

The method with which international governments are dealing with the current insecurity in Europe also complicated matters for groups operating on the ground.

1.3 Managing Security and Acceptable Levels of Risk

There has been an unprecedented rise in attacks on NGOs and humanitarian agencies operating in conflict areas although this might be because the situation is being monitored much more carefully than in previous years, leading to greater media coverage and better statistics. There is a perception that there has been a reduction in humanitarian workers on the ground. The 'Where is Everyone?' Report published by NSF made the important point that international agencies and workers need to be there in order to provide witness to these events. There is indeed a greater risk to humanitarian workers than there was 10 years ago however, to combat this, risk needs to be managed, acceptance within communities needs to be cultivated and remote management has to be improved (using local partners or local staff).

In the context of Darfur, Sudan, the risks to humanitarian teams were very real and present on a daily basis and managing security takes up considerable human resources. Humanitarian agencies have to be clear on their acceptable levels of risk. Ocha came to the conclusion that there were benefits to their presence and the feedback that it was receiving from communities was that Ocha's presence was providing protection. This was a tipping factor in the organisation's risk evaluation process and everyone in the organisation had to accept that level of risk.

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