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EDITORIAL

[Issue 114 – May 29, 2008](#)

Fearing for the Future of the Humanitarian Enterprise

The *Humanitarian Agenda 2015: Principles, Power and Perceptions* research project of the Feinstein International Center recently issued its final report. Since early 2006, a multi-disciplinary team from the Center canvassed perceptions of the work of humanitarian agencies from the bottom up – focusing on the perceptions of communities and individuals who benefit from or observe the functioning of, the humanitarian enterprise.

[*The State of the Humanitarian Enterprise*](#), (Antonio Donini, *et al*), summarizes the findings of the research – the constraints, challenges and compromises affecting humanitarian action in conflict and crisis settings. The building blocks were 12 case studies of local perceptions conducted in 2006 and 2007 in Afghanistan, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Liberia, Nepal, northern Uganda, the occupied Palestinian territory, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Sudan.

The approach was evidence-based. Findings were distilled through an inductive process involving interviews and focus group discussions at the community level aimed at eliciting local perceptions. Additional data was collected from aid staff and other observers at the country level. More than 2,000 people provided inputs into the research.

The findings are analyzed around four issues: the universality of humanitarianism; the impact of terrorism and counter-terrorism on humanitarian action; the thrust toward coherence between humanitarian and political agendas, and; the security of humanitarian personnel and the communities benefiting from humanitarian action.

The findings highlight a crisis of humanitarianism in the post 9/11 world. International action aimed at assisting and protecting the most vulnerable is, for the most part, inextricably linked to a northern security and political agenda. Nevertheless, principled humanitarian action, though battered at times, constitutes an essential safety net for people in extremis deserving of nurture and protection. Such action occupies a crucial but increasingly precarious position at the intersection of (a) international political / security agendas and (b) the coping strategies of people affected by crisis and conflict. It is

instrumentalized and torn between principle and pragmatism as perhaps never before, particularly in high-profile crises.

Though the traditional values of humanitarianism still resonate among affected communities in all of the settings studied, the humanitarian enterprise itself is divided on the extent to which core principles should be respected, particularly in the more asymmetrical and intractable crises they have to confront. This disquiet affects the quality and the coherence of the assistance and protection provided.

To confirm that humanitarians need to be wary of politics, even as they do their work in highly politicized settings is nothing new. What is new in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 eras is that the stakes are much higher because the extent of need has proliferated, the awareness of need has become more instantaneous and more global, and humanitarian action has become a multi-billion dollar enterprise. When it occupied the margins of conflict – as, for example, in refugee camps outside conflict areas – humanitarian action was an activity of generally minor consequence to belligerence. Aid agencies were accepted or tolerated as beneficial, or at least non-threatening. Now humanitarian action is very often at the center of conflicts and of international concern. It influences, as well as reflects, public opinion and the views of governments at the national and global levels.

Moreover, politicization, militarization and privatization nowadays represents more of a challenge for those parts of a diverse enterprise striving for a modicum of fidelity to principle. Many mainstream agencies have been drawn implicitly or explicitly into the service of political agendas. Only a minority have exhibited the policy determination and financial wherewithal to resist. It thus remains debatable whether the assortment of agencies and individuals that comprise the humanitarian enterprise can – or should – maintain the fiction that they are all parts of the same movement, functioning as parts of a common apparatus.

The research data also confirms that the humanitarian enterprise has become much more institutionalized. Standards have gained currency, programs have become more contextualized, and professionalism has improved. Yet despite the rhetoric of downward accountability to beneficiaries, mainstream humanitarians continue to talk principally to the like-minded, shunning different or dissenting voices. Much that is local and non-western in humanitarian action goes unrecognized: the coping mechanisms of communities, the parallel life-saving universe that includes *zakat*, migration and remittances. These constitute the unrecorded assistance flows of groups and countries that are not part of the northern-drive humanitarian system.

The wider meaning. The HA2015 findings confirm the good news that humanitarian action remains an essential – and sometimes

dominant – element in the international response to crisis and conflict. Increasingly, it is a factor in the undertakings and calculations of political and military players. However, the bad news is that humanitarianism’s high profile status entails a constant risk of misunderstanding, false expectation, and delusions of grandeur. There is a persistent and worrying perception gap between outsiders and insiders – that is, between aid agencies and the communities they aim to help.

Despite examples of creative problem-solving, humanitarians have not acquitted themselves well in protecting the integrity of humanitarian interests and operations from recurrent infiltrations of political and military actors. As the authors conclude, “Absent the cultivation of greater resourcefulness and resilience, therefore, we fear for the future of the humanitarian enterprise.”

The findings of the HA2015 country study on Iraq are summarized in an NCCI *Focus on Operationality* Briefing Paper at [http://www.ncciraq.org/IMG/pdf_NCCI_Focus_on_Operationality_6 - Perceptions of Humanitarianism in Iraq.pdf](http://www.ncciraq.org/IMG/pdf_NCCI_Focus_on_Operationality_6_-_Perceptions_of_Humanitarianism_in_Iraq.pdf)

Salaam,
NCCI Team

HUMANITARIAN UPDATES

FROM NCCI, NGOs' REPORTS FROM THE FIELD AND UN AGENCIES

Operational Humanitarian Space

- [Sixty Years of Human Rights Failure – Governments must apologize and act now](#)

Source: [Amnesty International](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 27, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Amnesty International today challenged world leaders to apologize for six decades of human rights failure and re-commit themselves to deliver concrete improvements. "The human rights flashpoints in Darfur, Zimbabwe, Gaza, Iraq and Myanmar demand immediate action," said Irene Khan, Secretary General of Amnesty International, launching AI Report 2008: State of the World's Human Rights.

- [Security Council express deepest concern at continued civilian suffering during conflict, condemns all violations of humanitarian law threatening non-combatants](#)

Source: [UN Security Council](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 28, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Expressing its deepest concern that civilians continued to suffer the brunt of the violence during armed conflicts, the Security Council this afternoon condemned all violations of international law that threatened non-combatants and reaffirmed the responsibility of States and other parties of conflicts to protect them.

Humanitarian Needs and Assistance

- [Humanitarian Sector Working Group](#)

Source: [UNAMI](#)

Document: **MoM**

Date: **May 22, 2008**

Access: **Members**

Minutes of meeting held on May 22, 2008 in Basra.

- [Sadr City Humanitarian Actors meeting](#)

Source: [UNHCR](#)

Document: **Report**

Date: **May 26, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Short Briefing Memo for David Shearer, DSRSG/HC/RC; May 25, 2008.

Human Rights and Protection

- [Protection Outcome Team inputs Sadr City](#)

Source: [UNHCR](#)

Document: **Matrix**

Date: **May 26, 2008**

Access: **Members**

Sadr City Protection Outcome Team May 22, 2008; Protection issues Sadr City May 22, 2008.

- [Iraqi women need more security](#)

Source: [DPA](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 28, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Increased security for women and other vulnerable groups needs to be further strengthened in Iraq, Iraqi women organizations and UN representatives said Wednesday. The issues as well as problems like discrimination experienced by women were highlighted at a seminar on the eve of a UN-Iraq meeting aimed at discussing progress on reconciliation and nation-building in Iraq.

Health

- [Strengthening of PHC system in Iraq](#)

Source: [UNWHO](#)

Document: **Proposal**

Date: **May 28, 2008**

Access: **Members**

PHC proposal phase; Concept Note Strengthening of PHC system in Iraq 2;

- [Ministry issues drought warning](#)

Source: [IRIN](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 22, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Iraq is suffering from water shortages that could lead to widespread drought as a result of the water policies of neighbouring countries and an unusually dry winter, the Iraqi Water Resources Ministry has said in a statement. "The shortage of rain, which last winter was 30 percent of what it was in previous years, has led to an obvious impact on water levels in the Tigris and Euphrates and their tributaries," the Ministry said.

IDPs

- [IDP Working Group](#)

Source: [UNHCR](#)

Document: **MoM**

Date: **May 22, 2008**

Access: **Members**

Minutes of meeting held May 21, 2008.

Refugees

- [UNHCR faces difficulty helping neediest Iraqis in Jordan](#)

Source: [UNHCR](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: May 27, 2008

Access: Open

Amid rising food and energy prices, exacerbated by the withdrawal of state fuel subsidies, the UN refugee agency will find it increasingly difficult to help the growing numbers of Iraqi refugees in need of assistance in Jordan. Vulnerable Jordanians and Iraqis have been particularly hard hit by the economic developments. And while the government has tried to cushion the blow with public sector wage increases and the establishment of a social safety net, these initiatives will not benefit Iraqis, most of whom are not entitled to earn a living in Jordan.

- [UN Food agency receives funding boost to feed 750,000 displaced Iraqis](#)

Source: UN

Document: Article

Date: May 27, 2008

Access: Open

*Thanks to a \$40 million funding boost from the Iraqi Government, the United Nations World Food Programme will be able to feed up to 750,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) for the next six months. Noting that the Iraqi contribution – the largest the Government has contributed to any UN agency – came “at a crucial time,” WFP Iraq Country Director Stefano Porretti **said** that “the donation shows the Government’s commitment to support all Iraqis, particularly those not covered by the Government-run food distribution system.*

- [A long road for Iraq’s refugees](#)

Source: Council on Foreign Relations

Document: Article

Date: May 15, 2008

Access: Open

The plight of Iraq’s refugees, often overlooked amid the ongoing challenges of reconstruction and redevelopment, has surfaced as a major policy challenge for the United States and Iraq as nongovernmental organizations, aid groups, and lawmakers demand more be done to address the problem.

Education

- [Education Sector Outcome Team](#)

Source: UNICEF

Document: MoM

Date: May 28, 2008

Access: Members

Minutes of Education SOT meeting May 21, 2008; Proposed agenda May 26; Monthly progress Education SOT.

WatSan

- [WatSan Sector Outcome](#)

Source: UNICEF

Document: MoM

Date: May 21, 2008

Access: Members

Minutes of meeting Watsan Sector Outcome Team May 21, 2008.

IRAQ CONTEXT

General Overview

- [Iraq Crisis Report \(IraqHAR\)](#)

Source: [Centre of Excellence on Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance](#)

Document: Weekly report

Date: May 28, 2008

Access: Open

Political: The US Senate on Thursday (May 22) approved an additional US\$165 billion to wage war in Iraq and Afghanistan for another year after lawmakers blocked proposed timetables for withdrawing American troops from Iraq. A vote of 70-26 allowed the Senate to pass the new war money the Pentagon says it urgently needs to avoid civilian layoffs and the interruption of soldiers' paychecks within months. Last week, the House of Representatives passed a drastically different bill that failed to provide any new money for the wars and would withdraw US combat troops from Iraq by the end of 2009. If lawmakers give President Bush all the war funds he has requested, Congress will have appropriated more than US\$800 billion for combat in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2001. (Reuters, May-22)

- [Juan Cole's informed comment's excerpt](#)

Source: [Informed Comment - Juan Cole's Web Blog.](#)

Document: Selection of daily comments

Date: May 22 - 29, 2008

Access: Open

Juan Cole is a Professor of Modern Middle East and South Asian History at the University of Michigan. As such he brings daily much needed expertise and historical perspective to issues surrounding Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East. Good reading to have a weekly review of the Iraq daily situation.

Iraqi Living Conditions

- [The Iraqi who wasn't there](#)

Source: [Los Angeles Times](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 23, 2008

Access: Open

Abu Hassan took deep breaths of joy as he crossed the double-decker bridge spanning the Tigris River. The water below may have stunk of sewage. The air may have been choked with traffic fumes. It didn't matter to Abu Hassan. He was free after nearly a year hidden inside his house, the only place he had felt safe from the gunmen and killers who had taken over his neighborhood in south Baghdad.

- [Through Occupation, The Very Dreams Change](#)

Source: [IPS](#)

Document: Article

Date: May 27, 2008

Access: Open

Today, a shower is a dream. Or that the electricity supply continues just that little bit longer. "These needs are very trivial for people of other countries," 43-year-old political leader Saad Tahir told IPS. "But in Iraq, people dream more of these things than of some ambition or success." Abdullah Mahdi, a retired 51-year-old trader, says he dreams only of electricity. "Like millions here, I hope supply gets better to help us to sleep in this hot summer," Mahdi told IPS. "We have been suffering from this problem since the 1991 Kuwait war, and this current occupation only made things worse."

Violence and (Un-) security

- [U.S. air strike in Iraq kills two children](#)

Source: [UPI](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 22, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Eight people, including two children, died in a U.S. helicopter strike in the northern Iraqi town of Baiji, U.S. and Iraqi officials said Thursday. U.S. military officials said the civilian deaths were not intentional and the consequence of an attack on suspected Sunni insurgents, The New York Times said.

- [Seven killed, 35 injured in Iraq attacks](#)

Source: [Monster and Critics](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 26, 2008**

Access: **Open**

A fresh outbreak of violence in Iraq on Monday left seven people dead, including a US soldier and four tribal policemen, and 35 wounded, the US military and Iraqi police said. In the northern Salahaddin province, a US soldier was killed and two others injured Monday in a bomb blast, according to the US military.

Reconstruction

- [Iraq starts repairing refinery pipelines to Baghdad](#)

Source: [Reuters](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 25, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Repair teams started work on major oil pipelines connecting Iraq's largest refinery to Baghdad on Sunday, in a bid to help meet a domestic supply shortfall, a British official overseeing the project said. "This group of pipelines connects north and south Iraq and will help distribute crude oil to refineries and oil products such as kerosene and diesel to people," Brigadier Carew Wilkes, energy operations director for U.S.-led forces in Iraq, said.

Iraqi Political process

- [Iraq holy city tells US it wants alms, not arms](#)

Source: [AFP](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 25, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Najaf governor Assad Sultan Abu Gelal said he did not want the United States to replicate in his province the strategy of funding former Sunni insurgents, a move claimed to have reduced Al-Qaeda attacks in neighbouring Anbar.

- [Iraq's main Sunni bloc suspends government talks](#)

Source: [AlterNet](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 28, 2008**

Access: Open

Iraq's main Sunni Arab political bloc said on Wednesday it had suspended talks to rejoin the Shi'ite-led government after a disagreement with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki over a cabinet post. Persuading the bloc to rejoin has been a main aim of U.S. policy in Iraq and is widely seen as a vital step in reconciling the country's factions after years of conflict. Sunni Arabs have little voice in a cabinet dominated by Shi'ites and Kurds.

Rule of Law

- [PM Interim Committee Order](#)

Source: PM Office

Document: Article

Date: May 19, 2008

Access: Open

Prime Minister Directives: Constituted a committee to be headed by the Minister of the Displaces People and Immigrants and the following members as follows:

- [Jordan supports Iraqi gov't efforts to restore law and order](#)

Source: Jordan Government

Document: Article

Date: May 28, 2008

Access: Open

His Majesty King Abdullah on Tuesday renewed Jordan's support for efforts to realise security and stability in Iraq, impose the government's authority all over the country and end all forms of violence and terrorism. At a meeting with Iraqi Vice President Tareq Hashemi, the King said only the unity and solidarity of Iraqis would help them stand up to all threats their country faces.

Policies and Strategies

- [The Mosul riddle](#)

Source: Asia Times

Document: Article

Date: May 8, 2008

Access: Open

"Operation Peace" in Sadr City in Baghdad is and will continue to be spun by the Nuri al-Maliki government - and by America corporate media - as a resounding "success" in controlling Iraqi militias, in this case the Mahdi Army of Shi'ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

- [The return of Iraq's Ayatollah](#)

Source: Time

Document: Article

Date: May 25, 2008

Access: Open

High-profile visits by political figures are relatively rare in Najaf, the quiet holy city in southern Iraq where [Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani](#) lives. Sistani, the most venerated Shi'ite religious leader in the country, shuns the limelight. But it fell his way last week nonetheless when Iraqi Prime Ministry Nouri al-Maliki and U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker appeared in Najaf separately within days of each other. It raised questions whether Sistani is making a comeback as a voice in political decision-making in Iraq.

- [Al-Qa'ida in Iraq 'has never been closer to defeat'](#)

Source: Independent

Document: Article

Date: May 25, 2008

Access: Open

Violence in Iraq has fallen to its lowest level in more than four years, according to figures released yesterday by the US military, but officials said progress was still fragile and reversible. Iraqi security officials added that an

offensive against al-Qa'ida in the northern city of Mosul, which the US military says is the group's last major urban stronghold, had wiped out most of the insurgent network.

- [Baghdad's al-Sarafiya Bridge Reopens](#)

Source: [VOA](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 27, 2008**

Access: **Open**

A major bridge in Baghdad that spans the Tigris River reopened Tuesday with much fanfare, 13 months after terrorists bombed the landmark and killed more than 10 people. Iraqi officials say they are celebrating more than a bridge reopening; they are celebrating successes over terrorist forces. VOA's Suzanne Presto reports from the northern city of Irbil.

- [Sadr's objectives](#)

Source: [Herald Tribune](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 27, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Considerable debate surrounds the long-term objectives and potential power of Muqtada al-Sadr and the political and military movements that identify him as their leader. Though assessment of this mercurial politician's motives, intentions and capabilities can only be partial, it is possible to identify his aims, strengths and weaknesses, as well as the near-term events that may shape his future role.

- [Iraq PM rides high on successes](#)

Source: [Washington Post](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 27, 2008**

Access: **Open**

After two years in office, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has managed only in the past two months to stamp a semblance of authority in this unwieldy nation with bold crackdowns on Shiite militias and Sunni insurgents in Baghdad, Basra and the north. The progress has brought the Shiite prime minister's political rehabilitation, quieting critics at home who have long seen him as ineffective, indifferent to corruption or biased toward Shiite interests.

Iraq and International policies

- [U.S., Iran and Arab neighbours to meet on Iraq](#)

Source: [Reuters](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 27, 2008**

Access: **Open**

The United States will prod Sunni Arab states to offer more support to the Iraqi government at a conference in Sweden this week as a way of countering the growing influence of non-Arab Iran in Iraq. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki will chair the conference on Thursday, aimed at assessing progress in implementing a plan adopted at a meeting in Egypt last year to help Iraq rebuild after five years of war.

- [Swedish UN envoy sees 'light at end of tunnel' in Iraq](#)

Source: [The Local](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 28, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Major tensions remain in [Iraq](#) but there are signs the situation is improving, the top UN envoy in Baghdad said Tuesday, just ahead of an international conference on the war-torn country in Stockholm. "Are we stabilized yet? Not yet. There is still [Al-Qaeda](#) looking for spectacular attacks, there are still tensions in Sadr City and there have been in Basra, but I see the light at the end of the tunnel," Staffan de Mistura told the Swedish public radio news programme Ekot.

- [Iraq urges world to write off debt at conference](#)

Source: [Alternet](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 27, 2008**

Access: **Open**

The international community should lend more support to Iraq by writing off its debts at a conference in Sweden this week, Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh said in remarks published on Tuesday.

"The world is expecting Iraq to (implement) reforms and show progress," he told pan-Arab daily Asharq al-Awsat. "And now it is time for the outside world to fulfil its promises through action to support it, especially in what concerns writing off debt and compensations the Iraqis are paying for the crimes of Saddam Hussein."

HUMANITARIAN WORLD PERSPECTIVES & QUALITY OF AID

- [International Compact with Iraq - Annual Review Conference in Stockholm](#)

Source: [Government Offices of Sweden](#)

Document: **Article**

Date: **May 29, 2008**

Access: **Open**

Sweden will host the first International Compact with Iraq - Annual Review Conference in Stockholm in Stockholm on 29 May 2008. Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt and Minister for Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt responded positively to a request to host the conference from the United Nations and the Government of Iraq at a meeting on 3 April with UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

This Page is your page

If you have an announcement (training, workshop, etc) regarding your organisation, if you are aware about meetings, events, humanitarian update, if you would like to make known some information, please send them to webmanager@ncciraq.org

Weekly Schedule

We encourage you to check regularly our Weekly Schedule on our [Website](#) for updates. We have added on our [weekly schedule](#) some events hold in Iraq or Jordan that concern only specific invited people. They are highlighted as "restricted". This is to give better information on what is going on to our members.

Upcoming important dates

June-1 / Jumaada al-awal-27

Anniversary of Iraq Oil Nationalisation (1973)

June-04/Jumaada al-awal-30

[International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression](#)/ School Examination

Updates & Announcements

NCCI would like to inform you that the mandate of DRC as NCCI Board Member will end soon and NCCI is planning to organise an election for the vacant seat in the next General Assembly, scheduled for June 10, 2008. Candidate NGOs are invited to express their interest by May 30th.

We would like also to announce that the NCCI General Assembly session will take place on June 10, 2008.

Within the Developmental framework of UNDP along with funding from Government of Japan, UNDP Iraq is conducting Rehabilitation projects for both Ramadi and Takrit General Hospitals in Iraq. Terms related to this Call for proposal can be found [here](#).

UPP and MDM- F opened new [vacancies](#).