

Safety and Security Update

OCTOBER 2013

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) 2013, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$945,000 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 2013, USAID/OFDA provided \$4.1 million to the U.N. Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to support emergency humanitarian responses in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Syria.

IMPROVING SAFETY AND SECURITY WITHIN THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

Humanitarian actors working in the field, particularly smaller organizations with limited resources, face security challenges. In FY 2013, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$312,000 to InterAction—the largest alliance of U.S.-based international non-governmental organizations (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.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO AID THROUGH DATA AND ANALYSIS

USAID/OFDA provided more than \$327,000 to Humanitarian Outcomes in FY 2013 for a two year project aimed at increasing analysis of data related to humanitarian operational security. Building on a prior USAID/OFDA-funded project that established the Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB), which provides statistics on security incidents against aid workers, Humanitarian Outcomes will expand the availability of critical data to inform aid workers of changing security environments, as well as publish regular analysis of trends and statistics. To inform this process, Humanitarian Outcomes has entered into agreements with a number of field-level security consortia in high-incident environments, including in Afghanistan, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan, and plans to expand partnerships to Syria and Mali. The Aid Worker Security Database is available here: <https://aidworkersecurity.org/>.

SUPPORTING THE EUROPEAN INTERAGENCY SECURITY FORUM

Since 2010, USAID/OFDA has supported the European Interagency Security Forum (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 2013, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$209,000 to EISF through Christian Aid.

ENHANCING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN INSECURE LOCATIONS

Ongoing insecurity in several countries threatened humanitarian operations and challenged the ability of aid workers to provide humanitarian assistance in FY 2013. In response, USAID/OFDA provided \$4.1 million to UNDSS to support operations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Syria. USAID/OFDA assistance reduced the vulnerability of humanitarian staff and informed the delivery of assistance, allowing aid to reach populations in need—often in hostile areas. For example, UNDSS conducted security risk assessments to identify vulnerabilities of aid workers, programs, and operations to better facilitate the provision of assistance in high-risk areas of Somalia. Increased UNDSS security capacity—through USAID/OFDA support for staffing and improved communication—in Syria facilitated the delivery of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations experiencing active conflict.

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 2013, USAID/OFDA held consultations with InterAction and EISF. Through these consultations, partners continue to express their operational concerns and provide feedback on USAID/OFDA support.

USAID/OFDA CONTACT

Shawn Bardwell, *Safety and Security Coordinator*, sbardwell@usaid.gov
Joshua Kearns, *Safety and Security Specialist*, jokearns@usaid.gov