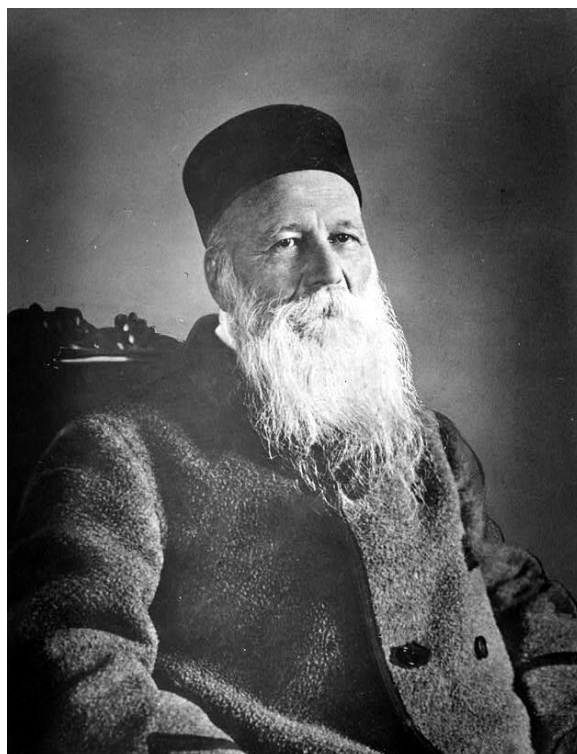


WHO - Topic 2: **Measures to improve Health Services in Areas of Conflict or War Zones**

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history wars shaped the lives of warriors, who took part in them and civilians who suffered as collateral damage. Many actions shaped the war as we know it today, but none of it had an impact as big as the actions of Jean-Henri Dunant. Being present during the Battle of Solferino, Dunant stunned by the suffering soldiers and civilians decided to help. Together with local farmers he offered aid to anyone, who needed it. Based on his experience Dunant proposed ideas, which later resulted in the creation of the Red Cross.

The work of Henri Dunant and his fellow colleagues resulted in a truly remarkable document called Geneva Convention. Geneva Convention was updated and is now comprised of many newly added articles. It has been given a new name Geneva Conventions. At the very beginning it was covering the treatment of sick and wounded but with new wars came new treaties. Today Geneva Conventions address the prohibition of certain weapons, treatment of soldiers and definitions regarding the roles of people in the war. The main idea is to minimize the horrors war causes.



Currently there are approximately 40 active war zones all around the world. In most of these conflicts there is medical staff, who is guided by the same principles as Henri Dunant was. There are times, when those who only wish to help, are recognized as enemy combatants. This is not only inhumane but also against the international law and the Geneva convention.

II. DEFINITIONS

A war zone is an area or a region in which two or more parties or subjects are in a state of an ongoing armed conflict. The term war zone also applies to armed conflicts waged at sea. War zones are typically areas of extreme violence. However, certain areas do carry characteristic such as extreme violence. Those countries are not described as war zones due to the fact the designated area is at peace. The best example would be a so-called drug war in Mexico. The extreme violence is present, however it is a result of a country containing criminal activities.

Health services describe measures for improvement of health. In developed countries health services are offered at hospitals. Medical supplies are easily reachable. When it comes down to war zones it becomes a highly complicated to reach medical assistance or medical supplies. Due to the fact that facilities, which offer health services are non-operational. In response non-governmental organizations typically engage by sending aid workers and medical supplies to the designated area to provide medical assistance to all factions especially civilians. Unfortunately, those aid workers sometimes become victims themselves. In 2016 there were 158 known incidents in which 288 aid workers were affected.

III. PERPETRATORS AND MOTIVES

Aid workers serve as a neutral subject with the aim of providing medical assistance. The act of killing a neutral subject can occur by accident. The aid worker can step on a mine, which was in placed to damage an enemy combatant. However, data

shows vast majority of deaths comes from intentional killing. Kidnap and kill is by far the most accepted method to target aid workers.

According to an Aid security report 2017. Majority of perpetrators are national insurgents. This category includes groups Al Shabaab, Taliban and Tehrik-i-Taliban. The ambition all these groups have in common is the aim to overthrow and replace current government body within existing state. Taliban and Al Shabaab combined are responsible for half of all attacks carried out on aid workers.

Approximately 24% of all attacks on aid workers comes from state perpetrators. As a state perpetrator is regarded any combatant coming from states at war.

Third category includes global insurgents such as Islamic state and Al Qaeda. The intent goal of both previously mentioned groups is to overthrow current world order and replace it with a universal absolutist ideology.

Regional insurgents conducted around 6% of all attacks. In this category groups such as Boko Haram and Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb can be found. These two groups seek to control or influence a territory, with the aim of establishing a new state based on ethnic or ideological grounds.

Sub-national insurgents and criminal enterprises share the last place. Groups found in the first category seek autonomy or control over an area within the state. Mai Mai Militas is a group associated with the given category. Criminal enterprises on the other hand wish to have an economic gain. Somali pirates are commonly found in this category. However, there is a group overlapping both of the categories. The group is called Haqqani Network. Overlapping both of previously mentioned categories adds an element of unpredictability.

Out of 1,083 incidents during 2011–2016 for which the report includes both perpetrator and motive data, 27% of incidents were politically motivated, 22% were incidental, 14% were purely economically motivated and 37% were unknown, meaning that the researchers lacked sufficient information to make a judgment as to motive. However, we are reasonably confident that most of the perpetrators in that unknown category are neither state actors nor acting on behalf of a major armed opposition group, as these are much more readily identified.

IV. JUSTIFICATION

Aid workers and non-governmental organisations, which offer medical assistance to those in need are usually founded and financed by western or developed countries. The concept of a professional humanitarian actor is unknown, since it is a rather new idea. As such it is not widely accepted and regarded. Many insurgents and state actors might view humanitarians as a threat and not as a neutral subject in an armed conflict.

1. Espionage

In nearly every contested environment, aid agencies have come under suspicion as being the eyes and ears of a state party, a reputation not helped by known uses of false NGOs as fronts or real NGOs as cover for intelligence or covert operations by intelligence agencies. Even if they do not believe aid agency members are spies, insurgents and state actors may still suspect them of colluding with political actors – from whom they get their funding and whose agenda they de facto support. At best, they lump them together as associates of the opposing side. Associating aid agencies with a warring party of course has serious implications and can and has been used to justify strikes against them. If they are not neutral parties they have no claim to protected status under International Humanitarian Law.

In the eyes of a major insurgents acting all around the world any aid worker and non-governmental organization, funded by the United States of America, its allies and United Nations, represents the interference of the western world led by the United States of America.

2. Rivals for authority/creators of dependency

Insurgents and state actors especially those seeking to expand territory aim to exert firm and total control over a population, particularly in the beginning. The existence of independent entities that provide goods, services, education and employment can threaten this projection of power, and incentivise insurgents and state actors to threaten or harm them as a lesson in who truly controls the designated area.

There is yet another idea spread by the insurgents in order to persuade people into believing non-governmental organizations present danger. The idea is aid agencies bring expired food and medical supplies, not fit for the western world, with the aim of undercutting the production of a designated area and humiliating people, inhabiting the area. An idea absolutely absurd, but a tremendous mean of manipulation.

3. Violators of religious and cultural norms

Religious ideology is extremely salient in the motivations of certain insurgent groups and a frequently repeated justification for attacks on humanitarian actors, who are accused of offending and transgressing religious dictates. Typically, those religious dictates are related to Islamic based societies. Foreign aid workers are marked as infidels and as such do not have place in the Islamic based societies. Another issue is brought up, when discussing the status of women. Certain insurgents believe women are inferior to them and should respect their word. The conflict arises, when their demands have not met.

V. INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

International humanitarian law is a set of rules, which seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict. It protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare. International humanitarian law is also known as the law of war or the law of armed conflict. International humanitarian law is part of international law, which is the body of rules governing relations between States. International law is contained in agreements between States – treaties or conventions –, in customary rules, which consist of State practise considered by them as legally binding, and in general principles. International humanitarian law applies to armed conflicts. It does not regulate whether a State may actually use force; this is governed by an important, but distinct, part of international law set out in the United Nations Charter.

International humanitarian law applies only to armed conflicts, it does not cover internal tensions or disturbances such as isolated acts of violence. The law applies only once a conflict has begun, and then equally to all sides regardless of who started the fighting. International humanitarian law distinguishes between international and non-international armed conflict. International armed conflicts are those in which at least two States are involved. They are subject to a wide range of rules, including those set out in the four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol I.

Non-international armed conflicts are those restricted to the territory of a single State, involving either regular armed forces fighting groups of armed dissidents, or armed groups fighting each other. A more limited range of rules apply to internal armed conflicts and are laid down in Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions as well as in Additional Protocol II. It is important to differentiate between international humanitarian law and human rights law. While some of their rules are similar, these two bodies of law have developed separately and are contained in different treaties. In particular, human rights law – unlike international humanitarian law – applies in peacetime, and many of its provisions may be suspended during an armed conflict.

VI. LITERATURE

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