

CRS GUIDELINES ON HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE IN CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Harpers Ferry Workshop
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Introduction

CRS has developed a framework within which to manage emergency responses in conflict situations. What follows is first, a set of basic principles which will guide CRS's response in conflict situations. These principles are broad enough to address the range of conflict situations in which CRS works, and have been derived from CRS's Mission Statement and Catholic social teaching.

In drawing from the Mission Statement, the following is central to the guidelines: "The fundamental motivating force in all activities of CRS is the gospel of Jesus Christ as it pertains to the alleviation of human suffering, the development of people and the fostering of charity and justice in the world."

Together with *Gaudium et spes* and Pope John Paul II's *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, *Pacem in terris* lays out the principles for a contemporary Catholic theology of international affairs centered on "the universal common good."

Based on Catholic social teaching, the guidelines have relied particularly on *Pacem in terris*, Pope John XXIII's 1963 encyclical. The concepts of the common good and the human dignity of the person as well as the importance of "reading the signs of the times" are taken from this landmark document.

Second, CRS has identified a series of essential conditions that must be met in any response to a conflict situation to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the response. These conditions are consistent with the Principles of Response and are derived from our rich and diverse experience.

Following the principles and conditions is a section that sets forth recommendations on the design of the response. This includes sections on pre-assessment, assessment, re-assessment and cross-border and cross-line operations.

After the design section comes a series of sections which discuss operational issues: coordination, use of food, personnel, material support and funding.

Finally, there is a concluding section on addressing the underlying causes of conflict.

I. PRINCIPLES OF RESPONSE

A. Principle of the Common Good

Following Catholic Social Teaching, CRS believes that although the common good is the first responsibility of government, it is likewise a social responsibility falling on all persons and groups. When political authorities, either domestic or international, fail to protect the common good (understood as the safeguarding and protection of civil, political, economic, and social human rights), it falls to others, including social institutions such as CRS, to act on behalf of the rights of a deprived population, when that population is unable to protect itself.

B. Principle of Human Dignity

CRS's response in conflict situations is to alleviate human suffering, promote human development, and foster a culture of peace, respect and dignity.

C. Principle of Impartiality

CRS's response in conflict situations is impartial with respect to race, creed, political orientation, and ethnicity, but is partial to the poor, the suffering, and the marginalized. CRS only assists civilian victims in conflict situations. CRS prefers to assist victims on both sides of the conflict unless needs on one side are met by other groups or unless operational considerations preclude working on both sides.

D. Principle of Non-Partisanship

CRS is non-partisan in its approach to humanitarian assistance in conflict situations in the sense that CRS neither takes sides nor supports partisan causes in the hostilities. Consistent with our mandate, CRS stands in solidarity with the victims of the conflict.

E. Principle of Independence

CRS's humanitarian action requires operational freedom to function without political or other interference. CRS, and/or our partners, must be free to operate without arbitrary detention of staff, seizure of relief equipment or diversion of relief supplies. Without this independence humanitarian action is impossible.

II. CONDITIONS OF RESPONSE

A. Conditions for CRS

1. CRS must conduct a thorough analysis of the background and causes (political, economic, social, religious, and cultural) of the conflict.
2. CRS must assess the capabilities of the counterpart, if any, other organizations, and target populations and determine the possibilities of joint response.
3. CRS must analyze the projected impact of the response and should ensure that neither the provision nor the source of the resources is used to fuel the conflict or to jeopardize the target population. The analysis should ensure that more vulnerable segments of the population are not adversely affected by the response. Further, an assessment should be made of the CRS "value added" i.e. what specific contribution CRS can make which others are not.

B. Conditions for Counterparts

When CRS's response will be channeled through a counterpart(s) :

1. The counterparts must be knowledgeable of, subscribe to, and act in a manner consistent with, CRS's Principles of Response.
2. CRS's counterparts must have access to the targeted population; they must be able to visit the affected areas and to communicate periodically with the beneficiaries.
3. CRS's counterparts must have the capacity to plan, carry out, and account for resources provided to them.
4. In those situations where no counterparts are available, or meet the above conditions and CRS is operational, the CRS field office must be able to meet the above conditions.

III. DESIGN OF RESPONSE

Conflict situations, across the entire continuum, from sporadic violations of human rights to full-scale war, require even more careful design of response than normal CRS programming.

A. Pre-assessment

While recognizing the need for quick and decisive action when confronted with humanitarian needs in conflict situations, it is important to develop the terms of reference of assessments in consultation, first, with headquarters and the appropriate Cluster and/or Subregional office, and second, with other international humanitarian and development agencies, i.e. AID/OFDA, NGOs, UN, local Church etc. The consultation process should continue during and after the assessment period.

It is particularly important that Cluster/Subregional offices, where they exist, should be consulted when discussing the long-term implications of the emergency program and its potential effects on CRS programs in neighboring countries.

Rationale: The consultative process sets the basis for future collaborative efforts, sheds light on security and access considerations, and provides guidance in the formulation of political judgments as they relate to issues of impartiality and justice/peace programming opportunities.

B. Assessment

1. An on-the-ground assessment of needs and capacities should be a prerequisite to the development of an emergency response, including project proposals and operational plans. Although CRS staff should lead such assessments, participation by other NGO representatives should be encouraged. Assessments should include a site visit whenever possible.

2. The assessment should follow the sequence identified in the CRS Emergency Manual Sitrep format (see appendix A) with the following additional information:

a. The assessment of needs should consider:

i. An analysis of both the capacities and the vulnerabilities present in the affected population and in local organizations.

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CRS Guidelines on Humanitarian Assistance... ("Harpers Ferry Guidelines") (continued)

ii. The urgency of need and whether it is life threatening or otherwise critical.

iii. The needs of particular CRS-targeted priority groups (poor, unreached by others, etc.) affected by the conflict.

b. The assessment of CRS response should consider the needs relative to existing capacities in crisis areas, including the capacities of local people, local organizations, churches and of other external agencies (U.N., A.I.D., NGOs, etc.)

~~i. When the need is great but others have capacities to meet it, CRS field response is not necessary.~~

ii. If capacities exist but are not addressing particular needs (such as trauma) or groups (such as women), a gap may exist warranting CRS response.

iii. When needs are unmet and a CRS or counterpart capacity exists, a CRS response is called for.

c. An assessment of probable effectiveness of alternative CRS responses should include:

i. Assessment of CRS resources or access to resources vis a vis unmet needs.

ii. Assessment of CRS capacities vis a vis unmet needs.

iii. A critical assessment of local counterparts and other material and institutional capacities to respond to the emergency situation, to include an examination of what other national and international NGO/UN and government agencies are doing or intend to do in response to the emergency situation.

iv. Possible "resistance" to CRS response -- Church, jeopardy to other CRS work, liability to CRS work through resource reallocation e.g. staff reassignment.

v. Access to region (political, military and logistical). See section on Cross-Border Arrangements.

vi. Ability to meet accountability criteria in the areas of access, record keeping, and reporting.

vii. Staffing requirements, including an assessment of appropriate housing, food, water etc. for CRS staff.

viii. An analysis of the political and conflict-security environment.

- ix. Minimum communication requirements.
- x. An analysis of the effects of conflict situations on women, women-headed households, children and the elderly.
- xi. Psychological/mental health issues.
- xii. Budgetary implications.
- xiii. Opportunities for contributing to a process of peace.

Rationale: Emergency response programs based on comprehensive assessments are more likely to anticipate future programming constraints and programming opportunities. Assessments will also help to determine the appropriate resource mix to employ in response to the emergency as well as guide the financial planning and budgetary process.

- 3. All of the above are assessed in order to determine effectiveness in terms of:
 - a. Meeting immediate needs
 - b. Contributing to long-term development and peace and justice
- C. Re-assessment

Systems should be developed to ensure that periodic re-assessments of needs, conditions, and the overall working environment are conducted by external (out of country) personnel, with priority placed on Cluster and Subregional staff. The re-assessment process should examine the multiple options of redirecting CRS resources including the option of phasing out CRS assistance.

Rationale: Conflict situations are intense and fluid and require regularly updated situational analyses to ensure maximum program impact. Special areas of consideration should be issues related to targeting, security, and impartiality. External assistance is required since staff working in day-to-day conflict situations may have less than optimal objectivity.

D. Cross-border and Cross-line Operations

- 1. In every conflict situation where CRS responds, CRS should look for opportunities to work on both sides of the conflict in order to build opportunities for future reconciliation.

CRS is particularly well-suited to do this in situations where there is a Catholic Church on both sides.

2. In undertaking a cross-border operation, CRS must be in touch with the churches and other relevant bodies on both sides. In these cases, CRS must ensure that the gains of providing humanitarian assistance to both sides outweigh any potential cost incurred as the result of this assistance, i.e. that operations on one side are not jeopardized by operations on the other. While CRS will not negotiate away the right to operate on both sides, pragmatism and an effective division of labor may lead to a decision to operate on only one side.

3. Insofar as agreements provide increased security, accountability, and promote effectiveness of operations, they should be signed between CRS, local political authorities, and international bodies. All agreements that CRS signs should include an explicit statement about the primacy of humanitarian assistance. Draft agreements should be reviewed and approved by headquarters.

IV. COORDINATION WITH THE U.S.G. U.N., NGOS, AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

A. CRS supports and will participate in coordinated planning, assessment and operations insofar as they are consistent with our principles and conditions of response. Such coordination is a critical component in mounting an effective emergency response program. This includes coordination with Church partners, NGOs, ICRC, AID/OFDA, U.N. organizations, inter-governmental organizations and governments. The most critical level of coordination is in the field. But coordination should also occur at the international level, especially in the areas of advocacy, public education and information sharing.

B. To facilitate this coordination, CRS field staff should maintain continued contact with local U.S. Embassies, A.I.D. missions, local government, U.N. and Church authorities, particularly those with a disaster role. Staff should keep A.I.D., government, the U.N. and the Church informed of CRS programming during conflict situations. This should be replicated at HQ level, in conjunction with other major NGOs and NGO consortia. CRS field offices should participate in all essential international and local coordinating bodies.

C. CRS country programs should participate in coordination efforts when these efforts ensure that a) all members of the "at risk" population are included in overall planning and b) the relief assistance is distributed equitably within targeted areas.

D. CRS country programs should be prepared to share human and material resources with other NGOs when sharing will maximize effectiveness.

E. CRS programs implementing emergency responses in conflict situations and their regional offices should improve the timely flow of information to CRS/Geneva for dissemination to CI and other interested bodies. Field and headquarters staff should participate when possible in CI's Emergency Aid Group (EAG) meetings and other NGO fora.

V. USE of FOOD

A. Food as an Appropriate Resource

1. Principle: The provision of food is appropriate in conflict situations when people are in need, when it is used to reduce vulnerabilities, when it is well targeted, when it is time-bound and where access to adequate food in the conflict area does not exist. A food resource may come from either local purchases, food swaps or foreign donations.

Food is not an appropriate resource in a conflict situation if the distribution of food results in: coerced movements or winning political allegiances, disruption of traditional coping mechanisms or results in fueling the conflict.

Need is determined through: 1. anecdotal reports such as movement of populations, fluctuations in agricultural commodity prices and increases in nutrition related disease; 2. on the ground independent needs assessment from NGOs and 3. multilateral and bilateral situational reports.

2. Rationale: Food shortages are a common result of prolonged conflict due to disruptions in normal agricultural cycles and market mechanisms. CRS policy is that food can be used as an effective resource and ought to be considered for use where appropriate. CRS has access to and managerial capacity to program food assistance in emergency situations.

3. Assumptions: Food resources are available for use in conflict situations. Capacity of counterparts (food resources are more time and capital intensive than other non-food interventions.)

B. Targeting of Resources

1. Principle: Humanitarian assistance is targeted to the most vulnerable civilian groups, as determined by criteria established and reviewed through ongoing needs assessments. CRS will not enter into any agreements to provide assistance directly to combatants for use or distribution.

2. Rationale: Sound targeting and ongoing assessment maximizes impact of intervention, reduces perceptions of partisanship and avoids fueling conflict.

3. Assumptions: There must be a capacity for on-going needs assessments. Reaching the most vulnerable remains the overriding concern and there are risks that some food will reach combatants.

C. Developmental Impact

1. Principle: In addition to the obvious short term impacts of providing food in conflict situations humanitarian assistance has the potential for both a positive and/or negative long term impact on a community. Therefore, food assistance should focus on increasing capacities as well as reducing vulnerabilities of a community.

Specifically, food assistance should:

a. support rather than disrupt existing traditional coping mechanisms.

b. reinforce and strengthen the capacity of a local counterpart to effectively respond to conflict situations.

c. assist a community to return to a condition whereby self-sustaining activities can return or be developed.

d. not undermine the peaceful resolution of a conflict.

2. Rationale: Reduce the need for long term outside assistance.

3. Assumptions: a. There exists an actual or potential institutional capacity, either within CRS or among local counterparts, to address long term development issues in conflict situations.

b. The design and implementation of an emergency program should involve broad based participation of communities and counterparts.

c. There are acceptable levels of security and stability within the operating environment that allows for local counterpart participation in emergency situations.

d. There is effective coordination among NGO's to avoid incompatible programming and to provide security to operate an emergency program.

D. Accountability

1. Principle: CRS will meet the agency's accountability standards. In recognition of the fact that conflict situations present unique conditions for accountability, any exception to these standards will be justified, negotiated with the donor, and documented in the operational plan.

2. Rationale: There is a need for acceptable and agreed to standards of accountability to maintain the integrity of the agency as a steward of a resource.

3. Assumptions: a. There are qualified and experienced staff to monitor and account for CRS resources.

b. There exists a positive negotiating environment between a donor and CRS.

VI. PERSONNEL

A. Human Resources should maintain and regularly up-date a file of people (internal/external) for conflict assignments.

B. CRS/HQ should ensure that HQ and field offices are adequately staffed such that field transfers and TDY assignments do not adversely affect regular, non-emergency programming efforts or overly burden the offices of neighboring country programs.

C. Personnel for emergency-conflict assignments which are considered to be war-risk areas as designated by the Agency, should have specific characteristics to include the following: (1) the assignment should be voluntary, (2) they must receive orientation on CRS conflict guidelines, and (3) they must be able to live in difficult and insecure environments.

D. Regional offices must remain in frequent contact and exhibit genuine concern for all staff, continually assure field staff that their point of view is understood, and be supportive when discussing programming or managerial differences. Staff going into conflict situations should receive adequate briefings on psychological stress likely to be encountered, prior to departing for the field; CRS/HQ or

REFERRED TO IN CHAPTER 12

CRS Guidelines on Humanitarian Assistance... ("Harpers Ferry Guidelines") (continued)

field staff in neighboring countries should make time available to discuss staff experiences, difficulties encountered, stress-related problems, etc. in an effort to make the transition from conflict situations to normal environments as smooth and as stress-free as possible. Staff should have access to professional counseling if necessary.

E. CRS/HQ should develop appropriate R/R compensation policies for international personnel serving in conflict areas.

F. When establishing an emergency program in a conflict situation, the implementation team should include personnel experienced in setting up logistics and administrative systems, in addition to the overall CRS field manager.

G. Contingency plans for the evacuation of CRS international staff and/or their dependents must be developed and staff should be prepared to leave at any time. Efforts should be made to secure U.S. Embassy and/or other embassy assistance in providing security, protection and evacuation not only to U.S. citizens but also to international non-U.S. citizens working for CRS. (See Personnel Manual Section VIII. D.)

H. CRS country programs should develop country-specific security procedures for implementation in conflict situations including specific reference to problems faced by CRS women staff members.

I. Under no circumstances may CRS personnel bear arms.

J. CRS field offices should analyze on a regular basis the level of risk to national staff associated with working in conflict situations with the aim of reducing those risks by relocation or other means. In addition, CRS field offices should develop strategies for addressing "burn-out," motivational, and compensation issues related to CRS national staff.

K. A "non-Title II" logistics officer/manager should be positioned on the project implementation team and charged with responsibilities for office set-up and the "care and feeding" of project personnel.

L. CRS/HQ should make a commitment to ensure that staff working in conflict areas are provided with safe and adequate housing.

Rationale: The adequate provision of material support to CRS field offices operating in conflict situations serves to reduce stress, improve effectiveness, increase accountability, and limit security risks.

VII. MATERIAL SUPPORT

A. CRS/HQ should have the following material support in the form of portable kits available for immediate delivery to the project site:

- office/administrative supplies and manuals
- financial supplies, including ledgers
- Title II manuals, materials and forms
- ID/name cards, T-shirts, CRS logos, CRS packing tape

B. CRS/HQ should have mechanisms for the immediate purchase and delivery of vehicles and spare parts required during program implementation.

C. CRS/HQ should look at appropriate communication systems and establish guidelines/parameters to be applied by the assessment team in developing recommendations in this area.

VIII. FUNDING

In addition to funds made available through the DRT, funds are available in the field to support emergency start-up and program activities. CRS field offices should be encouraged to access local funding from the U.S. Ambassador's \$25,000 emergency fund, the EEC, WFP and others. CRS should also lobby the USG and others for the retroactive reimbursement of start-up funds legitimately charged to external donors.

CRS should not be influenced by the political persuasion of funding sources, particularly if donors have a stake or role in the conflict situation.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDRESSING UNDERLYING CAUSES

A. Recognizing the third principle of human dignity, to foster a culture of peace and respect, CRS has a moral responsibility to work towards cessation of the conflict, to promote non-violent solutions, and to address underlying causes. CRS should undertake one or more of the following:

- Supporting the local Church's efforts to develop activities and strategies toward reconciliation and non-violent resolution of conflict;
- Supporting human rights activities (see approved Board policy) with discretion while maintaining a low profile in the field;

REFERRED TO IN CHAPTER 12

CRS Guidelines on Humanitarian Assistance... ("Harpers Ferry Guidelines") (continued)

HHH. CRS/Country - Plans/needs

i. Plans:

- policies, objectives;
- immediate action;
- mid-term/rehabilitation/recovery, development.

- As response develops, outline priorities in resource allocation.

ii. Needs:

- quantity/quality of immediate needs.
(Are supplies locally available?)
- personnel support (for CRS or counterpart), logistics (transportation, storage facilities, office equipment).

- Give priority to local supplies.

- This section will be a function of needs assessment and program plan.

(Specify costs where possible.)

III. CRS action to date:

- Commitments (dollar amount and tonnage) and location of deliveries;
- Number of beneficiaries;
- Current staffing level;
- Contact with news media.

JJJ. Outlook:

i. Comment on issues favorable or unfavorable for relief/rehabilitation efforts;

ii. Assess outlook for future of emergency and for CRS operations.

Regards/
Name of Country Representative

GGG. CRS/Country:

i. Is CRS present in the country? Does it have an agreement with the government? Has CRS had projects/presence through counterparts in the affected area?

ii. What is the present means of communications with the affected area (telephone, auto, through counterpart)?

iii. What is CRS staff capacity? (Does CRS have financial, logistical, nutritional expertise in office to cope with sudden needs of emergency response?)

iv. CRS access to transport, storage facilities:

- Have customs requirements for emergency shipments been clarified in-country?

v. Counterparts: specify likely counterparts, at national and local/diocesan level. What experience have they had in emergencies, and what is their probable capability in managing emergency response?

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EEE. Needs

i. Supplies and services needed, commitments, deliveries;

ii. Specify basic immediate needs and extent of local availability (quantity and type of food, clothing, shelter, medicine, household equipment, etc.);

iii. Assess mid-term and rehabilitation needs for those affected.

- Applies to general situation;
- State sources (government, UN, PVO);
- Information will change as crisis evolves.

FFF. Response

i. Has government

- declared emergency?
- issued appeal for external assistance?
- appointed an official body responsible for relief operations?
- made relevant laws, guidelines, restrictions concerning the emergency?

ii. Assess quantity and quality of bilateral and PVO response.

- This is a delicate issue but important to CRS.

- ii. Topographical, and socio-economic information on affected area and people.

CCC. Damage:

i. Human: i.e. deaths, injuries, homeless (specify numbers, location and other characteristics), disease, and sanitation.

- Use reliable sources of information;

- Details may take days to emerge in a sudden disaster.

ii. Material: i.e. land, buildings, services (water supply, etc).

DDD. Access:

i. Specify damage limiting access to affected areas (roads, bridges, railroads, telecommunications).

ii. Infrastructure in country (ports, airports, roads, rail).

iii. Transport, i.e. trucks (quantity, breakdown rate, maintenance facilities, spare parts, gas supplies), aircraft, helicopters, railways.

iv. Storage facilities at all points of distribution chain.

REFERRED TO IN CHAPTER 12

CRS Guidelines on Humanitarian Assistance... ("Harpers Ferry Guidelines") (continued)

<u>Format</u>	<u>Comments</u>
TO: CRS/New York Name of Region/Personnel	
FROM: CRS/country	
RE: Emergency in (country name)	
<u>URGENT -- (COUNTRY NAME) EMERGENCY SITREP</u>	
AAA. <u>Summary:</u>	- This information should be put into very brief bullets.
- Nature of emergency (flood, earthquake, volcano, etc.);	
- Location;	
- Magnitude of effect (people killed, affected, displaced, injured, etc.; physical damage to land, buildings, water supply and other services);	
- Overall response by government, international community, PVOs;	
- Unmet needs;	
- CRS actions (proposals, expenditures, etc.)	
BBB. <u>Nature of Disaster</u>	
- i. Type of disaster, when it struck, location and extent of affected area.	

- In situations with religious tension, attempting to promote inter-religious understanding and collaboration through its programs;

- Conducting public education in the U.S. about the causes of the conflict through a variety of avenues, including donor appeals;

- Networking with and providing information to organizations with specialized skills and the mandate for addressing specific underlying causes.

B. Recognizing that in conflict as in other emergencies prevention is better than cure, CRS should explicitly include consideration of issues of incipient and existing conflicts in the development of every country program strategy.

When assessing opportunities for providing humanitarian assistance in conflict situations, the assessment should ask specific questions related to how CRS can promote a process of healing, reconciliation and development at community, national and international levels.

When designing programs that promote a healing and reconciliation process, program designers need to be sensitive to underlying political, economic, and cultural causes, i.e. belief systems, ethnic rivalries, religious differences, etc., of the conflict.

Rationale: In conflict situations, the provision of material assistance, though essential in and of itself, does not constitute an adequate humanitarian response to the needs of affected communities.