organisations, including UN agencies and NGOs, feared losing independence and impartiality if they coordinated with it or accepted US funds (Burkle and Noji, 2004, p. 1372).

Lessons from Operation Phantom Fury

Operation Phantom Fury in Fallujah, Iraq (2004), resulted in displacement, and the need for water, food, shelter and medical aid for those who remained (Turlan and Mofarah, 2006, p. 19). Access and citizen acceptance were key issues in the provision of humanitarian assistance, with foreign assistance viewed with suspicion in comparison to assistance provided by local aid workers or those with prior experience in the area (Turlan & Mofarah, 2006, p. 19).

An evaluation of the humanitarian consequences of this military operation by members of the NGO Coordination Committee in Iraq, suggests that lessons learned for contingency planning for similar future scenarios include (Turlan & Mofarah, 2006, p. 19):

  i)   map the cities: health facilities, water stations, mosques, composition of the population (ethnic, tribal, religious);
  ii)   map surrounding villages and cities, to which IDPs may flee;
  iii) identify which NGOs are working in that area or in neighbouring governorates, and what their capacities are;
  iv) hold contact information of potential partners at local level;
  v)   identify storage facilities in or near the cities and pre-position goods; and
  vi) carry out assessments of hosting communities.

However Turlan and Mofarah, (2006, p. 20) suggest that in the two years after the operation in Fallujah no real emergency contingency plans were put in place as a result of scarcity of funds and the short term nature of projects. No mention is made of cooperation between military and civil actors.

3. Previous experiences and lessons learned: other cases

Kosovo contingency planning and preparedness

An independent evaluation of UNHCR's emergency preparedness and response during the Kosovo refugee crisis, consisting of field visits, interviews and a desk review, found that some inter-agency contingency planning occurred prior to the NATO airstrikes in Kosovo, but the mass exodus which occurred was not anticipated (Suhrke et al, 2000, p. 17). The inter-agency contingency planning focused on the most likely scenario and involved NGOs (Suhrke et al, 2000, p. 29) The dominant public view was that the air strikes would be a solution, rather than a problem, and this set the framework for planning in

humanitarian agencies that were heavily dependent on public information for making policy decisions (Suhrke et al, 2000, p. 18).

The independent evaluation of UNHCR's performance shows the political impediments to effective contingency planning (Choularton, 2007, p. 33). They were heavily criticised for failing to anticipate, prepare for and respond to the large-scale refugee exodus from Kosovo that occurred (Choularton, 2007, p. 33). At the time planning for a major crisis would have signalled a lack of faith in the on-going peace process, which left UNHCR ill-prepared financially, materially, and in relation to human capacity to deal with the escalation of the crisis and play an effective coordination and protection role (Choularton, 2007, p. 33). However, they also overestimated their capacity to implement the general contingency plans they had made, which led to sharp criticism (Suhrke et al, 2000, p. 25).

UNHCR declined joint contingency planning with the military as a result of legitimate concerns about jeopardising its mission and credibility. Thus, UNHCR did not receive much useful information regarding population displacement (Suhrke et al, 2000, p. xiii; The Kosovo Commission, 2000, p. 202). However, it is not clear whether NATO would actually have generated and/or released information to UNHCR, even if there had been closer working relations (Suhrke et al, 2000, p. xiii). What contingency planning discussions there were between the NATO Liaison Officer and UNHCR concerned the evacuation of humanitarian workers, with NATO and others claiming to have made no assessment of probable population displacement caused by air strikes (possibly because there was no interest in undermining the military campaign) (Suhrke et al, 2000, p. 19).

Based on UNHCR's Kosovo experience, Suhrke et al (2000, p. 28) suggest that it is prudent to take seriously plans for events with a low probability of occurring if the consequences entail significant risk. In addition, it is important to "think outside the box" for the "worst case" scenarios in planning (Suhrke et al, 2000, p. 29). The Kosovo experience also suggests that when there are large numbers of internally displaced peoples, a large outflow of refugees should be anticipated at least in contingency planning (The Kosovo Commission, 2000, p. 202).

An independent evaluation of Disasters Emergency Committee funded responses to the Kosovo crisis found a number of lessons, including (HPN staff, 2000, p. 40):

i. complex political emergencies, effective preparedness and response plans depend on access to informed political analysis;
ii. strong preparedness capacity arises as a result of in-house emergency staff available at short notice, well-defined expertise in a particular sector, efficient recruitment procedures and good logistics systems; and
iii. an established presence in the region and existing relationships with local partners are important for preparedness and timely response; and
iv. preparedness plans need to pay attention to protection issues and carry out assessments, including gender analysis.

Macedonia contingency planning and preparedness

A review of practice relating to contingency planning and humanitarian action found that, different agencies in different countries used different scenarios (Choularton, 2007, p. 34) and so contingency planning in response to the outbreak of fighting in Macedonia in 2001 was initially uncoordinated. In response an inter-agency team was deployed and a coordinated planning process was established using common regional scenarios which allowed for consistent planning and a more logical allocation of

resources (Choularton, 2007, p. 34). A UNHCR-led inter-agency contingency plan outlined preparedness actions to ensure that the refugees who were expected to flee to Kosovo would be adequately provided for (Choularton, 2007, p. 29). Existing resources and additional preparedness resources from UNHCR headquarters were used to establish reception centres, staff were deployed to border points and supplies were requisitioned (Choularton, 2007, p. 29). As a result UNHCR and its partners were able to receive, register and provide assistance to Macedonian refugees as they arrived (Choularton, 2007, p. 29).

Within Macedonia itself, attempts were made to consolidate sector planning into one master plan which became too long, difficult to update, and difficult to use (Choularton, 2007, p. 34). In contrast, the separate contingency plans that were prepared in Kosovo were short, focused and useful (Choularton, 2007, p. 34).

Mali contingency planning and preparedness

Although it is not clear how much contingency planning took place prior to the intervention in Mali, OCHA staff highlighted the importance of contingency planning for military attacks as part of their work on civil-military coordination. The multiplicity of military and humanitarian actors resulted in the swift set up of a UN-CMCoord (Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination) mechanism to ensure appropriate coordination between the national and international military and the civilian actors (Solomon, 2014, p. 7). The mechanism allowed for regular information sharing, ensured efficient and optimal functioning of the de-confliction mechanism (allowing humanitarian actors to notify their movements to military actors), and identified all specific humanitarian or security issues that could be the object of discussion between humanitarian actors and armed forces (Solomon, 2014, p. 8-9).

Lessons learned by OCHA from the Mali experience include that:

i. Early engagement and early deployment of UN-CMCoord officers is essential to ensure the most appropriate coordination mechanisms are set up.
ii. Information sharing can contribute to better coordination, for example, to inform military planning, humanitarian actors mapped the area to be secured in priority from a humanitarian perspective;
iii. Many humanitarian actors still feel that they need to remain distinct from the military mission in order to obtain and sustain humanitarian access;
iv. Competition over resources, for example water use or occupation of public facilities by the military, led to dissatisfaction among local population and humanitarian partners;
v. More contingency planning is needed to respond to the needs of civilians as a result of military clashes, especially when they seek refuge in military compounds;
vi. Frequent turnover of troops means that constant training is needed to ensure that military actors are aware of humanitarian principles and concepts and are kept abreast of the latest humanitarian developments; and
vii. Humanitarian aid provided by military actors jeopardises the perception of neutrality of humanitarian assistance and puts at risk humanitarian actors, as well as making recipients vulnerable to attack for 'collaborating' with the so-called enemy (Solomon, 2014, p. 10-14).

Afghanistan contingency planning and preparedness

Analysis of civil-military relations in Afghanistan, based on an extensive desk review and interviews, indicate that in the years leading up to the surge in 2009 relations had broken down between humanitarian organisations and military actors (Jackson and Haysom, 2013). The humanitarian components of the UN report being put under intense pressure to support military efforts from troop-contributing countries and generally remained silent (Jackson and Haysom, 2013, p. 20). However, the UN spoke out about the pressure on humanitarian actors to support Operation Moshtarak in Marja district of Helmand province in 2010, saying 'we are not part of that process, we do not want to be part of it, we will not be part of that military strategy', and warning that 'the distribution of aid by the military gives a very difficult impression to the communities and puts the lives of humanitarian workers at risk' (Jackson and Haysom, 2013, p. 20). Afghan civilians who engaged with the military were targets for attacks, which further alienated NGOs from the way in which the military strategy was implemented (Jackson and Haysom, 2013, p. 20).

The increased troop presence made dialogue between the military and aid actors more complicated and less effective, although some efforts were made to ensure a basic level of co-existence (Jackson and Haysom, 2013, p. 20). Civil-military dialogue around the protection of civilians, and specifically reducing civilian casualties attributed to the International Security Assistance Force was the most successful during this period (Jackson and Haysom, 2013, p. 21).

Lessons from the Civil-Military Co-operation Centre of Excellence (CCOE)

Advice from the Civil-Military Co-operation Centre of Excellence (CCOE) suggests that it is important to align relevant strategies in the planning stage, even if this is challenging due to the reluctance of many NGOs to collaborate with the military (tan Berge, 2014, p. 7). Such reluctance hampers the overall civil-military effort in the crisis area but the alignment with humanitarian organisations is important for Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and Civil Military Interaction (CMI) to be of any added value, not only from a military perspective but also for wider crisis management (tan Berge, 2014, p. 7). More efficient coordination is needed to avoid duplication of efforts to help affected populations and resolve conflict (tan Berge, 2014, p. 7). The military is often interested in working on the ground with NGOs but less inclined to cooperate at the planning level because they do not want to incorporate too many civilian goals in their military planning (tan Berge, 2014, p. 8). On the other hand, NGOs largely avoid cooperation on the ground but are interested in working together on the planning level in order to have some input (tan Berge, 2014, p. 8). Military personnel should engage with existing coordinating structures and mechanisms already in use by the international community, such as the 'cluster system' for humanitarian and disasters response situations, especially as most civilian organisations do not have the manpower or resources to participate in additional meetings (tan Berge, 2014, p. 12).

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