

Criminal violence greatest threat to humanitarian and development workers – New study

20 June 2005

(Geneva)—Criminal gun violence poses the greatest security threat to humanitarian and development workers. Armed ‘civilians’ pose a greater risk than insurgents or other combatants, according to the findings of a new study published today.

The largest global survey ever of its kind, *No Relief: Surveying the Effects of Gun Violence on Humanitarian and Development Personnel*, drew on a sample of more than 2,000 relief and development workers from more than 17 international agencies in 96 countries and territories.

The study indicates that armed civilians—including criminals and petty thieves—routinely cause security incidents and operation suspensions, preventing access to people in need of aid. The findings have serious implications for how aid agencies should prioritize and respond to security threats.

“This study is crucial to humanitarian and development agencies, who now need to reconsider their security priorities to deal with the proliferation of small arms among civilians in places where they operate,” said Martin Griffiths, Director of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.

Among the findings of *No Relief*:

- 21% of respondents reported that 25% or more of aid beneficiaries had been inaccessible in the previous six months due to routine armed threats.
- Aid agencies increasingly employ armed guards to defend against violence. 32% of respondents reported the use of guards.
- Fewer than half (44%) of all respondents indicated that they had received security training from their current agency.
- Victimization rates in Afghanistan and Angola are especially high as compared to the global baseline. In both countries the proportion of national staff (as opposed to expatriates) who reported having been personally victimised is higher still.

No Relief is published by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and the Small Arms Survey as part of the In the Line of Fire project, a global, multi-year study into the impacts of arms availability and misuse on humanitarian and development operations and personnel. The report can be downloaded from www.hdcentre.org and www.smallarmssurvey.org.

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