



LESSONS PAPER



HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTIONS IN SITUATIONS OF URBAN VIOLENCE

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The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (**ALNAP**) is a system-wide network dedicated to improving the accountability and performance of humanitarian action by strengthening the humanitarian evidence base through sharing lessons, identifying key issues and, where appropriate, providing leadership to find collective approaches and solutions.
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Scope of the paper

This paper identifies lessons emerging from humanitarian interventions in violent urban settings. It is operationally oriented and intended primarily for field staff involved in programme design and evaluation. Lessons are drawn from case studies and evaluations of humanitarian organisations and agencies operating in such settings.

The range of violence in urban settings is broad, from high levels of interpersonal and criminal violence to gang violence to urban warfare conducted by recognised armed actors. Each situation is different. This paper focuses on key lessons that are broad enough to apply to most of these contexts.

Practices referred to here mainly pertain to adapting humanitarian responses so that they can be more successful when undertaken against a context of urban violence (for example, conducting water and sanitation or shelter interventions in cities with high levels of violence) or to conducting humanitarian responses which specifically address the effects of violence (such as health interventions in cities at war). The paper does not consider 'peace building' activities, or activities aimed at addressing the root causes of violence. While these are extremely important, they generally fall beyond the remit of the humanitarian organisations that form the ALNAP Membership. Because of its focus on urban violence in the city, this paper does not cover interventions related to internally displaced people (IDPs) and refugees displaced to urban settings, where such reception settings are not necessarily violent.

Readers are invited to read this paper in conjunction with the [ALNAP Lessons Paper Responding to Urban Disasters](#) (Sanderson and Knox Clarke, 2012). The lessons from that paper that relate most closely to this issue are referenced in the text.

Methodology

This paper presents the results of a desk review of literature produced by humanitarian organisations and research institutes involved in humanitarian responses in violent urban settings and available from the online Urban Humanitarian Response Portal sponsored by ALNAP and UN-HABITAT (www.urban-response.org). More than 200 documents were reviewed, and a smaller number, focusing on urban violence, were selected as sources. A number of experts were also asked to provide additional resources. Sources were categorised by sector of intervention, and the information was consolidated, compared and contrasted in order to derive concrete lessons.

A few limitations were inherent in this review. Little or no published material was found on the following issues:

- *Women and violence*
- *Non-Food Items choice and distribution*
- *Profiling, identification and targeting of affected communities*
- *Public communication and advocacy strategies*
- *Monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian interventions in violent urban settings.*

Even in areas where information was available, there were sometimes few practice examples. Use of the Urban Response Portal as the primary documentary resource also led to a focus on insights from humanitarian organisations and research institutes. Literature from other sources, including the development, urban planning, geography, and criminology communities, is thus under-represented.

The lessons presented here should be taken as emerging rather than set in stone. We hope that more research and reflection on practice will be carried out and shared, possibly on the [Urban Humanitarian Response Portal](#) and the [Urban Response Community of Practice](#), in order to improve the performance of the humanitarian sector in urban settings affected by violence.

Introduction

Violence in urban settings may or may not meet the criteria for the application of international humanitarian law, which applies to conventional warfare. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) uses the term 'other situations of violence' to refer to situations such as civil unrest, riots, state repression, violence in the aftermath of elections, gang violence and demonstrations. In these situations, the authorities often make extensive use of police or military force to maintain or restore law and order. While such situations do not reach the threshold of armed conflict, the humanitarian consequences can be as serious (ICRC, 2012).

Situations of this type occur predominantly in cities. This is partly because urbanisation creates an enabling environment for violence because of the rapid social change it promotes, and partly because of their concentration of power and resources (and of disempowerment and poverty) (Apraxine et al., 2012).

Urban violence that does not qualify as warfare under international humanitarian law can nonetheless cause great harm. In some cities, violence levels seem to exceed a threshold that would justify their classification as an armed-conflict-like situation. Brazil's Rio de Janeiro and Mexico's Ciudad Juárez provide examples of urban violence that could be classified as domestic armed conflict to which international humanitarian law would apply (Duijsens, 2010). Such scenarios involve large numbers of people who are killed, injured, raped, kidnapped, tortured, forcibly displaced or otherwise harmed. They may also involve large-scale arrests; imprisonment of a large number of people for political reasons; inhumane conditions of detention; symbolic violence; suspension of fundamental judicial guarantees, either as part of a state of emergency or simply as a matter of fact; or allegations of forced disappearance (ICRC, 2012).

Violence is sometimes short-lived, but it can also become chronic. The term 'fragile cities' has been used to describe chronically violent cities in which public authorities have lost control and are unable to deliver basic public services, security, representation (Muggah and Jutersonke, 2012; Muggah and Savage, 2012).

Urban violence is usually dynamic (subject to rapid increases and decreases and geographical fluidity), heterogeneous (domestic, interpersonal, collective, with varying intentionalities), simultaneous (involving overlapping forms), and interactive (with different types of violence and their effects influencing one another) (BRICS Policy Center, 2011). This creates a particular and challenging context for humanitarian organisations. For more readings on the nature of violence in urban settings, please refer to Annex 1.

Role of international humanitarian organisations

Military and political strategists are becoming more aware of the role fragile cities play in low- and medium-intensity violence and humanitarian emergencies (Norton, 2003). Yet the response of humanitarian actors in programmatic terms remains gradual and incremental (Muggah and Savage, 2012). Humanitarian organisations have worked for decades in cities caught in armed conflicts (such as Beirut, Grozny, Huambo, Jaffna, Kabul, Njamena, and Sarajevo), but they have been relatively slow to respond to the specific characteristics and dynamics of non-conflict violence generated by an urban environment. In part, this is because it has not always been clear how humanitarian organisations can realistically provide relief or protection in these complex environments, particularly given the traditional rural orientation of many of these organisations (Ramalingam and Knox Clarke, 2012). In addition to poor recognition of the humanitarian consequences of urban violence, organisations have not yet established criteria for engagement in such situations.

A number of humanitarian actors are now cautiously engaging with this issue, including multi-mandate agencies with objectives that extend beyond narrow humanitarian aspirations. Donors such as the European Community Humanitarian Office are starting to recognise the humanitarian needs caused by violence linked to non-political armed actors such as drug cartels, street gangs and organized crime groups, especially in Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Mexico (ECHO, 2013). However, this trend is still more the exception than the rule, and humanitarian agencies need to better understand and engage with the causes and impacts of urban violence (Muggah and Savage, 2012).

Humanitarian consequences of urban violence

Conditions of relentless, routinized daily violence – such as social cleansing, armed robberies, assaults, beatings, kidnappings, murders, threats, and confrontations with law enforcement agents for the control of territory – regardless the legal framework, generate extreme suffering and vulnerability and often create a vicious cycle that leads to more violence and other hazards. In addition to loss of life, both physical and mental trauma are common. Violence can also cause displacement, the breakdown of the social fabric, and the breakdown of social and health services and law and order.

In addition to its direct physical consequences, violence can create an environment of insecurity with sometimes disabling consequences for vulnerable groups. It can limit mobility and thus access to basic goods and services, livelihoods, markets and social networks (Ronak Patel, personal communication, September 2013). Vulnerable urban populations, including IDPs, are likely to put an additional strain on existing resources and services with their need for health care, shelter, food, water, income and safety (Lucchi, 2010).

The humanitarian needs caused by violence are arguably more important than whether that violence is characterized as chronic urban violence or urban armed conflict. Humanitarians need to recognize the gravity of urban violence in its own right, rather than requiring a situation to meet specialized (legal) criteria to justify a response (BRICS Policy Center, 2011). In a few settings affected by chronic urban violence such as Guatemala City, Medellín, Port-au-Prince, and Rio de Janeiro, humanitarian agencies such as the ICRC and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) are seeking ways to respond to the needs generated by criminal and gang-related violence (Muggah and Savage, 2012). Most of the lessons presented in this paper come from those organisations.

Urban-specific challenges

While each setting is different, urban conflicts often pose humanitarian challenges different from, or in addition to, those that occur in rural areas (Cross and Johnston, 2011; Grünewald, 2012).

- The city's dynamism, high levels of mobility and reliance on markets and logistic hubs that can be disrupted by violence require different assessments and responses from those used in rural settings.
- High population density means that more people are likely to be affected, sometimes overwhelmingly, by violence within a small space. Homicide rates can be several times higher in low-income areas than in the rest of the city (Muggah, 2012).
- The diversity of urban populations means that the needs of affected populations will be highly differentiated both in specific neighbourhoods and throughout the city, and targeting approaches need to be adapted accordingly (Ramalingam and Knox Clarke, 2012).
- Predatory authorities, front-lines, opportunities for criminal gains, alternate forms of urban governance in slums, the need to negotiate access to very localized areas with a number of different actors, urban chaos and structural dysfunctions are all challenges to humanitarian interventions (Muggah, 2012; McLean, 2013).
- Access to basic services (health, social services, physical and legal protection) can be a problem in violent urban environments, because the services are lacking or because restrictions on movement due to insecurity prevent their delivery (Cristina, 2011).
- Endemic urban violence can gradually transform relationships in ways that erode effective collective action, which is essential for enabling predictable exchanges within political, market and social domains.
- Urban violence can have an impact on child and adolescent learning, undermining well-being as well as future earning and productive potential (Muggah, 2012).

The rest of this paper presents tentative lessons that can be gleaned from existing attempts to meet these challenges.

LESSONS

Strategy

Be clear on what you aim to achieve.

Whatever the reason for humanitarian organisations' involvement in violent cities – responding to the effects of violence, meeting chronic humanitarian needs in a context of high levels of violence, or continuing to operate in a city that has become violent in the course of an operation – they need to be clear about the trigger for their action, their orientation and the objective and scope of the intervention.

Boundaries between humanitarian and development assistance are often blurred in urban settings. Thus, another complex question needs to be addressed before considering an intervention (Ferris, 2012): to what extent are humanitarian organisations responsible for addressing long-term, pre-existing patterns of violence? Some humanitarian agencies provide assistance in times of acute need (e.g., disasters and spikes in violence) but consider their role in addressing underlying causes of vulnerability to be limited, this being essentially a developmental challenge (Metcalf et al., 2011). Others might address chronic humanitarian needs (e.g., health and sanitation), working with state and local authorities to improve the situation in the medium to long term. Providing water or health care in a city, for example, may mean supporting the city's existing service architecture rather than delivering services directly (Ferris, 2012). Still others consider preventing violence and reducing or managing its future risk as an integral part of their response. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is testing this comprehensive intervention model (prevention, protection and assistance) at several locations including Cali, Medellín and Rio de Janeiro (IFRC, 2011; Canadian Red Cross, 2012; Gussing, 2012; ICRC, 2013b).

See also Lesson 1 in Responding to Urban Disasters (Sanderson and Knox Clarke, 2012).

Ensure that you have the capacity to carry out the intervention.

Once an organisation has established the scope and limits of an intervention, it needs to ensure that it has the capacity—organisational commitment and financial, logistical and human resources—to carry it out. Implementing such interventions requires dialogue with state and non-state armed actors (such as rebel groups and gangs), flexibility, and long-term commitment. Not every humanitarian agency is prepared for that, and the decision must be carefully thought through (Bangerter, 2010).

Take a localised approach.

Violence and conflict in cities are usually concentrated in specific areas. The determination of the scope and scale of a humanitarian intervention invariably depends on localized conditions, including the intensity and organisation of the violence. The ICRC focuses on specific neighbourhoods within certain comunas (municipal sub-units) in Medellín and violence-affected favelas (slum communities) in Rio de Janeiro that are hotspots for violence. MSF has used a similar approach, focusing on the most vulnerable areas in Rio de Janeiro and Tegucigalpa. Even when working in a specific location, complex state-city dynamics (for example, between service providers with overlapping state and municipal jurisdictions) must be taken into account during a humanitarian response. Violence can also shift locations within a city, and trends and actors outside the target area are important to watch.

It is important to define the community with which an organisation intends to work. This is challenging in violent urban settings. Communities are 'common purposes, networks, livelihoods and where people gather' (Rogers, 2012). In cities, they might be dispersed rather than defined by an area; multiple communities might coexist in an area. It is common

for one area to include many different people, with different vulnerabilities and coping abilities, who may be in conflict with one another (Ramalingam and Knox Clarke, 2012). There might be a blurring of lines between civilians and combatants, and both might live in the same neighbourhood. Girls who have been sexually assaulted by armed actors often do not seek treatment or report the crime to the police because they live near the perpetrator and fear repercussions (Lucchi, 2012).

Planning the delivery of humanitarian aid in urban contexts also requires an understanding of relationships between the host community and IDPs; in cities, they often live adjacent to one another (Grünwald, 2012; Bernal-Franco and Navas-Caputo, 2013). It is also important to recognize that community actors, like all others, may have their own agendas and may be under pressure from gangs and other violent groups (Ramalingam and Knox Clarke, 2012).

See also Lesson 3 in Responding to Urban Disasters (Sanderson and Knox Clarke, 2012).

Develop capacity and linkages in the communities you serve.

Humanitarian assistance needs to be implemented in a way that strengthens existing capacities, resources and networks (UN-HABITAT, 2013). Developing the social capacities of the urban population requires a strategic approach that invests in building skills of individuals and the capacity of structures at the community level, while linking those structures more effectively to state and municipal resources. The ultimate aim of this approach is not just to reduce violence but also to prevent it in the future (Gussing, 2012).

In Medellín and Rio de Janeiro, ICRC programmes seek to move beyond provision of basic humanitarian needs to helping build the resilience of people and communities exposed to violence (Bernal-Franco and Navas-Caputo, 2013). Both MSF and ICRC strategies focus on supporting communities – by providing training on sexual and reproductive health and first aid for community leaders, or by accompanying them in claiming their rights to public services and facilitating contacts with nongovernmental organisations that can help them in the longer term (Haroff-Tavel, 2010; Cristina, 2011; ICRC, 2013b).

Saferworld's intervention in Nairobi included training and consciousness-raising for police

officers and communities, setting up community safety and information centres, street lighting, and information boxes to enable anonymous reports of crime and violence. As a result of the program, trust between residents and law enforcement improved, and safety and security increased (World Bank, 2010). In addressing chronic needs in Kabul, the CARE shelter project (KASS) brought together the Kabul municipality and community members to increase people's understanding of their rights and responsibilities, enhance the ability of authorities to listen to the needs of the people, and find solutions to problems (Kallweit et al., 2007).

Do no harm.

Humanitarian organisations obviously have a responsibility to do no harm (Anderson, 1999). Specifically, they should prevent violence occurring as a result of their actions (for example, systems for delivery of relief must not put beneficiaries at risk) or in areas under their control (for example, in temporary shelters) (Ferris, 2012).

Security analysis and management must carefully consider the risks confronting beneficiaries (Lucchi, 2012). For example, large distribution centres can become focal points for violence and disorder (USAID, 2008). Distribution points should be located so that people can go home relatively quickly and during daylight (ACF, n.d.). Checkpoints and 'taxes' by the military or other armed actors are common in conflict contexts and must be identified; they are clear points of exposure for beneficiaries (Cross and Johnston, 2011). In Port-au-Prince, to help stop thieves from targeting beneficiaries, Catholic Relief Services used a neighbourhood-level approach, with small offices serving discrete neighbourhoods, to benefit from the positive elements of distribution centres while avoiding the downside of large-scale distributions (Ramalingam and Knox Clarke, 2012; Hirano, 2012).

Consider a long-term approach ...

Most urban projects still rely on short-term emergency planning that tends to create a more limited vision of the future and a certain level of project instability (Lucchi, 2012). Particularly in the domains of protection and prevention, most activities will not achieve a significant result in the short term; to change dynamics just a little, there

must be a commitment over several years or even decades. Efficient activities that are stopped too soon may create more problems than they resolve (Bangerter, 2010). Rather, a long-term approach with adequate resources, technical support and attention is essential (Canadian Red Cross, 2012).

... but plan your exit strategy from the beginning.

Engaging effectively in urban contexts requires a sound exit strategy, which is anything but simple. There should be a vision helping to define a way out of delivering humanitarian aid continuously (Grünewald et al., 2011). This should be defined early in the project lifecycle. Clearly defined outcomes can help ensure effective planning in the long term across annual planning cycles, maintaining a coherent overall operational strategy (Lucchi, 2012).

Choose strategies that are flexible and adaptable.

Operational strategies should be adaptable over time and should include a flexible, learning-based approach that permits successful aspects to be strengthened and expanded based on initial results (Lucchi, 2012). Agencies need to be open to the possibility that programmes may end up looking very different from the original proposals (Savage et al., 2011). Preconceived ideas may need to be changed in response to circumstances. The KASS project design, for example, allowed the intended beneficiaries to change and the intervention format to be flexible. This contributed to the cohesion and ultimate success of the project (Kallweit et al., 2007).

Develop the specialised skills needed to respond to urban crises.

In many sectors of intervention, organisations highlight the need for new skills and competencies. Understanding the dynamics of violence and power in crowded urban spaces requires a significant investment of time and resources (ICRC, 2013a). Researching urban violence is a dangerous activity in itself. It is possible for external players to meet gang members and other non-state actors, though that requires thorough research before any meeting, including research into the group's culture. The credibility of every humanitarian agency depends to a large extent on the personal credibility of its staff

(Bangerter, 2010), and staff with the correct experience and calibre must be found (HPN and ECB, 2012).

In needs assessment, multidisciplinary teams, including anthropologists and lawyers and other experts, seem to be able to provide a better understanding of violence and its consequences for the population. In health projects, specialists such as child psychologists and social workers are needed. Social mobilisation and social communication skills are equally important.

Experience from Syria suggests that new skills and competencies are required to respond to shelter needs in such settings. Urbanists who understand cities and urban systems are needed more than logisticians. More technical experts in the housing and construction sector (including engineers, repair specialists, planners, architects and builders) are also needed, along with land tenure and property specialists. Finally, urban specialists are needed to advise governments as they begin to rebuild safer and smarter cities and connect to urban stakeholders (Masaud, 2013).

Partnerships and relationships

Include outreach in the project strategy.

Outreach activities should be part of the package in order to increase access to services. In Nairobi, the staff of a ChildFund centre walked the streets and approached people to let them know about available services (Moran, 2010). In the health sector, because of fear, stigma and poor knowledge of available services, it is especially important that the community trusts the health staff and understands its work as well as its limitations. In this regard, simple health messages on issues of concern to the local population, as well as information on the (often life-saving) treatment available, should be a key part of project implementation. Community health workers can also gather information on recent incidences of violence or on marginalised community members and offer them counselling and referrals to existing services (Lucchi, 2012). In Aden, Yemen, 20 UNHCR-supported community health workers are working in the Basateen neighbourhood to ensure, among other things, tracing of defaulter patients for the tuberculosis and chronic disease programmes, provision of nutritional support to families and maternal and child health services (GHWa et al., 2011).

Coordinate with other service providers.

In violent urban settings, cooperation is necessary if only because of the scale of the needs involved. Partnerships – with the affected communities; local and municipal authorities; other humanitarian, development, and human rights organisations; the private sector; academic circles; religious organisations and others – **may improve effectiveness and operational reach** in responding to violence-related emergencies (Haroff-Tavel, 2010).

For example, in Guatemala City, MSF fostered a partnership between the Ministry of Health and the Public Ministry to make medical services available in the office where assaults are reported, thus enabling victims of assault who seek justice to access medical care directly (MSF, 2012). In Cité Soleil and Martissant, the ICRC, together with the Haitian Red Cross, introduced a system for evacuating wounded and sick

people and established first aid stations. That made it possible to evacuate 1,500 people from Cité Soleil between 2005 and 2007 (of a population of 250,000) and to treat around 200 more each month at the first aid stations (Bangenter, 2010). In Kabul, CARE built relationships with government departments, ministries, NGOs and other stakeholders so that activities of all were consolidated and built on each other (Kallweit et al., 2007).

Working cooperatively with other organisations provides added value in several domains:

- Sharing **context and needs assessment** information promotes better understanding of issues and needs. For example, In Sanaa and Aden, Yemen, MSF found that networking with a broad range of actors was key to having accurate information on how violence and insecurity were affecting the population (Sancristoval, 2011).
- In **advocacy** efforts, the presence of multiple actors can serve as a force multiplier. Humanitarian organisations can work together to stimulate wider concern and involvement in the state and private sectors, demonstrate good practice or advocate for specific goals and standards (IFRC, 2011; Angeloni, n.d.). For example, MSF has attempted to involve community, institutions, legal and health authorities, international donors, and the UN in efforts to prevent sexual violence in Guatemala (Queen, 2011).
- Coordination can be vital for **security**. The Gaza NGO Safety Office, established in 2008 by CARE International, provides information, tools and analysis to NGOs to help them implement projects and missions safely (Stoddard and Harmer, 2010).
- Partnerships are also important to ensure **provision of complementary services** such as health, food, shelters, legal services and

protection (Rouani et al., 2011). During the crisis in Fallujah, humanitarian NGOs stressed the importance of coordinating the delivery of supplies and assessing needs as frequently as possible in order to be able to coordinate future actions. A key factor was the coordination between the government, local authorities, armed forces, NGOs and other organisations (Turlan and Mofarah, 2006)

- Partnerships are important when **planning an exit** from a project. Identifying other organisations willing to continue the intervention can help ensure a smooth transition. It is essential to create links with local NGOs, development agencies, municipal authorities and multilateral donors who are going to stay after humanitarian organisations are gone. For example, the ICRC has established partnerships with water utilities in Monrovia, Liberia and Grozny, Chechnya (Pinera and Reed, 2007). In Honduras, in addition to running mobile clinics, MSF partnered with the Health Ministry to work alongside health centre staff providing medical care, medicines and staff training. When MSF leaves, the Health Ministry can continue providing primary care at the health centres (IRIN, 2013).

Consider area coordination rather than sector coordination.

The cluster system, which has become the most common form of coordination, confronts huge challenges in urban settings as all the issues related to humanitarian aid and service delivery are intertwined locally. Area-based coordination has to be set up and strengthened at the most relevant level in the urban system, whether that is the neighbourhood, the municipality or a group of communities.

In urban contexts, this kind of multi-sector geographical coordination could replace the more compartmentalized cluster system (Grünwald et al., 2011). In urban Syria, neighbourhood and city-level geographical-based coordination of shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, basic services and planning is the preferred implementation form (Masaud, 2013).

Choose your partners carefully.

While working with partners has many advantages, the need to maintain neutrality can present

challenges in violent situations whether they meet conventional warfare criteria or not (ICRC, 2013a). Particularly in conflict situations, many actors have a heavy political agenda, so it is important to choose a partner carefully (San Cristoval, 2011).

For example, working with governmental authorities might pose challenges to neutrality in situations in which the government is a combatant (Angeloni, n.d.). Government actors and security forces might not enjoy the trust of all citizens. The same considerations might apply to local volunteers, whose local knowledge is invaluable but whose ability to maintain neutrality and access to supplies in a conflict remains unknown (Davis, 2012). A conflict-mapping tool (see section below, Analysis, assessment and targeting) can help in understanding the main actors, the services they provide, and their various interests.

Engage with armed actors carefully.

Engaging with armed actors – such as police and military forces as well as territorial gangs – is key for establishing and running relief operations in violent urban settings. While most humanitarian organisations are used to conducting dialogue with official security forces on operational matters, approaching non-state armed actors requires great caution. Any work carried out by humanitarian players in a city neighbourhood that is controlled by a gang will be subject to discussion or authorisation by the gang, whether one is aware of it or not (Bangerter, 2010). Continuous dialogue with all concerned parties can make it possible to **access people in need** and move and function freely within the communities, including in gang- or rebel-controlled areas (ICRC, 2013a). Contact with these groups is also essential to **ensure access to services by the population** (Bangerter, 2010).

For example, thanks to MSF's dialogue with all parties, in Port-au-Prince in December 2010, youths engaging in post-election violence opened their impromptu roadblocks throughout the city to allow MSF vehicles and emergency cases to pass unharmed (Lucchi, 2012). During the initial decade of the crisis in Mogadishu (1991–2000), access to IDP camps and delivery of aid had to be negotiated with gatekeepers – landlords or other groups controlling

public and private plots (Grünewald, 2012).

Engagement and dialogue are important for the **security** of humanitarian operations: For the ICRC in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, security measures include notification of movements, use of community radio stations, direct and indirect contact with armed factions, and dialogue with political circles (Haroff-Tavel, 2010). Similarly, MSF in Rio de Janeiro always informed both parties about MSF activities and movements in contested areas. While official, hierarchical contacts were made with the security forces of Rio de Janeiro, a bottom-up strategy was also implemented to deal with the Comando Vermelho- the gang controlling the area: assuming that communities have some form of contact with territorial groups, MSF talked at the very beginning to community leaders, who later facilitated direct contact with the Comando Vermelho leader (Cristina, 2011). Similarly, in the Altos de Cazuca neighbourhood in Bogotá, MSF was in touch with self-appointed leaders of the community who usually answered to one of the armed groups (Zabalgoeazkoa, 2011).

Contact with all armed actors is also important to establish a **protection dialogue**. There is a difference between groups that challenge the authority of a state and those whose aim is mainly criminal. With the former, a dialogue based on rules aimed at reducing armed violence can be envisaged. With the latter, this type of dialogue has its limits (Haroff-Tavel, 2010). Protection activities aimed at gang members can best take a minimalistic approach; finding a basis for exchanges on questions perceived as relevant by the group, as a means to strengthen its ties with the community can be key. For example, dialogue could be about the protection of medical facilities and staff or infrastructure vital to that community (Bangerter, 2010).

In addition to contacts with all the actors involved, it is important for humanitarian organisations to work on **acceptance strategies** (towards armed groups, individual citizens, and other important actors in the surrounding community). In order to work in dangerous environments, an organisation needs to gain acceptance gradually, by meeting people's needs through visible assistance (for example, in health,

first aid, water, hygiene, wastewater treatment or education) that they can appreciate, and that make the organisation better known in the community (Haroff-Tavel, 2010). In Port-au-Prince, CRS met gang members and leaders face to face and hosted meetings with all gang leaders to discuss the ways the organisation could help the community (Hirano, 2012).

It is crucial to remain **impartial and neutral**, providing aid in ways that are non-discriminatory and need-based, so as to gain the confidence of all parties involved and acquire access to communities under the control of armed parties (Lucchi, 2010). For example, neutrality has to be maintained when negotiating with all local authorities (e.g., water utilities) and armed actors to ensure safe provision of water and respond to the needs of a community (Pinera and Reed, 2007). In Port au Prince, the ICRC, while repairing the water system, worked to convince the gangs to allow the employees of the water board safe access to the neighbourhood. It also ensured that the inhabitants would have access to drinking water without having to pay the gangs for it (Bangerter, 2010). A similar strategy was adopted with government and opposition forces in urban Syria (Londoño, 2013).

Strategies for communication with different actors in the community are also important. In Rio de Janeiro, In addition to face-to face contact with communities and their leaders, both the ICRC and MSF conveyed messages regarding their activities via local radio stations in order to reach anyone living in the area (Haroff-Tavel, 2010; Cristina, 2011).

Analysis, assessment and targeting

Recognise the complexities of urban violence.

Intervention in situations of urban violence requires in-depth understanding of the context (Muggah and Savage, 2012). For a humanitarian organisation, being able to operate in such an environment depends on understanding who the important actors are and what each actor's position, interests and needs are. Violence can take a wide range of forms, including social and political uprisings, hunger riots, turf wars between gangs, violence against foreigners or members of different ethnic or religious groups, and criminal violence associated with drug trafficking, arms smuggling, human trafficking, and terrorism (Haroff-Tavel, 2010).

Violence can have different and overlapping motivations, and a multiplicity of actors can be involved. For example, in Haiti, urban gangs, former members of the disbanded Haitian army, private militias and criminal networks coexist. Some actors are politically motivated, and some are not. The lines between groups are not always easy to distinguish. In addition, the line between being an agent of violence and being a victim of circumstances prone to violence is often very thin (Kolbe, 2013). In Medellín and Altos de Cazucá, Bogotá, alliances can shift overnight, and local groups are instrumentalized by larger crime organisations and adopt tactics of social, economic and territorial dominance over people and territory (Zabalgogezkoa, 2011; Bernal-Franco and Navas-Caputo, 2013).

Context analysis should include questions such as the following:

- *Who is directing the violence? Who is benefiting from it?*
- *Which territory do they control/where do they operate?*
- *What are their orientation, ideology, aims, position, interests and needs?*
- *What is their social base, what are their alliances, and where do they get support?*
- *Who are the targets of violence?*
- *What form does the violence take?*

Carefully assess local needs and strengths.

Designing an intervention strategy and responding to needs in urban environments affected by violence requires a careful analysis of the specific problems that affect the population, their vulnerabilities and resilience capacities, and existing public and social services. Effects of violence and war on urban populations are difficult to measure. Vulnerabilities, often interconnected and overlapping, include direct and indirect effects of violence, mental and physical effects, and acute and chronic needs. It is important to identify specific forms of violence against particular groups, including gender-based violence (Rouhani et al., 2011; Gussing, 2012). To survive in and bring aid to war-torn cities such as Mogadishu, humanitarian actors must be able to assess multi-layered, complex, open urban systems. Analysis of urban warfare and how the population tries to adjust to it is essential to determine where and how to intervene. Different methods of urban warfare limit access by the population to basic security and to water, food, livelihoods and basic services, and they deeply affect the margin for manoeuvre by humanitarian organisations (Grünewald, 2012; Apraxine et al., 2012: 65-69).

Familiarise yourself with local institutions and existing services.

Rapidly growing urban areas' immense size and complex structure make it difficult to assess the resources available and their accessibility by different socio-economic groups. For example, an assessment of health centres would need to account for government services, major private hospitals, and NGO clinics and smaller independent clinics that may operate in different neighbourhoods (Rouhani et al., 2011).

Be aware of the limits of existing assessment tools.

A suitable assessment framework for urban settings – one that can provide an accurate portrait of the specific groups at risk as well as a detailed analysis of the context, from the health system to the cultural, economic, legal, political, and social realities and

constraints (Lucchi, 2012) – is still lacking. However, some efforts in this direction have been made. MSF implemented a health assessment methodology in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, which included assessment of health centres and NGOs, health needs assessment, use of external data sources, focus group discussions, data triangulation, stakeholder analysis and legal assessment (Rio Navarro et al., 2012).

We were unable to identify any guidance specifically related to needs assessment in violent urban contexts. Selected resources that relate to urban environments more generally are listed in Annex 2.

Thoroughly plan assessments in advance.

Before conducting an assessment, it is important to conduct a feasibility study and be aware of constraints and how to mitigate them. Like many assessments in besieged cities, the Aleppo assessment (Assessment Working Group for Northern Syria, 2013b) outlines the limitations of such an exercise: time, accessibility and security, compounded by limited geographic coverage, unclear population figures, little primary information collection and limited coverage were the key constraints encountered by the assessment team. In addition, some populations in need reportedly preferred not to be registered for fear of how the lists might be used in the future.

For high-risk environments, consider remote management strategies.

Where access for expatriates is not possible, delegating assessments to local actors (either a local NGO or the national staff of an international agency) is an option. Before doing so, risks to national/local staff or partners need to be properly assessed and mitigated, and systems need to be put in place to ensure clear and consistent management, such as reporting systems, communication protocols and monitoring procedures (Stoddard et al., 2010).

Where supervision by or involvement of experienced expatriate staff is not possible, additional control mechanisms can be used to verify the information collected locally, such as videos, photos and triangulation with different sources (Grünwald, 2013). Enumerators need to be trained in data collection, data protection and confidentiality and in

the humanitarian code of conduct.

For the World Food Programme (WFP) Urban Food Security and Nutrition Assessment in Mogadishu, a single expatriate supervised a team of 99 locally hired staff, of which only three were senior consultants. Fifteen districts of the city were surveyed. The methodology for this survey took into consideration the characteristics and dynamics of Mogadishu, such as limited access, physical risk and related challenges (Guillemois, 2012). Table 1 summarizes the preparation for the Mogadishu assessment, clearly indicating each district's conflict dynamics and accessibility.

Conduct repeat assessments.

As situations in cities exposed to violence change rapidly, it is almost impossible for a single assessment to provide an accurate snapshot of a situation that remains reliable for the short to medium term. As the Aleppo assessment concludes, there is a need for more comprehensive, systematic and regular assessment to provide an increasingly accurate and timely picture of needs (Assessment Working Group for Northern Syria, 2013a). Similarly, Turlan and Mofarah (2006) mention that in Fallujah, it was important that an initial distribution of goods was made, based on a rapid assessment of needs (with the additional objective to secure acceptance by the population), and that a more developed assessment should follow the first intervention, in order to gain a better idea of the type of aid required, as well as the capacity to respond to these needs. Over-assessment should, however, be avoided, by means of better coordination between organisations and agencies working on different sectors of aid (ACAPS, 2013b).

Use a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods.

In these settings, official data tend to be aggregated for the entire urban population. Malnutrition and homicide rates in a city are usually at best rough extrapolations from patchy information. This generalized information is difficult to break down to gain a better understanding of specific groups or areas. Population data in conflict areas also quickly become obsolete as many people are on the move. It is important to adapt existing assessment

tools towards a mixed methodology that uses both quantitative and qualitative information (Lucchi, 2012; ACAPS 2013b).

Quantitative methods such as surveys can only provide a snapshot of a situation, and results are often limited by lack of clarity about the representativeness of the sample. In-depth individual interviews and participatory methods allow better interaction with communities and better understanding of their issues and make it possible to find more accurate information about sensitive topics such as sexual violence. Such approaches, however, often take more time than anticipated (Rio Navarro et al., 2012; Koscalova and Viot, 2012).

The Aleppo assessment gathered qualitative and quantitative data, using key informant interviews and direct observation. Relief committees, religious leaders, local organisations, heads of household, medical staff and local police were interviewed. In order to avoid bias, information was later triangulated with data from other informants, secondary data and observations. Public places such as schools, hospitals, markets and small shops were also visited to complement interviews with direct observation. The Aleppo assessment protocol prescribed that non-triangulated information would be discarded (Assessment Working Group for Northern Syria, 2013b). The WFP assessment of urban areas of Afghanistan (1998–1999) used the same methodology (Paul Knox Clarke, ALNAP, personal communication, September 2013).

When targeting beneficiaries, consider the needs of related communities.

Targeting the populations that can benefit from aid is extremely difficult in urban contexts, and a simple error can rapidly become a security issue. In Mogadishu in particular, the Somali clan and sub-clan system is such that aid organisations run the risk of being seen as the enemy by one side if they provide aid to another, making needs-based targeting and allocation a risky endeavour. In such situations, the most frequent approach to targeting is area and site targeting, in which the entire population living in a given area receives assistance (Grünewald, 2012).

PANICA, a project in Cali originally designed to deal only with children living on the street, eventually included displaced populations and youth and children vulnerable to urban school violence, as well as the children's families. This recognised the need for integrated programming that took into account interrelated conditions and contexts, and for broader definitions (IFRC, 2011).

Checklist for assessments in violent urban settings

Issues to be assessed will vary by sector, but some common elements need consideration:

- Areas and populations most affected by violence
- Identification of facilities and service providers (public, NGOs or private)
- Analysis of access (by different population groups) to such facilities
- Needs assessment (including health, food security, water, shelter and protection)
- Identification of groups at risk (including considerations around gender dimension, people living with disabilities, minorities and people who do not want to be identified)
- Stakeholder analysis
- Legal analysis (specific to protection issues)

The assessment methodology should include the following:

- External data sources
- Focus group discussions
- Key informant interviews
- Direct observation
- Data triangulation

Table 1: Characteristics per district (at the time of preparing the assessment), Mogadishu/Somalia

District	Frontline	Controlled by	Population density	Access	Remarks
Abdi Aziz	Frontline	Primarily insurgents 10%	Very low	Very difficult	Presence of foreign insurgents, access is a challenge. Very small district with no alternative of relocation within the district.
Bondhere	Frontline	TFG	Low	Challenging	Newly taken by TFG.
Darkenley	-	TFG	High	Ok	
Deynille	-	Insurgents	High	Ok	
Hamar Jajab	-	TFG	High	Ok	
Hamar Weyne	-	TFG	High	Ok	
Hawl Wadag	Frontline	Split	Very low	Challenging	
Heliwa	-	Insurgents	Low	Ok	Access possible from the north of the district.
Hodan	Frontline	Primarily TFG	Low	Ok	Has accessible side.
Karaan	-	Insurgents	Very low	Challenging	Sensitive district.
Shibis	Frontline	Insurgents	?	Challenging	Difficult to access.
Shingani	Frontline	Split	Low	Ok	
Waberi	-	TFG	High	Ok	
Wadajir	-	TFG	High	Ok	
Wardigley	Frontline	Split	Very low	Challenging	
Yaqshid	Frontline	Insurgents	Low	Challenging	
Elisha	-	Insurgents	High	Ok	Desitnation of the displaced population. Access is not a challenge an it is a mix of population.

TFG = Transitional Federal Government

Source: Guillemois (2012)

Working with maps

Mapping is essential for needs assessments, communication with stakeholders, and planning.

Production and use of different types of maps (multi-scale, multi-factor and historical) should become a routine part of humanitarian operations in urban settings. Geographic and administrative units as well as socio-economic and ethnic elements (such as density, type of population, socio-economic level) have to be identified and qualified. Their inter-relations – often in terms of flows of people, labour, money and goods, but also in terms of political domination and socio-economic exploitation – have to be clarified (Grünewald et al., 2011). Global Positioning Systems (GPS) devices can be used to locate sites of interest. Digitized maps can also be useful to visualize violence dynamics and trends. Open-source technology is available and could be more widely used by humanitarian agencies for mapping, targeting and coordinating relief. Information from dispersed individuals can be compiled and geo-coordinated to build an electronic map. The results are published online, and the material is continually updated.

For example, the KASS project used GPS devices and digitised maps to record accurate locations for five categories of shelters and their attached latrines as well as for community and family wells, drainage ditches, and stretches of gravelled road (Kallweit et al., 2007).

The Ushahidi project was initially created for citizen tracking of the 2007 election violence in Kenya, and was later used in Haiti. The Ushahidi Haiti Project was a volunteer-driven effort to produce a crowd-sourced, open map to support effective aid delivery following the 2010 earthquake (Smith et al., 2011). A similar project maps sexual harassment in Cairo (Harassmap, at <http://harassmap.org>).

See also Lesson 8 in Responding to Urban Disasters (Sanderson and Knox Clarke, 2012).

Security management

Adapt security measures to the local context.

Urban areas present different types of security risks (Wille and Fast, 2010; Cross and Johnston, 2011), including dangers related to crowds, mobs, looting, crossfire and sniper fire (Zabalgogazkoa, 2011). The security situation can also change extremely rapidly. Strategies to assess and manage risk need to be adapted accordingly; sometimes they require a block-by-block analysis. Risk assessments should include the following (Rio Navarro, 2011):

- Detailed description of the neighbourhood or facility to be reached
- Preferred route to the location
- Separate risk evaluations for daytime and night-time
- Where to park the vehicle
- Contact details for a community representative
- A place to take refuge in case of emergency
- Key potential threats, ranked by probability and potential impact
- Preventive measures to address these threats

Involve the community.

Much of an organisation's security depends on the attitude of the communities affected by the conflict. It is essential to involve the community in ensuring security (making sure they understand what would be the consequences of a security incident – i.e., most probably, the end of the programme). Keeping a community well informed about a programme should reduce complaints, threats and potentially dangerous behaviour on distribution day (ACF, n.d.).

Communities need to be able to feel part of the organisation's activities. Community members or leaders can be involved in daily site security assessment, and need to agree on the organisation's operating procedures (Rio Navarro, 2011).

Take decisions on security issues as close to the field as possible.

Given the volatility and context-specificity of each neighbourhood, it is important that, in order to

reduce reaction times, the team directly involved in activities and closest to the field takes relevant security decisions (for example, on evacuations). Community outreach activities place staff close to victims but also to aggressors. In Tegucigalpa, MSF has developed clear protocols and definitions of roles for each member of the outreach team that can take the decision to leave a particular site. General coordination at the main (capital) office would be available as a backup (Rio Navarro, 2011).

In Altos de Cazuca, Bogotá, MSF shifted significant responsibility to senior national staff. Only a weekly green-lighting of presence and activity of MSF teams in the area was given by the head of mission (Zabalgogazkoa, 2011).

Train staff on security issues.

A coherent security strategy must be developed and security guidelines, procedures, and protocols implemented (Lucchi, 2012; ACF, n.d.). This involves the regular review and update of all security documents (e.g., every 6 months) and the establishment of an incident reporting system.

Moreover, it is of key importance that the staff involved in relief operations in such settings receives appropriate training. Security management workshops need to be performed with all team members, and new team members should receive a dedicated security management briefing. Protocols need to be in place for referring patients who are armed actors to public hospitals (which would likely trigger the arrest of the patient), for dealing with armed actors in panic or on drugs, and for maintaining the confidentiality of data (Cristina, 2011).

Be aware of the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnance.

After a conflict, cities can present a high risk, for the local population as well as for rescue and humanitarian teams, of landmines and unexploded

ordnance. Any relief intervention has to be supported by decontamination teams in order to ensure safety. The experience of Opération Licorne in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as difficulties faced by the inhabitants of Grozny and Mogadishu, show how essential it is to have rapidly deployable squads able to clear mines, unexploded ordnance and booby traps and thus to facilitate the return of the population in its neighbourhoods (Grünwald, 2013).

SECTOR-SPECIFIC LESSONS

Protection

Introduce protection activities gradually.

In order to implement protection programs in violent urban settings, it is important for humanitarian workers to build trust with the different actors and communities involved, and then make gradual connections between other types of assistance and protection. Particularly in settings not governed by international humanitarian law, protection work needs to be started from scratch. For example, in Medellín, the ICRC is talking to school children and their families about rules for living together, creative conflict resolution, the dangers of weapons, self-protection measures, first aid, and sexual and reproductive health. At the same time, the ICRC disseminates legal rules on the use of force, arrest and detention to members of the security forces; they disseminate humanitarian principles, and they visit prisons and rehabilitation centres for minors (ICRC, 2013b).

Ensure that protection is mainstreamed.

The connection between protection and other types of assistance is important in urban settings. In order to increase relevance and efficiency, it is important to make continuous efforts to ensure that protection concerns are mainstreamed in and become integral part of all assistance and prevention activities, including health, water and sanitation and educational programmes (Gentile, 2011; Grünwald et al., 2011).

Ensure confidentiality in case management.

Confidentiality in case management can be a question of life or death, given the often difficult

relations between communities, the police and the judicial system (Grünwald et al., 2011). In Nairobi, IRC set up an information centre for people living in Eastleigh neighbourhood, where, among other information, refugees could ask where to get treatment for stigmatised concerns such as sexual and gender-based violence and HIV-AIDS. Open to all in the community, this approach introduced measures to protect information and visitors' identities. Visitors will not use services if they suspect their anonymity may be at risk (Barcelo et al., 2011). In Papua New Guinea, MSF arranged secure and confidential relocation of victims of violence (McPhun, 2011).

Health

Restore access to health care quickly.

In war-torn cities, the capacity to save the lives of wounded people is directly linked to the time required for them to access treatment. The destruction of health infrastructure, the lack of medical supplies and energy, and the collapse of the referral system create enormous barriers to health care. Where the health system has collapsed, people need basic health care as well as treatment for injuries caused by violence. In Mogadishu, ICRC and MSF worked in a limited number of hospitals that remained accessible during confrontations (Grünwald, 2012). In some contexts, setting up smaller clinics in the most affected neighbourhoods can best facilitate access to health care.

Offer a variety of health services.

An integral model of care (medical, psychological and social) can often best meet the needs of survivors of violence. Armed violence can lead to other forms of violence – such as sexual, domestic and self-inflicted violence (WHO, 2002) – and health interventions should be prepared to treat these, too. In Tegucigalpa, one of the key issues was ensuring timely access to and quality of medical, psychological and social care for survivors of sexual violence (Llanos, 2011). In Rio de Janeiro, MSF set up a health facility with an emergency room in the centre of the favela, which provided access to emergency medical care, stabilisation, psychological support and counselling. A referral system, including ambulance service, was then developed to ensure the best level of care. References from other service providers to the MSF clinic were also encouraged (Cristina, 2011). In the Martissant district of Port-au-Prince, in addition to one fixed clinic, MSF runs three mobile clinics, in order to reach patients in remote and difficult-to-access locations (De Mayo, 2011).

Shelter

Tailor responses to local conditions.

In cities, conflict-displaced families may find a diverse range of housing solutions. In overcrowded areas of Mogadishu, IDPs move into former government buildings, settle on compounds through negotiated access with gatekeepers, and rent small plots of land, sometimes at great expense (Grünewald, 2012).

In urban centres in Syria, finding adequate shelter remains the biggest challenge for most displaced families. Shelter needs are being met through a range of temporary measures: squatting in rudimentary tent structures on vacant land, collective shelters, occupying empty public and private buildings (most of which are without water, sanitary facilities, windows or doors), including schools and health facilities, sheltering with host families and renting where apartments are available and affordable. Other families continue to live in their own homes, many of which have sustained damage and or been looted, and may be desperate for help with repairs (Assessment Working Group

for Northern Syria, 2013a). IDPs tend to move back to their homes once the fighting moves on to other areas. Simultaneously there are additional and different needs for IDPs and returnees (UN-HABITAT, 2013).

In planning a shelter response, it is necessary to undertake in-depth quantitative and qualitative analysis of how and where different modalities can be most cost-effective in providing dignified shelter for the most vulnerable families. Providing shelter kits, supporting house repairs, or providing cash to host families are options to consider.

Consider the physical security of different shelter options.

After a siege, carpet bombing, counterinsurgency operation or disaster, the classical aid response is to distribute tarpaulins, and more recently tents. However, in Port-au-Prince, most of the city's displaced people did not feel comfortable leaving their belongings in ruined and abandoned neighbourhoods, in tents or under plastic sheets in camps. They worried about intruders at night. Murder and rape were common and often went unreported (Hirano, 2012). Frequently, this resulted in IDPs moving to areas that were even more insecure than the sites that they left, in terms of both protection from crime and the physical safety of the structures (Ferris and Ferro-Ribero, 2012).

Consider ownership issues and other consequences of emergency use of properties.

It is important to move people rapidly from precarious shelters into potentially permanent accommodations (Grünewald, 2013). With this in mind, securing access to land and property is a critical issue to avoid further conflicts and violence between users and owners. In the emergency phase, a 'do no harm' approach should be attempted – for example by not putting people into other people's homes or into public assets like schools (or mosques or churches, if the conflict is inter-religious). In the reconstruction phase, international actors should be mindful of the danger of settlement plans being used to enforce dominance (Barakat and Narang-Suri, 2009; Piquard, 2009). A sustainable approach to post-crisis urban planning is people-centred and

includes consensus-building and coordination, as well as rebuilding critical infrastructure and services, and planning as a catalyst for economic recovery (UN-HABITAT, n.d.).

Livelihoods

Consider cash-based aid.

In urban environments, if products are still available in the market, aid in the form of cash has secondary benefits for the economy and local community, by enhancing local purchasing power and encouraging local traders to bring in more food at affordable prices. In violent contexts, cash, which is less bulky and thus less visible than food rations, can be safer for both recipients and aid workers (Grünewald, 2013). In Kenya, Concern partnered with the private-sector company Safaricom to implement M-pesa, a system of delivering cash to recipients via mobile phones (Brewin, 2008). This technology has since been used in numerous humanitarian responses such as the WFP's cash-for-work program in Manila (WFP, 2010) and the Mercy Corps response in Haiti.

Another form of cash transfer is the voucher system. In Mogadishu, the West Bank and Bogotá, the ICRC has distributed vouchers that could be used for purchases in selected stores. In Haiti, Oxfam gave vouchers which were redeemable in local shops for a combination of food items and a sum of cash. In Gaza, the vouchers allow beneficiaries to have access to a diversified food basket (including fresh dairy products and eggs), while providing a cash injection into the economy (Qleibo and Bertola, 2011; Mountfield, 2012). Vouchers are, however, more cumbersome to manage than cash, because the shops have to keep separate accounts and wait for reimbursement (Grünewald, 2012).

See also Lesson 4 in Responding to Urban Disasters (Sanderson and Knox Clarke, 2012).

Carefully consider the pros and cons of different food distribution schemes.

When markets no longer function and some areas are cut off from food supplies, food distribution might be the only solution. In cities under siege, such as Aleppo, prices have risen so sharply due to the blocked trade routes that people are struggling to obtain food

(ACAPS, 2013a). Despite the accompanying access and logistical problems, food distributions are often the only lifeline in such circumstances.

In some places, like Mogadishu, the most traditional food aid distribution method – dry rations – has proven extremely difficult in terms of targeting the right people and ensuring efficient logistics throughout the supply chain. Payments extorted at checkpoints between Mogadishu harbour and the delivery site increase the cost substantially.

The distribution of cooked meals (wet rations) is also an option and it was central to the operations of ICRC kitchens in the early 1990s. Diversion of cooked food at the distribution site is less likely and the transfer of the cost of cooking fuel from families to the aid agencies is another advantage (Grünewald, 2012). However, a WFP evaluation of its own activities in Mogadishu noted that attendance at wet feeding distribution varied strongly across the districts. It was particularly low along the front-line, which can be linked to physical inability to access feeding sites due to insecurity. Another factor which may have negatively affected attendance is the distance of households from the distribution point (Guillemois, 2012).

Consider promoting urban and peri-urban agriculture.

Urban and peri-urban agriculture programmes can work well even in besieged or conflict-affected cities. ICRC made this an integral part of its response in the cities of former Yugoslavia, in Kabul in the early 1990s and even in the peri-urban barrios of Huambo, Angola. Seeds distributed by ICRC in Sarajevo were grown even on the tops of buildings and on balconies during the siege (Grünewald, 2013). In Gaza, an urban fish-farming project on rooftops is providing a healthy dietary complement to many families (FAO, no date).

Food interventions can also help support livelihoods. In Kabul, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kandahar and Jalalabad, WFP supported 86 bakeries with free wheat flour and iodized salt. Such bakeries employed 897 women and 63 men who supplied subsidised bread daily to 167,868 beneficiaries (WFP, 2004).

Annex 1: Additional reading on violence in urban settings

The following publications can also be accessed via the ALNAP Resources Library.

- Beall et al. (2011) 'Cities, conflict and state fragility', Crisis States Working Papers Series No.2: Working Paper no. 85. London: Crisis states research centre.
- Bernal-Franco, L. and Navas-Caputo, C. (2013) 'Urban violence and humanitarian action in Medellin: Discussion Paper 5'. Humanitarian Action in Situations Other than War.
- Bourgeois, P. (2001) 'The power of violence in war and peace: post-Cold War lessons from El Salvador', In Scheper-Hughes, N., and Bourgeois, P. (eds.) *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing: pp. 425–434.
- Briceño-León, R. (2005) 'Urban violence and public health in Latin America: a sociological explanatory framework'. Rio de Janeiro: *Cadernos Saude Publica*: 21(6):1629-1664.
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- Fernandes, R.C., and de Sousa Nascimento, M. (2007) 'Chapter 7: Mapping the divide: firearm violence and urbanization in Brazil, ' in *Small Arms Survey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 227-257.
- Ramos de Souza et al. (2006) 'The panorama of urban violence in Brazil and its capitals'. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 11(2):363-373.
- The World Bank (2010) 'Violence in the City, Understanding and Supporting Community Responses to Urban Violence'. Washington: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and The World Bank.
- UN-HABITAT (2007) 'Global Report on Human Settlements 2007: Enhancing Urban Safety and Security'. London: Earthscan.
- Urban tipping point (2012) 'Understanding the Tipping Point of Urban Conflict'.

Annex 2: Additional guidance and tools related to the urban environment

As mentioned beforehand, in this literature review we were unable to identify any guidance specifically related to the topic of needs assessment in violent urban contexts. However, there are a variety of resources related to the urban environment. Some useful links are provided below.

EFUS (2007), 'Guidance on Local Safety Audits: A Compendium of International Practice'. Paris: EFUS.

FAO, FewNet and WFP (2010) 'Comprehensive food security and vulnerability analysis (CFSVA) and nutrition assessment for Kenya high-density urban areas'. Rome: UNWFP.

Howe, K. and Adams Brown, C. (2013) 'Technical Brief (Draft), Networks and Neighbourhoods, A Guide to Rapid Assessment in Urban Space'. CHF International for ACAPS.

Jacobsen, K., and Furst Nichols, R. (2011) 'Developing a Profiling Methodology for Displaced People in Urban Areas'. Medford: Feinstein International Centre

Kolbe, A., and Muggah, R. (2010) 'Surveying Haiti's post-quake needs: a quantitative approach', Humanitarian exchange 48. London: HPN/ODI.

Nzuma, J. and Ochola, S. (2010) Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis (CFSVA) and Nutrition Assessment: Kenya, High Density Urban Areas. WFP.

O'Leary, R., and Viswanath, K. (2011) 'Building Safe And Inclusive Cities For Women: A Practical Guide'. UNWOMEN and UN-HABITAT.

UNODC and UN-HABITAT (2009) 'Cross-Cutting Issues Crime prevention assessment tool, Criminal justice assessment toolkit'. New York: United Nations.

UN-HABITAT et al. (2010) 'Adolescent Girls' Views on Safety in Cities: Findings from the Because I am a Girl Urban Programme study in Cairo, Delhi, Hanoi, Kampala, and Lima'.

UNHCR and WFP (2013) 'Joint Assessment Missions: Technical Guidance Sheet No. 1 – Refugees In Urban Areas'. Geneva: UNHCR.

(to be read in conjunction with:)

UNHCR and WFP (2013) 'Joint Assessment Missions: a Practical Guide to Planning and Implementation'. Geneva: UNHCR.

Bibliography

The following publications can also be accessed via the ALNAP Resources Library.

If you are viewing this document onscreen you can click on each item individually and it will take you to the electronic publication hosted on the ALNAP website. To view as a list, click [here](#).

ACAPS (2013a) 'Global Emergency Overview'.

ACAPS (2013b) 'Needs assessment lessons learned: Lessons identified from assessing the humanitarian situation in Syria and countries hosting refugees'. Syria needs Analysis project. Geneva: ACAPS.

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Assessment Working Group for Northern Syria. (2013a) 'Joint Rapid Assessment of Northern Syria II', 27 March.

Assessment Working Group for Northern Syria. (2013b) 'Joint Rapid Assessment of Northern Syria - Aleppo City Assessment'.

Bangerter, O. (2010) 'Territorial gangs and their consequences for humanitarian players', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 92(878).

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