Disaster Summary Sheet
Armed Conflict
November 2012

Document objective

This disaster summary sheet (DSS) provides a general profile of the potential impact of an armed conflict. The DSS helps understanding what the actual impact and priority needs during an armed crisis may be, based on experience and lessons learnt from previous crises.

This DSS is about armed conflict, but does not intend to provide an in-depth analysis of armed conflict in different settings. It can, however, be used for determining the impact of armed conflict on affected community or as a briefing package on "what do we know about the impact of armed conflict on life saving sectors".

Content

1. What do I need to know?

This disaster summary sheet addresses the elements relevant to humanitarian programming during armed conflict. An **armed conflict** is understood to be any confrontation involving regular or irregular armed forces whose objectives are perceived as incompatible and in which there is a continuous and organised use of violence.

Armed conflict takes three forms:
- Armed conflict of an international character (refer the four Geneva Conventions 1949 and Protocol I of 1977) (ICRC 1949)
- Armed conflict of a non-international character (note common article 3 of the four Geneva Conventions 1949 and Protocol II of 1977)
- Purely internal conflict, including tyrannical regime victimization (to which the Genocide Convention, the Torture Convention, and Crimes against Humanity apply).

Armed conflict can manifest both as a one off event and as on-going and protracted acts of violence. Contemporary conflict is frequently protracted and characterised by grave human rights violations. Disruptions to livelihoods persist, and protracted conflict is typically punctuated by periods of acute food insecurity and displacement.

A complex emergency is a humanitarian emergency characterised by extensive violence and loss of life, massive displacement of people, widespread damage to social services, infrastructure, and communities and challenges of humanitarian assistance as a result of insecurity, lack of access of affected areas, and by political and military constraints.

Historically, armed opposition groups have clear political aims at a conflict's outset. Over time, these political conflicts mutate into conflicts over economic resources and are perpetuated by economic benefits to be gained from the war economy. War economies often involve various forms of violence, including asset-stripping of the politically weak, extorting protection money and exploiting labour. This may involve military or paramilitary actors or profiteers who benefit from a weak regulatory environment. The term 'fragile states' is often used to describe situations of chronic conflict, weak institutions, political will and policies, poverty and/or the ineffective use of development assistance.

In protracted conflicts, there may be periods or areas of relative stability, but the risk of acute or violent conflict remains and conflict frequently resumes. In 2011 only, 37 armed conflicts were recorded (UCDP n.d.).

Impact summary

Armed conflict negatively affects a population in a variety of ways. Its impact extends far beyond the number of soldiers and civilians who die violently in combat, armed conflicts also contribute to excess mortality and morbidity in the civilian population — largely through the spread of infectious disease, destruction of assets, disruption of livelihoods, the loss of entitlements, and the diversion of scarce resources away from basic services (SAS 2012).

The table below presents a non-exhaustive summary of the main issues that conflict-affected populations face as direct consequences of a conflict. Each impact will be explored in more detail throughout the DSS.

Physical Impact:
- Damage to basic services infra-structures including health centres and schools
- Damage to infrastructure: power supply, roads, sewage systems, communications etc.
- Trade routes affected by insecurity, displacement and sanctions
- Markets disrupted
- Destruction of cultural and religious heritage sites
- Environmental degradation
- Damage to / destruction of shelter

Impact on population:
- Displacement
- Disruption of livelihoods
- Shortage of shelter/housing
- Lack of access to health services
- Death and injuries due to fighting
- Epidemic outbreaks
- Inability to manage chronic illnesses and disabilities
- Malnutrition
- Inability to access clean water
- Challenges in accessing sufficient and diverse food
- Poor psychosocial wellbeing
- Grave human rights and protection violations
- Sexual and gender based violence
- Breakdown of traditional family and community sup-port mechanisms
- Family separation
- Restrictions to freedom of movement
- Closure of schools
- Access to public services severely impaired.

2. Lessons learnt

Displacement

Most armed conflicts are accompanied by large scale population movement. As of December 2011, 26.4 million persons had been displaced as a result of conflict (IDMC 2011). Direct threats to life, general violence, and insecurity resulting from armed conflict are among the most common reasons for leaving areas of origin (IAU 2010). Forced relocation has also been witnessed during armed conflicts, notably in Burundi in 1996, in Timor-Leste in 1999, and in Darfur since 2004.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs) are *persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes ... as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, violations of human rights or human-made disasters, and who have not cross an internationally recognised State border* (OCHA 2004). Once a conflict affected person crosses international borders, s/he become a refugee and is defined as someone who *owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it* (OHCHR 1951). Displacement has an aggregating effect on the negative consequences of armed conflict and impacts across all sectors.

Refugees and IDPs from conflict areas are found amongst those living under the most difficult forms of socio-economic exclusion and deprivation. Displaced populations often struggle to find work, are less likely to work in the post-conflict period, and exhibit lower productivity levels than those that stayed behind (IDS 2011). In addition, poor nutrition, inadequate shelter, and exhaustion increase individual immunity during the flight (MSF 1997). Host communities can be equally impacted if services are unavailable.

Livelihoods and Food Security

Contemporary conflict is frequently protracted, and risks to livelihoods thus persist for long periods of time. Protracted conflict is frequently punctuated by periods of acute food insecurity and displacement. Over 20% of the population of conflict affected countries lack access to adequate food. Similarly, countries with low per capita caloric intake are more prone to experience civil conflict (Sobek and Boehmer 2009, IFPRI 2005).

Although food aid buffers food-intake levels to some extent, armed conflict causes a reduction in both the quality and quantity of food available to the household (FAO 1996, FAO 2003). During conflict, food is also used as a weapon, and food systems both destroyed in the course of conflict and food insecurity persisting as a legacy of conflict (IFPRI 2005). In addition, food insecurity causes migration which (can) both negatively impact labour capacity and disrupt social networks (FAO 2003).

Armed conflict directly impacts on livelihoods through the destruction, looting and theft of key assets, and indirectly through the loss of basic services and access to employment, markets, farms or pastures. As a result, livelihood strategies become restricted and may involve considerable risks to personal safety. The direct and indirect effects of armed conflict on food security and livelihoods are detailed below:

Direct Impact
- Loss of food stock, crop yields and livestock
- Loss of farm and fisheries tools and seed stock
- Loss of other livelihoods assets
- Damage to irrigation channels and other infrastructure
- Loss of labour force due to changes in family structure, displacement, death/injury of caregivers etc.

Indirect Impact
- Increased prices of food
- Reduced income for farmers
- Decrease in food availability
- Decreased quality and quantity consumption of food
- Lower quality and variety of diet
- Loss of access to markets and trade routes interrupted due to insecurity

- Emergency sales of assets, often at below market prices
- Depletion of savings
- Malnutrition
- Increased <5 mortality rates
- Disruption of social networks

Direct effects

In contemporary conflicts, armed groups often seek to undermine opposition's support base by destroying civilian livelihoods (ODI 2007). Acute effects of armed conflict on livelihoods are due to the sudden loss of means of production. Key assets, such as livestock, home, business and food stocks are subject to theft, looting and destruction as a tactic of warfare to increase the vulnerability of those affected (ICRC 1996b, IFPRI 2005, IDS 2011).

Household's labour resources decrease due to migration, killings and recruitment into the armed groups (IDS 2011).

Conflict causes increased instability and uncertainty in the food supply (FAO 1996) and destroys both urban and rural infrastructure, in particular roads and irrigation (FAO 2003).

Indirect effects

The fraying of social networks, as a consequence of conflict, has significant negative implications on livelihoods as individual and community survival frequently depends on reciprocity. In addition, conflict impacts food security indirectly through the loss of access to employment, exchange networks and social services through the restriction of movement (ODI 2007).

Livelihood strategies become extremely restricted in armed conflict and may involve considerable risks to personal safety, e.g. people farming in land infested with landmines (IDS 2011). Landmines also impact the trade network as roads become unsafe to travel, thereby cutting off supply routes and diminishing usable arable land (UNMAS 2010, ICRC 1996a).

Migration can be a strategy to reduce vulnerability and maximize livelihood security in anticipation of, or during, a crisis. Here, households or individuals migrate to areas where they can obtain employment or access natural resources and other income sources to reduce the impact of the crisis (WFP 2009). However, IDPs often settled in remote locations to escape insecurity, far from markets and income generating opportuni-

ties. Few have access to arable land and adequate water to allow agricultural self-sustainability (Deng 2003).

Relief operations usually focus on food distribution and limited attention is given to recovery activities. Insufficient investment in livelihood and disaster risk reduction programmes has contributed to a continuing need for relief aid (HPN 2012). Food aid necessary during conflict can undermine investment in local food production and the development of local capacity (WFP 2011).

Free markets often become 'forced markets', with military actors using coercion to maintain protection regimes and price differences (ODI 2007).

Coping strategies

The main differences between livelihoods strategies to cope with natural disasters and those to cope with conflict are that the options are far more limited. Many strategies are intentionally blocked or unavailable as an unintended consequence of conflict. The range of possible responses to meet basic needs is limited under conditions of extreme asset loss, on-going insecurity and risk of attack. In addition, conflicting coping strategies may emerge between different population groups and the strategies of one group may be harmful to another, which can fuel conflict (ODI 2007).

Livelihoods strategies are divided into those that are reversible and those that are irreversible. Reversible strategies are those that do not cause permanent damage to livelihoods; irreversible strategies do cause permanent damage. A third category involves dangerous and/or activities that are debasing to local populations. The following table contains a list of coping mechanisms generally adopted by affected population to cope with the impact of an armed conflict (ODI 2007).

Livelihood coping mechanisms:
Reversible (from legal to criminal)
- Manufacturing, petty trade, domestic labour, firewood collection, harvesting wild food, and subsistence farming
- Migration of family members for work
- Changing economic roles of family members
- Reduction in food intake
- Change in diet
- Engaging in large-scale extraction, informal trade, small scale smuggling

- Engaging in theft, looting, government corruption, asset transfer, taxation by armed groups, and robbery
- Exploiting labourers

Irreversible
- Migration of whole family
- Divesting and sale of production assets

Risk survival / harm dignity
- Farming in insecure areas
- Collection of firewood in insecure areas
- Begging
- Joining armed forces
- Engaging in exploitive labour relations. Domestic labour during conflict has been associated with sexual abuse and attack
- If all caretakers have to engage economic activities, children face the risk of neglect
- Long term reduction in food intake
- Insufficient dietary diversity

Health

Armed conflict results in death and injury of both combatants and civilians. Conflict also contributes to additional mortality and morbidity amongst civilians beyond the direct impact of battle. The main direct and indirect effects of armed conflict on health are detailed below:

Direct Impact
- Mortality
- War related injury
- Sexual and gender based violence
- Psychological and social suffering
- Disability resulting from war injuries
- Damage to/destruction of hospitals and healthcare centres
- Disruption to drug supply chains
- Threats to health care providers
- Lack of health care providers
- Disruption of treatment of chronic illnesses
- Disruption to HIV/AIDS treatment
- Loss of restorative and mobility aids for persons with disabilities

Indirect Impact
- Routes to health centres closed due to insecurity resulting in no access for healthcare seekers or supply of medicine
- Outbreaks of infectious diseases due to overcrowded and unhygienic living conditions
- Deterioration of nutritional status
- Increased HIV/AIDS rates
- High maternal mortality rate
- Increased numbers of persons with disabilities
- Reduction in disease control programmes, including vaccination campaigns.

Direct Impact

Sustained armed conflict typically results in damage to and destruction of health care systems. This manifests in: the absence of medical staff; shortages of medical supplies; disruption of the cold supply chain; power breakdowns; and reduced access to health clinics due to higher costs and insecurity (ICRC 2004). Violations of the medical neutrality have been widespread in recent conflicts. Hospitals are destroyed, health care personnel targeted, and ambulances are blocked or seized (PLoS 2011).

Conflict leads directly to the death and injury of combatants. Torture cause specific health care

needs as do landmines, unexploded ordinances, and other remnants of war. UXOs not only cause immediate death and injury to conflict affected populations, but continue to cause disability and death beyond the life of the conflict (Annas and Geiger 2008). Sexual violence increases during armed conflict resulting in high rates of pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and HIV (Sapir 1993).

However, the total number of people dying violently during conflict is relatively low compared to those dying or being impacted indirectly from armed conflict (GVA Dec 2008).

Mental and psychosocial well being

Emergencies create a wide range of problems experienced at the individual, family, community, and societal levels. The impact of conflict serves to erode normally protective supports and increase the risks of diverse social and psychological problems. Mental health and psychosocial problems in emergencies are predominantly social or psychological in nature and include (IASC 2009):
- Pre-existing problems (e.g. extreme poverty or mental illness)
- Emergency induced social or psychological problems (e.g. family separation, disruption of community support networks, depression, anxiety, or PTSD (Martz 2010))
- Humanitarian induced social or psychological problems (e.g. undermining of community support networks, discrimination and anxiety over lack of information).

All sub-groups of a population can be at risk for mental health and psychosocial problems. However, multiple and interacting social, psychological, and biological factors will influence whether people develop psychosocial problems or are resilient in the face of the impact of armed conflict (IASC 2009).

Indirect Impact

As a result of impaired access to healthcare, affected populations not only face a higher risk of disease, but are more likely to be severely affected if they fall ill (ICRC 2004). During armed conflict, one in five women of childbearing age is likely to be pregnant. Conflict puts these women and their babies at risk because of the sudden loss of medical support, compounded by trauma, malnutrition or disease, and exposure to violence. Access to health care becomes a luxu-

ry, rendering it even more difficult for women to have a choice in their reproductive health (UNFPA 2012). The average mortality rate for children < 5 that are born in conflict affected countries is more than double the rate than in other countries (UNESCO 2011).

Indirect impacts on the health of conflict affected populations, especially for the displaced, are influenced by:

* Overcrowding
* Inadequate shelter
* Insufficient nutrient intake
* Insufficient vaccination coverage
* Poor water, sanitation and hygiene conditions
* High exposure to and/or proliferation of disease vectors
* Disrupted health assistance systems.

Communicable diseases

Epidemics that develop during armed conflict are often usually a function of displacement where large numbers of people are displaced to camps, public buildings and other locations where overcrowding and unhygienic living conditions provide a fertile breeding ground for infections (ICRC 1996a). The impact of communicable diseases reaches all conflict affected persons: IDPs; host communities; and the non-displaced/non hosting communities.

Malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrheal diseases, and measles are responsible for most indirect deaths in conflict zones (HSRP 2010). The main diseases likely to occur, by means of transmission, are:

* Air Droplet: TB, measles, meningitis, whooping cough, pneumonia
* Faecal-oral: Diarrhoeal diseases as cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, amebiasis and giardiasis, bacillary dysentery, typhoid fever, ascariasis, ancylostomiasis, and polio
* Vector-borne: Malaria, dengue fever, schistosomiasis, typhus, Japanese encephalitis,
* trypanosomiasis, yellow fever, onchocerciasis
* Blood: HIV, Hepatitis B & C
* Sexual: HIV, syphilis, Hepatitis B, gonorrhoea and other STDs (ICRC 1996a)
* Unclean wounds: Infections, tetanus
* Mother to child: Hep. B, HIV, Syphilis
* Reproductive health: Morbidity, disability, and mortality due to scarce resources during deliveries and early days after.

Displaced populations can transfer infections from their home environment or the area they travelled through to new areas of settlement, where these infections were previously unknown or under control (ICRC 1996a). Likewise, incoming IDP populations can experience increased mortality and morbidity if exposed to new diseases to which they have not yet developed immunity (MSF 1997).

In addition to the increased risk of an outbreak of communicable diseases, disease control programmes, such as vaccination campaigns, deteriorate due to armed conflict (ICRC 1996a).

Non-Communicable diseases, chronic illness, and disability

Health-related factors, such as disease, disability, and malnutrition brought on by displacement often claim more lives and cause greater suffering than the conflict itself (UNHCR 2010).

Older age is characterised by decreased mobility, sight, hearing and strength; minor ailments become serious handicaps which impair older person's coping strategies in response to emergencies (IASC 2008). Older persons have challenges accessing medical services during emergencies and are frequently faced with a lack of understanding, expertise and medication for the treatment of chronic illnesses (HAI 2012).

Persons with disability do not present a homogeneous group. In situations of armed conflict, they have the same basic needs as other affected persons. In addition, they may experience difficulty in moving, hearing, seeing, communicating and/or learning, amplifying the often severe challenges posed by displacement (UNHCR 2011). Chronic diseases common to older age, such as coronary heart disease, hypertension, diabetes and respiratory diseases can worsen without adequate routine assessment and medication (UNHCR/HAI 2008). Similarly, disability can result from poorly managed chronic illnesses during periods of protracted conflict.

Malnutrition

Sustained conflict leads to lower levels of nutrition as access to diverse foods decreases. The nutrition status of all affected people will be impacted by food shortages in the medium term and longer term. Common consequences of conflict in food security among affected populations include:

- Reduction in the availability and access to food
- Loss of or damage to family food reserves
- Decrease in both number and quality of meals,

Those who are already vulnerable - children <5 (HSRP 2010), older persons, persons with certain disabilities, those with chronic illnesses, persons with HIV/AIDs and those with already compromised nutritional status – will be most impacted. Severe acute malnutrition will appear and be measurable from the second month of displacement, giving time to place a surveillance system since the early stages if resources are available. Early food security measures can reduce or delay the appearance of SAM.

Shelter and NFI

A shortage of housing during and in the aftermath of armed conflict is common (Leckie 2005). Following periods of sustained conflict, housing is frequently damaged or destroyed due to shelling, burning, looting, and other forms of destruction. Residential areas are often targeted for destruction by opposing groups as part of political strategy. Furthermore, new housing construction and the maintenance of existing housing comes to a standstill, and generally does not resume or return to pre-war levels for several years afterwards. The direct and indirect effects of armed conflict on shelter and non-food items are detailed below:

Direct Impact
- Shelter destroyed or damaged
- People have no longer access to cooking, heating and hygiene possibilities
- Loss of materials to repair/rebuild shelter
- Loss of human resources to repair/ rebuild shelter
- Destruction of natural resources used to repair/rebuild shelter.

Indirect Impact
- Displacement
- Secondary and tertiary displacement
- Increasing number of land disputes, including discrimination in and exclusion from legal support to rectify such disputes
- Public services are hampered due to people taking residence in public buildings
- Protection violations
- Environmental degradation.

Impact
Inadequate shelter is a primary cause of (preventable) disease that impacts affected populations, especially IDPs, during emergencies (IFRC 2008). When a conflict is primarily ethnic in nature, housing may have been used as a tool in an ethnic cleansing process and/or as a form of political patronage as local leaders occupy the homes of rival groups (Leckie 2005).

During armed conflict, houses are left unattended as their occupants flee. In most conflict affected areas the abandoned property is inhabited by secondary occupants. This often causes conflict over land and property when the displaced population returns (Leckie 2005). This is aggravated by the disruption of land administration during

conflict. Ownership transfers are not recorded and the documentation can be a target for destruction to disrupt society, cause tensions and destroy evidence for legal claims to land (UNSC 2007).

People are increasingly exposed to protection violations, due to the reduced security offered by damaged, makeshift, emergency or temporary shelters.

Conflict affected-populations construct shelters on publicly or privately owned land, potentially causing tensions with titleholders of that land (IAU 2010). In addition, they are at risk of being evicted at any time, creating constant stress (IDMC 2011). IDPs often face secondary displacement, as the titleholders of the land where they are temporarily residing expel them or when the area affected by conflict expands.

Environmental degradation often results from a shortage in shelter, as trees are cut for construction as well as used for firewood for cooking and heating by displaced and host populations (FAO 2003).

Schools, health centres, religious houses of worship, and other public buildings are often used for temporary housing by displaced populations making them unusable or unavailable for their intended purpose (IDMC 2011).

Persons affected by conflict, especially IDPs, often lack vital non-food essentials such as blankets, mattresses, flooring, stoves, water containers, clothing and cooking sets (Berg and Wallinder 2006; Deng 2003; OCHA 2002, Potts, Myer and Roberts 2011).

During conflict and times of scarce resources, woman, especially widows and older women, face the risk of illegal evictions from their property (Habitat 2007).

WASH

Community water and sanitation services are among the first to be disrupted during armed conflict and facilities are often intentionally damaged or destroyed (UNICEF 2009). The greatest waterborne risk to health in most emergencies is the transmission of faecal pathogens, due to inadequate sanitation, hygiene and protection of water sources (WHO 2004). The direct and indirect effects of armed conflict on water and hygiene are detailed below:

Direct Impact
Disruption of water distribution systems due to:
- Interruption of electrical power
- Intentional destruction by opposing parties
- Inability to access systems for maintenance due to insecurity

Water system contaminated by:
- Leaks or destruction of water systems
- Overflowing drainage system
- Destruction of sewage system
- Leaking of sewage into water reservoirs
- Intentional contamination by opposing parties, debris
- Clogging and overflowing of latrines

Other:
- Pools of stagnant water remains and mosquito and other vector population increase
- Decaying corpses and carcasses create dangerous environment.

Indirect Impact
- Insufficient quantity of water available
- Increased distance to functional water source
- In places where IDPs are living: Inadequate latrines, laundry/washing facilities and insufficient privacy for women to wash/use latrines
- Consumption of contaminated water
- Defecation in open spaces
- Increased risk of water borne diseases
- Limited access to hygiene materials, e.g. soap and sanitary pads
- Change of environment can render traditional hygiene practices unsuitable
- Build-up of undisposed of rubbish.
- Potential risks of water-borne disease if safe water is not distributed in the first days.

Direct Impact

Shelling and a lack of fuel during armed conflict interrupt electricity, which can cause a breakdown of the water supply network (Hlavinek et al. 2009). The water infrastructure (intake, treatment, storage and distribution) is often deliberately targeted during armed conflict causing (ACF 2011):

- Leak in or destruction of water supply system, which prevents water distribution.
- Destruction of or damage to the reticulated water supply system, causing contamination of the water supply.
- Destruction or overflow of industrial drainage infrastructure, which may cause pollution.
- If a sewer is (partly) destroyed, the functioning part of that system is likely to overflow.
- If the drainage system collapses, there is a high risk for water-borne diseases to break out as pools of still water provide breeding grounds for vectors and are easily contaminated by other matter.

When there is no piped water available, water pump and wells can be targeted for destruction and be affected by rubble from damaged houses. The deliberate contamination of water, and destruction of wells and piped systems, is common during armed conflicts (Hlavinek et al. 2009).

The limited availability of functional wells burdens those that remain in good condition, resulting in their drying out or breaking down due to overuse. As more people and animals use fewer water sources, the risk of contamination increases (WHO 2004).

During emergencies, surface-water sources (e.g. ponds) are particularly sensitive to pollution, particularly bacteriological pollution. However, with the breakdown of alternatives, affected communities may increasingly depend upon these water sources (Atkins 2009).

Water usage

When water systems break down, the travel distance to safe water increases thus the cost of clean water increases, impeding access for the poorer households. As a consequence, the amount of available household drinking water decreases, limiting the activities that are conducted with safe water. The increased walking distance to clean water sources also poses security threats to (mainly) woman and children who are exposed to increased protection violations while fetching water (ICRC 2004).

Hygiene

When sewers are completely destroyed, people resort to open defecation which can contaminate ponds and other open water sources, posing significant health risks. Women who must wait until sundown to defecate outside in private areas are vulnerable to attacks (ICRC 2004).

During armed conflict, water and soap for bathing and for washing clothes may fall short (ICRC 2004). Likewise, communities, especially IDPs, may lose storage containers which allow them to transport and store clean water safely.

Women affected by armed conflict often assume additional burdens, which may place constraints on their time and cause them to have a reduced presence within the family and having an adverse effect on hygiene education (ICRC 2004).

Displacement

When conflict causes population movements, households are cut off from safe water supplies, their usual hygienic routine and from hygienic means of excreta disposal (UNICEF 2009). Public buildings that are used by IDPs for shelter often have inadequate sanitation capacity; latrines are quickly clogged and there is shortage of clean water. IDP-housing, both camps and in public buildings, is often overcrowded with limited privacy. Combined with poor sanitation, these locations may become breeding grounds for disease if preventing measures are not taken (Deng 2003).

Environmental changes, such as moving from an urban to a rural community or from a private residence to a collective settlement, can render traditional hygiene practices unsuitable or even a health hazard (ICRC 2004).

Over half the refugee camps in the world are unable to provide the recommended daily water minimum of 20 litres of water per person per day, and around 30% of IDP camps have inadequate waste disposal and latrine facilities (UNHCR 2012).

Education

During wartime, schools are used for military purposes by armed forces and non-state armed groups as barracks, logistics bases, operational headquarters, weapons and ammunition caches, detention and interrogation centres, firing and observation positions, and recruitment grounds (Global coalition to protect education from attack, 2012).

Access to education during armed conflict is impaired in different ways. Teachers and other staff flee conflict affected areas, creating shortages in personnel at schools. Schools, and students, are often targeted in armed conflict. These attacks not only damage property and harm the individuals involved, but they also incite fear and limit access to education for other children. Schools are often made inaccessible to conflict affected populations because of military occupation or use as shelter for IDPs (UNICEF 2009).

Maintaining access to education opportunities during armed conflict has multiple benefits (UNICEF 2009). It provides a safe environment, reducing children's vulnerability to trafficking and other forms of exploitation. School is a positive alternative to recruitment into and involvement with armed groups, gangs, and drugs. Schools can provide a safe place for identifying children with specific needs and can aid in facilitating their social integration. Education in camp, or other displacement, environments helps recreate elements of a social structure that children may have lost (UNESCO 2011).

Education can also be itself used as a weapon of war. Unfair or discriminatory educational systems violate basic principles of equality and can exacerbate the wider grievances, social tensions and inequalities that perpetuate armed conflict (UNESCO 2011). The direct and indirect effects of armed conflict on education are detailed below:

Direct Impact

- Educational facilities damaged or destroyed
- Schools occupied by armed forces
- School buildings become shelter for IDPs
- Lack of qualified personnel caused by displacement of teachers and other staff
- Curriculum changed to support the violent societal dynamics
- Recruitment of children into armed groups.

Indirect Impact

- Lack of access to education
- Exclusion from education
- Higher drop-out rate of pupils
- Inability to pay school fees, and other costs, due to disruption of livelihoods activities
- High illiteracy rates.

Direct Impact

Children in conflict affected countries are less likely to be in primary school than children in countries of comparable income levels that are not affected by conflict. They are also more likely to drop out; school completion rates in conflict affected countries are 65% as opposed to 86% in other poor non conflict affected countries (UNESCO 2011).

Children recruited into armed groups, who are abducted or assume the role of caretaker due to the loss of parents or grandparents lose access to education. Likewise, when schools are closed, children are more susceptible to conscription into armed groups. In addition, schools that fail to equip young people with the skills they need to achieve a sustainable livelihood help provide potential recruits for armed groups (UNESCO 2011).

Indirect Impact

Due to the reverse effect of war on income, households have to increasingly prioritise their spending to meet basic needs. Children drop out because parents can no longer afford the costs (UNICEF 2009).

The legacy of conflict is evident in literacy levels. Only 79% of young people and 69% of adults are literate in conflict-affected countries, compared to, on average, 93% and 85% in other countries, and girls are impacted more severely than boys with regard to access to education (UNESCO 2011). The loss of education due to protracted conflict has a negative effect for the complete development of the country in the long run, as whole generations potentially remain uneducated. Even short episodes of armed conflict can halt progress or reverse gains built up over generations (UNESCO 2011).

Protection

Protection violations in a conflict environment are common, as armed conflict is typically accompanied by a widespread proliferation of general violence (ODI 2007). Civilians and IDPs are often targeted in armed conflict, and the main casualties of conflict worldwide are civilians (UN 2003; UNESCO 2011). The impoverishment and deliberate intimidation of a civilian population is frequently a conscious war strategy (ODI 2007).

Lawlessness is often associated with armed conflict and provides an enabling environment for exploitation and abuse in impunity. During armed conflict, it is challenging to protect affected populations from violence and safeguard their rights.

During armed conflict, civilians face deliberate discrimination and deprivation across all sectors: health, education, WASH, livelihoods and protection (ODI 2007). IDPs forced from their homes experience specific protection risks. These include: armed attack and abuse while fleeing in search of safety; family separation; heightened risk of SGBV; arbitrary deprivation of land, homes and other property; and displacement into inhospitable environments, where they may experience stigma, marginalisation, discrimination, and harassment (UNHCR 2010).

Emergencies amplify pre-existing problems of social injustice and inequality (IASC 2009). Grave human rights and protection violations include: targeted attacks, forced displacement, forced recruitment, abductions, slavery, torture, etc.

Arbitrary restrictions on movement, including forced return, punitive curfews or roadblocks are common during armed conflict and prevent access to fields, markets, jobs, family, friends and social services (ODI 2007). Human shields are seen to be used to protect military conveys and other strategic goals, arbitrary detention is common.

The direct and indirect effects of armed conflict on protection are detailed below:

Direct Impact
- Exposure to physical harm, including: murder, mutilations, torture, systematic rape and indiscriminate attacks
- Violations of human, political, and social rights
- Lack of access to basic services, such as health care and education
- Discrimination by humanitarian service providers.

Indirect Impact
- Displacement
- SGBV
- Exposure to landmines and ERWs
- Violation of housing, land and property rights
- Violation of rights of vulnerable groups, especially children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and other at risk populations
- Exclusion from humanitarian support and recovery activities.

Displacement
Internal displacement creates heightened as well as distinct protection risks (UNHCR 2010). These include:
- Being compelled to seek shelter in crowded camps or settlements, giving rise to protection risks.
- Loss of access to land, property and other assets leads to poverty, marginalisation, exploitation and abuse.
- Access to adequate food, safe water, and public services, including health and education, is challenged leading to high levels of hunger, malnutrition, and disease.
- Family and community support structures collapse. Unaccompanied and separated children (UNICEF 2004), single headed households, older persons and persons with disabilities are at increased risk of abuse, sexual exploitation, child labour, and forced recruitment into armed groups.
- Identity documents are lost, resulting in difficulties for IDPs to access public services, limits to freedom of movement, and increased chance of harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention.
- Displacement into areas where IDPs face marginalisation, discrimination and hostility or exposure to landmines or other explosive remnants of war.

Conflict dynamics can be very present in IDP camps, and other types of settlements. At times, armed militia hold *de facto* authority in camps. As a consequence, violence committed against IDPs in camps is often perpetrated in impunity. It

is also common for camps to be raided by militia (NRC 2008).

Sexual and gender based violence

Rape during war and conflict is perpetrated as an opportunistic act, or spoil of war. However, it is increasingly perpetrated as a crime against humanity, when rape is used systematically as a tool of ethnic cleansing and is committed with political motivations (DAN 2006).

Sexual violence is the most immediate and dangerous type of GBV occurring in acute emergencies. It is often perpetrated in situations of armed conflict (FMR 2007), especially during the early stages of a crisis when communities first experience social disruption, populations are moving, and systems for protection are not fully in place. Other forms of GBV emerge during more stabilised phases. These include: harmful traditional practices (female genital mutilation); forced early marriage; honour killings; and domestic violence etc. (IASC 2005).

Destitute and displaced populations are particularly at risk of enforced prostitution and cross-border trafficking when living in or returning from camps (UN Women 2012).

In most situations of armed conflict, it is harder for women to access basic services. Many must resort to engaging in sexual intercourse for survival (Crisis Group 2012). There is a strong rise in domestic violence, sex trafficking, and forced prostitution in (post-) conflict areas (Manjoo and McRaith 2011).

Displacement and separation often demands that women act as breadwinners and heads of household. They and their community are often equally unprepared for this shift in conventional roles, and women may face social censure for transgressing behavioural norms in their struggle to secure a source of livelihood and access to basic services during conflict (ICRC 2004).

Conflict affected countries become both a source of human trafficking and a transit point (UN Women 2012). Forcibly displaced women and children are especially at risk for trafficking (GTZ 2004). Members of peacekeeping units have been directly implicated in trafficking, sexual exploitation and abuse in many conflict zones, while criminal organizations capitalize on the sudden influx of peace operations personnel by opening and expanding prostitution and trafficking rings (UN Women 2012).

Landmines, explosive remnants of war (ERW)

Landmines kill and mutilate more civilians than any other weapons. They pose a serious threat to civilians during flight, displacement, return, and recovery. Landmines and ERWs are indiscriminate and cannot be aimed. Those who survive landmine/ERWs often require amputation, hospitalisation, extensive rehabilitation and socio-economic assistance for reintegration into society. Survivors suffer from lack of medical care, limited access to education, unemployment, discrimination, and stigma (UNHCR 2010).

Housing, land and property

Violations of housing, land and property (HLP) rights are a common consequence of armed conflicts. In situations of conflict, destruction of property can be both a means of warfare and a consequence of common banditry and obliteration in the absence of rule of law. A frequent consequence of armed conflict is forced displacement, which often means the loss of HLP. Such losses not only sever individuals and communities from their primary shelter, but also from sources of livelihood. When these individuals eventually consider return, whether and how to reclaim their HLP and thus rebuild their livelihoods, is of crucial concern to them (Habitat 2012).

Child Protection

Violations against children increase during and after armed conflict. Violations include: killing or maiming, torture, enforced disappearance, administrative detention, forced displacement and sexual exploitation and abuse (UNICEF 2009). The highest risk groups among children are: detained children; child soldiers; IDP children; and children tortured by peacekeeping forces (Quiroga, 2009).

Armed conflict causes a breakdown in the family support systems that are essential to a child's survival and development (UN 1996). When children are separated or orphaned by war, they may have to engage in child labour for survival, the options of which are limited. Many children are recruited into (rebel) armies or engage in other hazardous professions such as prostitution, drugs production or trafficking, or agricultural activities in dangerous conflict zones (UNICEF 2009). Forced recruitment into the armed forces or armed groups is a common occurrence in most contemporary conflicts (UNICEF 2009).

Protection of persons with specific needs

Disability may give rise to heightened protection vulnerabilities, such as exposure to violence, including SGBV and domestic abuse, exploitation by family members, discrimination, and exclusion from humanitarian assistance, education, livelihoods and health care (UNHCR 2011).

When communities are struck by armed conflict, older people are among the most vulnerable people affected, and humanitarian programmes often fail to recognise their challenges, vulnerabilities, and potential contributions (HAI 2012).

Armed conflict also results in the deliberate denial of access to social services or humanitarian aid for specific areas or certain minority population groups (ODI 2007).

Coping strategies

The main coping strategy is to leave conflict affected areas through displacement and migration (Korf 2002).

Protection strategies can be categorized in three types: avoidance, containment and confrontation. Avoidance strategies are aimed at escaping the threat, containment strategies are described as living with the threat and confrontation involves fighting back (ODI 2007).

Protection coping mechanisms:

Avoidance
- Flight or displacement
- Hiding assets
- Early warning systems to alert for danger
- Changing patterns of movement (e.g. travelling at night or safer routes). Farming in groups
- Sending children to safe places

Containment
- Negotiation with warring parties
- Submission, such as 'marriage' to forces commanders
- Paying taxes or protection money
- Building alliances with power holders

Confrontation
- Formation of self-defense or vigilante groups
- Joining one party to the conflict

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