

USAID/OFDA SAFETY AND SECURITY SECTOR UPDATE – OCTOBER 2012

SAFETY AND SECURITY OVERVIEW

USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) staff and relief agency partners frequently operate in areas with security challenges. As a result, USAID/OFDA works to enhance the safety and security of the humanitarian community through outreach and dialogue with implementing partners and the donor community. USAID/OFDA supports established networks of humanitarian security personnel, improves security mechanisms and capacity at the global and country level, and strengthens policies that affect safety and security. In addition, USAID/OFDA's Safety and Security Unit directly supports USAID/OFDA staff in the field by providing real-time analysis and guidance on security matters from Washington, D.C., as well as through safety and security officers deployed to the field. USAID/OFDA efforts aim to enable humanitarian activities in volatile situations by increasing access, while minimizing risk to staff and operations. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2012, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$1 million for activities that improved operational security, facilitated coordination and information management, promoted best practices, and built a better understanding of the humanitarian security landscape. In addition, during FY 2012, USAID/OFDA provided approximately \$300,000 to the U.N. Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to support the U.N.'s response to humanitarian needs resulting from the conflict in Syria.

SAVING LIVES TOGETHER (SLT)

In 2006, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee launched SLT, a framework designed to improve security collaboration between U.N. agencies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), in response to increasing insecurity in areas where humanitarian actors operate. To continue the work of SLT, USAID/OFDA provided \$200,000 to UNDSS in FY 2012. Through SLT, humanitarian actors benefit from around-the-clock coordination and information sharing, as well as U.N. and joint U.N.–NGO reports, advisories, risk assessments, and analyses. In FY 2012, USAID/OFDA funding also allowed for external reviews of existing U.N. and NGO security coordination mechanisms in select low-, medium-, and high-risk countries to identify required changes to enhance awareness and implementation of the SLT approach.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND SECURITY WITHIN THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

Humanitarian actors working in the field, particularly smaller organizations with limited resources, continue to face security challenges. In FY 2012, USAID/OFDA continued to support InterAction—the largest alliance of U.S.-based international NGOs—to improve the safety and security of InterAction member agencies' staff and their ability to reach disaster-affected populations in high-risk environments. InterAction provides technical and strategic assistance to NGOs developing their own security frameworks and engages the private sector in providing security services to NGOs to ensure that services are afforded in accordance with NGO principles and sensitivities. USAID/OFDA support allowed InterAction to continue providing global leadership in safety and security coordination, outreach, and policy, including liaising with U.N. agencies, NGOs, the U.S. Government, and other donor agencies. As part of this effort, InterAction also supports SLT, promoting its implementation and advocating for the adoption of common best practices. In FY 2012, USAID/OFDA provided \$250,000 to InterAction to continue these activities.

SUPPORTING THE EUROPEAN INTERAGENCY SECURITY FORUM (EISF)

Since 2010, USAID/OFDA has supported EISF, a group of security managers from more than 50 humanitarian organizations, to enhance the safety and security of aid workers providing humanitarian assistance in complex and increasingly volatile environments. Through coordination with fellow agencies on security issues and strengthening of integrated security-risk management approaches, EISF facilitates increased and sustainable access to populations in need. EISF activities also include capacity-building workshops, biannual forums, and knowledge-sharing events. In FY 2012, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$93,000 to EISF through Save the Children/U.K.

ENHANCING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN SYRIA

Ongoing insecurity in Syria threatens humanitarian workers operating in the country and challenges their ability to provide humanitarian assistance to populations in need. To facilitate the response to increasing humanitarian needs in Syria, USAID/OFDA provided \$300,000 to UNDSS in FY 2012. USAID/OFDA support improved U.N. security capacity within the country, allowing for enhanced assessments of and reporting on security conditions, as well as increased coordination on security aspects of humanitarian operations throughout the country. This assistance helped enable humanitarian workers and inform the delivery of assistance, allowing aid to reach populations in need, often in hostile areas.

ACTIVELY ENGAGING OUR PARTNERS

USAID/OFDA continues to engage its partners through annual consultations to ensure that USAID/OFDA understands and can address their safety and security needs. In 2012, USAID/OFDA held consultations with InterAction in June and EISF in October. Through these consultations, partners continue to express their operational concerns and provide feedback on USAID/OFDA support.

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