

# Forgotten Humanitarian Crises

Conference on the Role of the Media, Decision-makers and Humanitarian Agencies  
Copenhagen, 23 October 2002

## Conference Paper



C/O DANISH REFUGEE COUNCIL  
P.O. BOX 53  
BORGERGADE 10  
DK-1002 COPENHAGEN K  
DENMARK

Organisers: Danish Refugee Council, DanChurchAid, Danish People's Aid, Danish Red Cross, Mission East  
The conference is funded by: the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) and the Organisers

Tel. +45 33 73 50 00  
Fax: +45 33 32 84 48  
e-mail: [forgottencrises@drc.dk](mailto:forgottencrises@drc.dk)  
[www.forgottencrises.dk](http://www.forgottencrises.dk)

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction, by the organisers.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Humanitarian Crises: What Determines the Level of Emergency Assistance?- Media Coverage, Donor Interests, and the Aid Business, by Gorm Rye Olsen, Nils Carstensen, and Kristian Høyen .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Giving Voice to Silent Emergencies, by Anna Jefferys .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Failing Failed States - Who Forgets the Forgotten?, by Hans-Henrik Holm.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Annex:</b>	
<b>Fact-sheet (relating to article one)</b>	

# INTRODUCTION

Despite the efforts of the media, aid donors, humanitarian agencies, and decision-makers around the globe, some humanitarian crises receive only a limited response from the outside world, in terms of media coverage or external assistance, or both. This happens at the expense of the victims. In order to delineate these from other crises receiving a proportionately higher share of attention, they are often characterised as being 'forgotten'. This signifies the pronounced inequality and irregularity in media coverage, public awareness, as well as provision of assistance to the crises of the world.

The question is, however, if any forgotten crisis is truly forgotten in a literal sense. In the world of today, it is unlikely that any natural disaster or complex emergency will ever escape at least a minimal degree of attention. So what do we really mean by the concept 'forgotten crises'?

Is it a matter of quantifying unmet needs and drawing a dividing line between remembered and forgotten in terms of assistance reaching the needy? And, if so, where does that line run?

Media coverage is another defining element. Which factors determine the degree of media coverage? Is it a preference for sudden, dramatic events rather than longer-term structural issues? And is media coverage a constituting factor per se in determining how much emergency aid a given crisis will receive? Or is it simply one among several factors?

Finally, there is the question of geopolitical agendas. Are they of overriding importance in determining the level of attention being paid to any given crisis?

On top of this there is a question of time - when does a crisis cease to be a crisis? For how long after the cyclone has left or the guns have been silenced does it make sense to speak of a crisis and of being forgotten? Is e.g. Ethiopia in the midst of a crisis, or is it 'simply' a post-conflict society that receives insufficient amounts of development assistance to cover all basic needs? And what about the AIDS epidemics - do they qualify as forgotten crises?

It is clear that the concept of 'forgotten crises' remains a complex and ambiguous yet inescapable term with vast humanitarian implications. In a sense, the concept hides the fact that crises are often ignored, neglected, suppressed or overlooked rather than forgotten.

From this perspective, it is highly relevant that the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) highlights the intention to focus on forgotten crises in its *Aid Strategy 2002*. As a direct outcome of this, ECHO and five Danish partner organisations - Danish Refugee Council, Danish Red Cross, DanChurchAid, Danish People's Aid, and Mission East - agreed to arrange the Conference on Forgotten Humanitarian Crises, coinciding with the Danish EU Presidency. The Danish partner organisations took upon themselves the task of organising the event while ECHO provided substantial funding.

The primary aim of the conference is to urge researchers, decision-makers, humanitarian agencies, and the media to reflect upon 'forgotten crises' and to put this very important issue on a common agenda. The hope is that the conference and the present collection of papers will provide additional insight into the complex dynamics and interactions between public opinion, news criteria, humanitarian motives, geopolitical agendas, and actual allocation of resources to humanitarian crises.

Within this framework, the main players have all been asked to scrutinise and contemplate upon their own roles, values, principles, and performance in relation to 'forgotten crises'. The intention is also to arrive at recommendations on how to ensure that humanitarian crises of the future will remain on the agenda.

This conference paper contains three articles that seek to analyse the causes and effects of 'forgotten crises'. In article one, Gorm Rye Olsen (Centre for Development Research), Nils Carstensen (DanChurchAid), and Kristian Høyen (Danish Refugee Council) raise the question: What determines the level of emergency assistance? Based on a comparative analysis, the three authors argue that media attention is far from the only

factor that determines whether a given humanitarian crisis is forgotten or not. In article two, Anna Jefferys (Save the Children UK) offers some suggestions as to how humanitarian agencies can assess the relative 'silence' of a given emergency, and how NGOs and other humanitarian actors can assist in giving such emergencies a voice. In article three, Hans-Henrik Holm (Danish School of Journalism) takes a closer look at humanitarian crises in relation to failing or collapsed states. Analysing the content of the media coverage of selected crises, he introduces the phenomena of bystander apathy –

knowing without reacting. He concludes that politicians, as leaders, have a special responsibility to place failed states and humanitarian crises on the agenda.

It is our hope that the three articles will inform the debate and be a future source of inspiration.

*The organisers.*

*The Conference on Forgotten Humanitarian Crises  
Copenhagen, 23 October 2002*

*The three articles contained in this folder reflect the views of the authors and not necessarily those of ECHO or the Danish organisers, who are not liable for any use that may be made of the information therein.*

# HUMANITARIAN CRISES: WHAT DETERMINES THE LEVEL OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE?

## MEDIA COVERAGE, DONOR INTERESTS, AND THE AID BUSINESS

By Gorm Rye Olsen, Nils Carstensen, and Kristian Høyen

“Lucky are the people of Yugoslavia and Somalia as the world's eyes rest on them. Condemned are the people of Juba for the world is denied access to the town and even does not seem to care anyway. It may be a blessing to die in front of a camera - then at least the world will get to know about it. But it is painful to die or be killed, without anybody knowing it.”

*Hand-written letter smuggled out from the besieged Southern Sudanese town of Juba, August 1992.*

### Introduction

The above quotation points to a common perception of our age, namely that media attention is extremely important for achieving political attention, and, subsequently, for promoting political action. The link between media attention and political action is often known as the ‘CNN-effect’, a term which implies that the media – and in particular television – are able to influence the decisions of political leaders, including the foreign policy agendas of Western governments. In relation to international emergency assistance, therefore, it is commonly assumed that massive media coverage of a humanitarian crisis will lead to increased allocations of emergency funds, whereby humanitarian needs have a better chance of being met.

This paper takes another starting point. It proposes the basic hypothesis that the volume of emergency assistance that any humanitarian crisis will attract is determined by three main factors working either in conjunction or individually. In other words, this paper operates with three types of explanation as to what determines the level of international emergency response to a given crisis: The first explanation maintains that the amount of emergency assistance does indeed depend on the intensity of media coverage. The second explanation assumes that the level of emergency assistance depends on the degree of political interest that aid-funding governments (donors) have in the particular region or country where a humanitarian crisis occurs. The third explanation supposes that the volume of emergency assistance depends on the condition of the institutional framework and the strength of the network of humanitarian organisations involved in the country or

region concerned. More specifically, the latter refers to the presence and strength of multilateral organisations, humanitarian NGOs, and committed individuals in a specific country or area. For reasons of brevity, however, the paper shall henceforth refer to the third type of explanation as ‘stakeholder commitment’.

It is the aim of this paper to substantiate the explanatory value of each of the three competing explanations presented above, and, if possible, the hierarchical relationship that exists between them. This will be done by analysing and comparing a number of humanitarian crises around the world – an analysis that will draw upon quantitative as well as qualitative indicators.

### A Note on the Methodological Reflections

The humanitarian crises analysed and compared in this paper were not selected at random. They were chosen for their diversity and their individual ability to substantiate each of the three competing explanations presented above. In other words, while some of the included cases were expected to support the argument that media coverage is the decisive factor in relation to emergency response, other cases were expected to support the argument that donor interest in a given emergency area is determining how much aid that area will obtain, and other cases yet were expected to support the argument that ‘stakeholder commitment’ in a given country is the crucial factor.

In the analysis below, four comparisons will be presented. The first comparison revolves two humanitarian crises unleashed by natural disasters – the India cyclone of October 1999, and the Mozambique floods of late January 2000. The other three comparisons deal with complex emergencies – Angola, Sudan, the Balkans, DPR of Korea, and Afghanistan. For each of the mentioned crises, data on the volume of emergency assistance and data on the level of media coverage have been gathered and rendered into the form of tables and figures (these tables and figures are presented in a separate fact-sheet below). All financial data are derived from OCHA's and ECHO's respective databases and should be seen as estimates, not as accurate or complete amounts. In other words, the financial figures applied in the below analysis should be observed with caution as they are encumbered with considerable uncertainty.

For reasons of feasibility, data on the level of media coverage have only been gathered for selected periods of time, i.e. for 3-months intervals during central years. In order to increase the validity of the comparisons, we have – with the first comparison as an obvious exception – chosen to compare the media data for the same quarter of each of the examined years. Data have been gathered from the two major TV channels in Denmark (DR-TV and TV2), as well as from 23 leading newspapers in the UK (5), Germany (3), France (3), Italy (2) USA (7), Spain (1), and Denmark (2).

For each of the examined humanitarian crises, data have also been gathered as to the scope and severity of the unfolding emergency situation and the need for outside assistance. While it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable information in this regard, it has been attempted in each case to judge the number of people effected and/or the need for food assistance. In connection with the comparison of the natural disasters in India and Mozambique, figures have been compiled from the CRED/OFDA database run by the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), Universite Catholique de Louvain in Belgium. In the analysis of the emergencies in the Balkans (Kosovo), Angola, Sudan, DPR of Korea, and Afghanistan, figures have been derived from the relevant UN CAP-appeals and mid-year CAP-updates. For Kosovo, the number of people who were displaced within F.R.Y., or who had fled across national borders during the height of the crisis, were used. For Angola, Sudan, DPR of Korea, and Afghanistan we have used the number of people who were deemed to be

in need of food aid by the WFP/FAO. This figure, of course, only reflects one dimension of an emergency intervention, but we found this to be the only consistently available and relevant figure to use as an indicator of needs in these complex emergencies. However, due to the inherent insecurities associated with using food aid figures, the reader should consider such figures as indicators only of the magnitude of a given crisis.

Finally, it should be stressed that when it comes to assessing the level of donor interest and the level of 'stakeholder commitment' in a given crisis area, it has not been feasible to apply any quantifiable indicators. Such assessments, therefore, will build on qualitative judgement.

### **Explaining the Level of Emergency Assistance**

Concerning the first explanation proposed above, the intensity of media coverage: In the academic literature there is no substantial evidence which shows the existence of a general CNN-effect within the realm of foreign policy. On the contrary, studies of media influence on international events indicate that the media have had an effect only in situations where the governments involved were lacking a clear policy. The few 'proofs' of the alleged massive influence of the media are very often the Western intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan in the spring of 1991, and the humanitarian intervention in Somalia in December 1992. However, these cases seem to be exceptions to the rule since media coverage of human suffering only rarely leads to Western policy initiatives (Gowing, 1994; Robinson, 1999). Rather, there is a general tendency for politicians and governments to turn the media into their 'servants' by communicating the message of the government to the public (Robinson, 1999).

Looking specifically at humanitarian crises, it has to be acknowledged that the situation may be different from the one prevailing in foreign politics in general. Thus, Lionel Rosenblatt argues that "in a narrowly focussed situation such as humanitarian emergencies, the media play a decisive role in informing the public and stimulating action" (Rosenblatt, 1996: 140 & 139). There seems to be general support to the claim that media coverage is important for promoting political action in humanitarian crises (Rothberg & Weiss, 1996). On the other hand, existing research on media influence in humanitarian disaster situations actually fails "to clarify the significance of media impact on humanitarian intervention decisions"

(Robinson, 1999) – which is exactly one of the purposes of this paper.

If the mass media choose to focus massively on a crisis, a number of preconditions have to be fulfilled (Natsios, 1996). First of all, the crisis has to be news and the emergency situation has to provide the basis for producing dramatic and emotive imagery (TV-footage and still photos). Moreover, a humanitarian crisis – in Africa for instance – has to compete with emergencies in other parts of the world. Another precondition for media coverage, therefore, has to do with what is sometimes called the ‘news attention cycle’ or the ‘issue attention cycle’. These terms imply that some issues, particularly distant ones not directly affecting people in donor countries, invariably receive attention only on a cyclical basis. Sometimes, this phenomenon is expressed in more popular phrases such as “the world does not have an appetite for more than one crisis at a time” (Livingston, 1996: 83-84). In reality, this precondition contains two elements. On the one hand, is the argument that the world cannot cope with more than one emergency within a certain time horizon. On the other hand, this statement is complicated by the argument of geographical proximity.

There can be no doubt that the most fundamental precondition for media attention is that a humanitarian crisis has to be ‘news’, and that it has to be able to deliver emotive reporting. Here, developing countries, and Africa south of the Sahara in particular, face problems, as most editors do not perceive it as ‘news’ when Africans are killing Africans. Also, for most mainstream media it is not really ‘news’ if Africa experiences yet another humanitarian disaster. At least, this seems to be the most important media-related explanation to the limited news reporting on the civil wars in Sudan and Angola – wars that have dragged on for decades, but whose daily outcomes are numerous casualties and wrecked lives. Hence, if an emergency situation contains no news, the message has to be ‘framed’ in the right way in order to create a public opinion for action (Robinson, 1999; Giradet, 1996: 58). The need for framing is related to the fact that “media reports do not objectively report on humanitarian crises. Rather, they report crises in particular and often very different ways” (Robinson, 1999), where they sometimes tend to ‘advocate’ for action, in other instances not.

As mentioned above, a second possible explanation for the level of emergency assistance a given humanitarian

crisis will attract refers to the interests – especially the security interests – of donor governments. Due to the lack of systematic information on the issue of donor interests in connection with humanitarian crises, this paper assumes that donors are basically motivated by the same kind of interests as they are when they grant long-term development assistance (ODA). The ‘aid motivations debate’ operates with two explanatory models, one called ‘recipient needs’, the other called ‘donor interests’ (McKinlay & Little, 1977, 1978, 1979). Donor interests consist of elements such as (national) security interests, economic interests (e.g. trade- and investment interests), and wider political interests. ‘Recipient needs’ are related to the economic and social level of development of poor countries. According to the ‘aid motivation literature’, the allocation of development aid from big donors, such as USA, France, UK, and the European Union, tends to be motivated by donor interests, whereas small and middle-size donors, like the Scandinavian countries, are mainly motivated by the needs of the recipients when they give aid. A basic assumption of the donor interest explanation is that the amount of aid received by any low-income country is proportional to the level of interest of the donor. This paper assumes that the same relationship can be found in relation to emergency assistance, implying that donor interests play an important role in motivating decisions on granting aid to specific humanitarian crises.

This paper also proposes a third type of explanation that stresses the significance of ‘stakeholder commitment’ in particular countries or regions. The mere existence of the specialised humanitarian agencies, donor administrations (e.g. ECHO, US Aid, Danida), early warning systems and rapid reaction units, industry standards (SPHERE, Code of Conduct), specialised information structures (IRIN, ReliefWeb), co-ordinating entities and professional networks (OCHA, SCHR, VOICE) ensure some kind of basic response to most major or medium-size disasters. This institutionalisation of a value-based sense of duty to help others in need is sometimes referred to as the ‘aid business’. The ‘stakeholder commitment’ argument can be exemplified by the situation in the Sudan. Here, UN agencies, international and national NGOs, the de facto ruling powers in the country, and, to some extent, even back donor representatives, are brought together in co-ordinated annual needs assessments, aid program planning, and co-ordinated fundraising efforts – i.e. the UN-lead Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS) and the UN Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP). Other ongoing crises, such as the ones in DPR of Korea, Western Sahara,

Congo-Kinshasa, Congo-Brazzaville, and Tajikistan do have UN-agency and international NGO presence, but in these cases the number of actors are smaller, their interactions less co-ordinated, and they form a much weaker 'humanitarian lobby' than the 'aid business lobbies' in Sudan and Angola.

### **Mozambique and India Compared: The Significance of Media Framing**

It is obvious from the below TV-figures on the media coverage of the India cyclone (1999) and the Mozambique floods (2000) that the coverage of the latter crisis was more than five times as extensive as the coverage of the former (87 spots versus 16 spots). A similar pattern is found in the media coverage of the same emergencies in

<b>Media coverage - Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV &amp; TV2):</b>	
India cyclone (15 Oct. 1999 - 15 Jan. 2000):	16
Mozambique floods (1 Feb. 2000 - 1 May 2000):	87
<b>Media coverage - Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA &amp; Western Europe):</b>	
India cyclone (15 Oct. 1999 - 15 Jan. 2000):	91
Mozambique floods (1 Feb. 2000 - 1 May 2000):	382
<b>Total value of received humanitarian assistance in US\$:</b>	
India cyclone:	23.097.000
Mozambique floods:	165.846.000
<small>(Sources: DR-TV, TV2, LexisNexis, Polinfo, and OCHA. See fact-sheet for more information).</small>	

23 influential newspapers in Western Europe and USA. In the period covered, the Indian cyclone was treated in 91 articles, whereas the Mozambique flood was described in 382 articles. Put differently, Mozambique received at least four times as much media attention as India in the 3-months periods covered by the survey. At a first glance, it seems as if the intensity of media coverage is able to explain why Mozambique received more than seven times the amount of emergency aid that India received. But in reality we can only establish that there is a correlation between media coverage and the amount of aid in the case of Mozambique. With this reservation in mind, it is relevant to reflect on the circumstances under which the two emergencies received media coverage.

In October 1999, the coastal parts of the Indian state of Orissa were hit by a super cyclone heralded by a 7-meter high tidal wave and subsequent storm surges and floods.

The official number of people killed was just under 10.000 and some 12.6 million people were reported to be affected (OFDA/CRED EM-DAT). Senior aid officials, interviewed a few months later, all agreed that the real casualty figure was probably 50 - 100% higher due to a substantial number of illegal and unregistered migrant workers living in the coastal belt (author's own research in February 2000). Some three months later two cyclones and continuous heavy rainfall led to widespread floods in Mozambique. About 800 people died and approximately 1,5 million people were affected (OFDA/CRED EM-DAT). Thus, looking at these figures as indicators of the magnitude of these specific disasters and the humanitarian needs they prompted, it is clear that the super cyclone that hit Orissa was, with all due respect to the affected Mozambicans, by far the largest and the worse disaster.

The basic question is: Why then did the African emergency attract so much more attention – and ultimately funding – from the outside world? It is difficult to say anything definite about the question of accessibility for the media, but the issue may have contributed significantly to explain the difference in the international responses to the two disasters. After a few days, access to the disaster zone and the transportation situation was not a major problem in Mozambique. On the contrary, reporters were assisted by authorities, aid agencies and the South African Air Force in getting quick and almost unhindered access to the disaster zone and some very dramatic and compelling footage. Initial access was much more complicated in India, as the Indian authorities declared a state of emergency and a no-go zone for most of the affected areas. This included the media, which for the first 4–5 days were restricted to report from the relative calm of the Orissa state capitol of Bhubaneshwar. By the time the media was finally allowed full access to the worst affected coastal areas, international interest had long vanished and dramatic footage, on the scale of what was to appear from Mozambique, was no longer at hand. Secondly, the two cases would appear to be similar as far as personal security for the reporters is concerned, implying that this particular element was negligible in both cases. Thirdly, it is striking that the two flood situations clearly negate the assumption that the world has enough of one emergency per year, or that the news attention circle explains the focus on one emergency but not on the other. If this assumption should hold in this case, Mozambique would not have received the massive aid it actually did. On the contrary, India, being first in time,



should have been the crisis receiving most attention – and thus aid.

It appears that the best explanation as to why Mozambique was such a big news story was the framing of the media coverage. Put simply, the world had never before on TV seen a woman give birth to a child in a treetop while the viewers simultaneously could hear the dramatic sound from rotor blades on the South African helicopter hovering over the woman. And never before has TV shown such a spectacular rescue operation involving a considerable number of people being rescued from treetops by helicopters. Thus, framing was no doubt important in the Mozambican case. In summary, a comparison between the two emergencies caused by flood confirm the generally held belief that media coverage matters and also that it matters in particular if the framing is innovative, as was the case for Mozambique where the framing almost 'demanded' action.

We then turn to the second type of explanation concerning the significance of donor interests in the two cases. It is impossible to identify major international security concerns in relation to any of these two disasters implying that this variable does not add a convincing explanation to the difference in donor responses to the two emergencies. Of course the absence of security concerns of the donors in the two specific emergency cases does not mean that India and Mozambique are of no significance to the donors' security concerns in general. On the contrary, the size, the geographical location, plus the fact that India has nuclear weapons makes India much more important in security terms than Mozambique.

As far as the third explanatory variable, i.e. the level of 'stakeholder involvement', is concerned there are important differences between Mozambique and India. UN agencies and numerous NGOs were involved in both cases and by the time the disasters hit, both countries had strong links to the national and international aid community and to major donor countries. But in India the state and central governments have strong traditions and experience with intervening and taking the lead in national disaster response relying only on international agencies and donors to supplement and fund their own efforts. This is not true in Mozambique, which was almost totally dependent on the quick intervention and initiatives by outside agencies, donors and entities such as the South African Air Force.

Even when this factor is taken into account, the remarkable differences in the media coverage and the outside assistance is glaring and the main explanation to the big difference seems to be the intensity of media coverage. At least, it is not possible to explain the difference in donor response by referring to either donor interests or solely the differences in stakeholder interests and commitment. This is even more the case when one takes the very different scale of the two disasters into account. Having concluded this, it is still pertinent to repeat the reservation that in reality all what we can establish is the existence of a correlation between the massive media attention towards Mozambique and very significant allocations of emergency aid to that country.

### **Africa versus the Balkans: A Small Victory for Humanitarian Networking?**

Based on the media coverage in the two Danish national TV-channels, DR-TV and TV2, a comparison of a nearby case, Kosovo, with two more distant cases, Sudan and Angola, reveals an interesting but not surprising pattern:

#### **Media coverage - Number of TV-news spots in Danish television (DR-TV & TV2), first quarter of each year:**

Angola 1998: 0	Sudan 1998: 3	Kosovo 1998: 72
Angola 1999: 4	Sudan 1999: 0	Kosovo 1999: 483
Angola 2000: 0	Sudan 2000: 0	Kosovo 2000: 140

#### **Media coverage - Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe), first quarter of each year:**

Angola 1998: 69	Sudan 1998: 121	Kosovo 1998: 948
Angola 1999: 277	Sudan 1999: 164	Kosovo 1999: 4983
Angola 2000: 151	Sudan 2000: 173	Kosovo 2000: 1769

#### **Total value of humanitarian assistance in million US\$ (CAP + outside appeal):**

Angola 1997: 178	Sudan: 1997: 90	The Balkans 1997: 349
Angola 1998: 100	Sudan 1998: 441	The Balkans 1998: 426
Angola 1999: 150	Sudan 1999: 213	The Balkans 1999: 1.168
Angola 2000: 101	Sudan 2000: 125	The Balkans 2000: 318
Angola 2001: 149	Sudan 2001: 232	The Balkans 2001: 375

(Sources: DR-TV, TV2, LexisNexis, Polinfo, and OCHA. See fact-sheet for more information).

Clearly, the complex emergency in Kosovo received much more Danish TV-coverage than the crises in Angola and Sudan during the three periods surveyed. The same pattern is found in the coverage of Angola, Sudan and

Kosovo in the international newspapers, especially during the first quarter of 1999: almost 5.000 articles covered Kosovo while less than 450 articles covered Angola and Sudan put together. It is also evident from the above table that the figures for media attention and the figures for the amount of emergency assistance show a clear correlation: Kosovo was covered by five times as many articles in 1999 as in 1998, and the Balkans – exactly due to the Kosovo crisis – saw a tripling of aid allocations from 1998 to 1999. Apparently, this correlation serves as a confirmation of the assumption that media coverage is a decisive factor in relation to the allocation of emergency assistance. But is this really the case?

Let us take a closer look at the scope and nature of the three complex emergencies in question. It has to be pointed out that the amount of money available for the emergency operations in Kosovo (the Balkans) was very large indeed when the needs in Kosovo are compared to the needs in Angola and Sudan during the same period. Absolute figures for the number of people in need are difficult to obtain, but based on information from the annual FAO/WFP crop assessments and the UN CAP-appeals material, the following figures can be used as indicators of the magnitude of acute needs in the three emergencies (it must be emphasised, however, that these figures only represent food aid needs while the funding figures cover needs in all sectors of a humanitarian response):

- Kosovo: During the spring of 1999, some 1,5 million people were directly affected by the eruption of war in Kosovo. Some 900.000 fled – or were forced to flee – Kosovo to Serbia, Macedonia or Albania. Another 600.000 were displaced within Kosovo. As of July 1999, most of these people started returning to Kosovo, but they returned to towns and villages, which often were partly or totally destroyed. From July and onwards the number of people in absolute need of food aid dropped quickly but large-scale reconstruction tasks remained.
- Sudan: Taking into account the large seasonal and annual variations, an average of no less than 2,4 million people were in absolute need of food aid during the period 1998-2001. In parts of 1998, a severe famine situation developed in Bahr al Ghazal, resulting in a short-lived moderate media interest in Sudan. The average figure of 2,4 million people in need is a very conservative figure, as the UN

operations in Sudan is guided by political agreements with the warring parties, which often leaves substantial numbers of needy groups outside the reach of humanitarian intervention. In contrast to the figure of needy people in Kosovo, the figure of people in need in Sudan does not include needs in the area of e.g. health and rehabilitation.

- Angola: Again this paper will use a fairly conservative estimate of between 1 and 1,8 million people in need of food aid in Angola in the period 1998-2001. As with Sudan, significant groups of needy people were outside reach (and assessment) by humanitarian agencies and therefore not included in this figure. Again, needs in the area of e.g. health and rehabilitation are not included in this estimate.

These figures show a remarkable disproportion in availability of emergency assistance in relation to the acute needs: Even when one uses conservative needs assessments, a disparity factor of more than five is noticed. Or put differently, a short dramatic war and a refugee crisis in south-eastern Europe attracts more than five times as much aid per needy person as did the protracted wars and humanitarian crises in Angola and Sudan. Having concluded this, it is not to be neglected that in spite of the extremely limited media coverage of the two African emergencies, these humanitarian crises continued to receive a not insignificant amount of emergency assistance during the years 1997-2001 (in the range of US\$ 90 to 440 million per year). As far as the assistance to Angola is concerned, the amount of money channelled to the country remained fairly constant from 1997 to 2001. The figures show that the media attention was negligible for the three periods examined, nevertheless Angola constantly received emergency assistance from abroad. This observation questions the assumption that media attention is of all out importance for a humanitarian crisis not to be 'forgotten' in financial terms. The figures on media coverage and emergency assistance for the Sudan point in the same direction, namely that media coverage by itself cannot explain the amount of aid to a particular emergency situation.

Moreover, the widespread conviction in the aid community that the Kosovo crisis 'stole' or diverted emergency assistance from Africa to Europe (the Balkans) is difficult to substantiate, at least if the focus is exclusively on Angola and Sudan. If at all, it is only possible to draw such a conclusion for Angola for the year

2000 (and only if one disregards the fact that WFP had a 66 million US\$ carry over from 1999). As far as Sudan in 2000 is concerned, it may be possible to explain the 'low' level of emergency assistance by the Balkan-effect. On the other hand, it may be much more important that it rose to its 'usual' level in 2001. At least, the return to the normal level of emergency assistance to Angola and Sudan in 2001 questions the significance of media coverage of humanitarian crises in general.

Applying the second type of explanation (according to which levels of emergency assistance are determined by donor interests in a given crisis area) certainly makes a lot of sense in relation to the three cases in question. Because of the proximity to the European Union, Kosovo was a security concern for the EU and, to a limited extent, to the USA. The costly war against the Serbian troops in Kosovo is a very strong indication of this. In fact, the concern about what was happening in Kosovo was so strong that the Western powers decided to go to war without authorisation from the UN Security Council. In comparison, the humanitarian crises in Sudan and Angola took place far away from both Europe and North America, and they did not in any way represent a security threat to these regions. In summary, the media explanation and the donor interest explanation both point in the same direction, namely that Kosovo would receive much more assistance than the two African cases – which was also the case. Based on this observation, there may be reason to reflect on whether the tremendous emergency assistance to Kosovo was not just relieving the sufferings of hundreds of thousand of people. There may be basis for arguing that the very considerable volume of humanitarian aid basically did serve as one among a number of instruments of crisis management.

Now, if we turn to the third type of explanation (according to which 'stakeholder commitment' is crucial to the allocation of aid), we may be able to explain the fact that – in spite of the absence of media attention, and in spite of limited donor interests in the region – Sudan and Angola received rather considerable amounts of emergency assistance between 1997-2001, albeit far from enough to cover actual needs. A possible explanation for this may be that a large number of UN agencies and major international NGOs have been engaged in humanitarian operations in both Angola and the Sudan for more than a decade. The humanitarian agencies have well-developed fund-raising tools, they are organised in international lobby networks, and they have direct access to back donor

bureaucracies. The same agencies work continuously with representatives of the media in order to insure a low but constant level of publicity. And major back donors, such as ECHO, have permanent representation in both these countries and are engaged in long term planning with partner agencies. Finally it should not be underestimated that many aid workers and journalists/editors have visited these countries (or lived and worked there) and therefore might have a particular affinity and sensitivity to appeals for assistance from those particular areas.

In summary, the comparison between the complex emergencies in Kosovo and those in Sudan and Angola revealed a number of interesting features. The least surprising observation may be that the combination of massive media attention and strong donor interests resulted in massive economic assistance to Kosovo. It is more interesting that in spite of the absence of media attention and significant donor interests, Angola and Sudan managed to attract significant levels of emergency assistance from 1997 to the present – even if this assistance did not meet the actual needs. This somewhat surprising observation can best be explained by the existence of a long-lived and influential humanitarian presence and lobby networks directly engaged in these particular emergencies.

### **North Korea Compared with Angola and the Sudan: Security is a Strong Argument**

A quick glance at the below table reveals that North Korea received considerable annual amounts of emergency assistance between 1997-2001, although there were indeed fluctuations. The amount of emergency assistance to North Korea was for all years covered, except 1998, above the levels channelled to Angola and Sudan. There was generally a low degree of attention from the 23 consulted newspapers towards all three cases during the periods covered in the survey, with North Korea receiving slightly more attention. Basically, there was no coverage on the two major Danish TV-stations of any of the three complex emergencies in question.

The actual scale of the humanitarian crisis in North Korea is extremely difficult to quantify. Humanitarian operations started in earnest in North Korea in 1995-96. The official explanation was, and continued to be in the years to follow, severe floods and other 'freak weather' phenomena. Underneath this explanation lie the realities of an economy, ecology and agriculture in near total

**Media coverage - Number of TV-news spots in Danish television (DR-TV & TV2), first quarter of each year:**

Angola 1998: 0	Sudan 1998: 3	DPR of Korea 1998: 3
Angola 1999: 4	Sudan 1999: 0	DPR of Korea 1999: 2
Angola 2000: 0	Sudan 2000: 0	DPR of Korea 2000: 1

**Media coverage - Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe), first quarter of each year:**

Angola 1998: 69	Sudan 1998: 121	DPR of Korea 1998: 184
Angola 1999: 277	Sudan 1999: 164	DPR of Korea 1999: 320
Angola 2000: 151	Sudan 2000: 173	DPR of Korea 2000: 254

**Total value of humanitarian assistance in million US\$ (CAP + outside appeal):**

Angola 1997: 178	Sudan 1997: 90	DPR of Korea 1997: 293
Angola 1998: 100	Sudan 1998: 441	DPR of Korea 1998: 335
Angola 1999: 150	Sudan 1999: 213	DPR of Korea 1999: 236
Angola 2000: 101	Sudan 2000: 125	DPR of Korea 2000: 224
Angola 2001: 149	Sudan 2001: 232	DPR of Korea 2001: 375

(Sources: DR-TV, TV2, LexisNexis, Polinfo, and OCHA. See fact-sheet for more information).

collapse following the abrupt disappearance of the Soviet Union and China's conversion to its own version of capitalism. These macro events left North Korea near bankruptcy and revealed a state that had been heavily dependent on subsidised trading agreements with the former communist block.

As the real nature of the humanitarian crisis in North Korea was never named, the Korean authorities never allowed UN agencies and international NGOs to undertake proper and thorough need assessments in the entire country. Still, using the best available data from FAO/WFP food and crop assessments it can be estimated that between 4-7 million North Koreans needed food assistance during the years 1998-2001. There are significant uncertainties and annual and seasonal variations in this figure and it should be taken only as an indicator. Other human needs, such as those in the areas of health, housing, and rehabilitation, are not included in the above estimate.

Turning to the first type of explanation (the 'media coverage explanation'), the figures show that in all three cases (Angola, Sudan, and North Korea) media attention was extremely limited in the covered periods. In spite of this, all three countries received rather considerable amounts of humanitarian assistance. But neither the level of aid nor the fluctuations from one year to the other can

be explained by the intensity of media attention towards these three cases. Why was the attention from the media so limited in the case of North Korea? Is a large-scale famine in the world's last truly communist state not 'news'? Probably, the single word 'access' can explain this. By and large, the media have had extremely limited access to cover events in North Korea. And the little coverage that did transpire about the grave humanitarian crisis in the country was largely based on media interviews with travelling aid workers from UN agencies and international NGOs.

Having documented the low degree of media coverage, we are left with a question: Why did North Korea receive so relatively much humanitarian assistance? Probably, this can best be explained by the strong security interests that lie with the single largest donor of emergency assistance and food aid to North Korea, namely the USA. But also China, Japan, and South Korea have much at stake in North Korea. Thus, one main security consideration among these states is that massive hunger in North Korea could create internal disorder. Subsequently, such disorder could inspire the North Korean armed forces to react in 'inappropriate' ways which might threaten regional stability, specially as it is assumed that North Korea possesses nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Another nightmare scenario for South Korea and China alike is a North Korea that simply implodes, sending up to 20 million starving refugees towards their borders. Balanced against such alarming scenarios, it is possible to argue that a modest international aid operation is judged to be the better option.

The claim that a strong donor interest in security and stability on the Korean peninsula is the explanation to the considerable amounts of emergency assistance received by North Korea is buttressed by the absence of any stakeholder interests worth mentioning in this particular country. The presence of UN agencies and international NGOs in North Korea is rather limited, owing to the fact that the conditions put down by the North Korean authorities tend to put off aid workers and back donors alike. There is only restricted access to needy groups, very limited freedom of movement for staff, no proper base-line information about needs, and very little scope for monitoring of the end use of the assistance given. Taken together, these working conditions do not at all resemble the opportunities for lobbying and networking that humanitarian communities enjoy in countries like Angola and Sudan.

In summary, the comparison between Angola, Sudan, and North Korea is interesting because all three countries have received rather considerable amounts of emergency assistance in spite of an absence of consistent media attention. Once again, this comparison questions the significance of media coverage as being the main determining factor in connection with emergency assistance allocation. In the case of North Korea, rather, the main explanation was the security concerns of the most important donor country – the USA. And in the cases of Angola and Sudan, as we have seen, the continuous flow of emergency assistance can best be explained by the labours and lobbying efforts of committed stakeholders, such as UN agencies, NGOs, and back donor representatives. In fine, the comparison shows that it is impossible to isolate one determining factor that decides how much emergency assistance a given crisis will attract.

### **Afghanistan Before and After 11 September: Security as the Ultimate Argument**

Despite remaining uncertainties as to the aid figure for the present year (2002), it should be obvious – from the below table – that the financial assistance to the emergency operations in Afghanistan increased markedly between 2000-2002. Or more precisely, the dramatic increase took place in the last three months of 2001, during which Afghanistan received US\$ 433 millions as compared to the amount of US\$ 232 million for the first three quarters of the year. In other words, Afghanistan is an interesting case because of the tremendous growth in emergency aid allocations in the wake of September 11.

<b>Media coverage - Number of TV-news spots in Danish television (DR-TV &amp; TV2), first quarter of each year:</b>		
Afghanistan 2000: 17	2001: 25	2002: 365
<b>Media coverage - Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA &amp; Western Europe), first quarter of each year:</b>		
Afghanistan 2000: 428	2001: 837	2002: 6684
<b>Total value of humanitarian assistance in million US\$ (CAP + outside appeal):</b>		
Afghanistan 2000: 230	2001: 665	2002: 880
<small>(Sources: DR-TV, TV2, LexisNexis, Polinfo, and OCHA. See fact-sheet for more information).</small>		

The terror attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon soon established a link to Afghanistan, and almost overnight the protracted crisis in Afghanistan

became a central security concern to the US administration and to most governments in Western Europe. There is no doubt that security is the decisive factor in explaining the growth in emergency assistance, a fact confirmed by the media figures showing moderate attention to the situation in Afghanistan in the first quarters of 2000 and 2001, i.e. before September 11.

The figures for the media coverage of Afghanistan are striking. In the first quarter of 2000, 17 TV-news spots appeared on the two Danish TV-channels. The first quarter of 2001 produced 25 such TV-news spots. The figure for the first quarter of 2002 is 365. The corresponding figures for the international newspapers included in this survey are even more staggering: 428 articles for the first quarter of 2000, 837 for the first quarter of 2001, and finally 6.684 articles for the first quarter of 2002. These figures underline an observation made by Piers Robinson, who argues that the most common pattern of media coverage shows that it is actually the politicians and in particular the White House in Washington who decides the agenda for international media attention (Robinson 1999). The case of Afghanistan seems to prove this point. First came the American government's establishment of the link between the terrorist attacks and Afghanistan. Then came the attention of the media, and finally came emergency assistance. Seen in this perspective, there may even be basis for arguing that emergency assistance to Afghanistan has been an instrument for crisis management.

It is worth noting that Afghanistan did receive emergency assistance during the 1990s – in spite of moderate media attention and in spite of limited donor interests in the country. The modest and far from sufficient amounts of aid received during the 1990s have to be explained by the fact that UN agencies, the ICRC, and a limited number of international NGOs had a stake in keeping the influx of emergency assistance as high as possible. On the other hand, the 1990-levels of funding, which were quite insufficient in relation to the massive needs, can perhaps be explained by the lack of media attention combined with the absence of any real donor interests in Afghanistan before 11 September 2001. The war and the human sufferings in Afghanistan had been going on for 22 years prior to the events that led to Western military intervention. By 2001, Afghanistan was in the grip of severe drought and, according to WFP/FAO assessments, the number of people in need of food aid had reached some 6 million. The UN agencies warned of a food deficit

of 1 million tonnes despite frequent appeals for increased aid. Yet, the aid allocations in early and mid-2001 were still rather moderate and media attention low. A year later, in August 2002, FAO/WFP again presented a figure of 6 million people in need of food aid. In other words, two months prior to the enormous and sudden rise in the emergency assistance to Afghanistan, the need for food aid was the same as it had been for some time. The question remains, therefore, if the recent US-led military campaign against the Taleban and Al-Qaeda forces created much greater needs for emergency relief in Afghanistan, thereby prompting a radical increase in the aid volume? In a country already torn by war and agony? Hardly.

Rather, the explanation seems to lie with the synergy effect of the sudden escalation in security concerns in the region and the subsequent media coverage. Firstly, it manifested itself in the conspicuous correlation between the growth in the volume of emergency assistance and the American military intervention in Afghanistan. Secondly, it showed itself in the level of aid and the intensity in media coverage, which clearly appears from the figures above. As far as the European donors are concerned, an interesting pattern appears from the tables of funding for the years 2000-2002 (see separate fact-sheet below). In all three periods, apparently, the EU Member States were considerably more willing to finance humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan than ECHO was. From 2000 to 2001, ECHO-funding to Afghanistan increased more than three times, whereas the corresponding figure for the EU Member States increased eight times. This conspicuous difference in aid response probably has to be explained by one of two circumstances. First, the difference could be explained by a greater inclination among national donors to act upon emergencies that receive much media attention, especially since security considerations were also involved. Compared to the national donors in the EU, ECHO – being a multilateral funding agency – may not be so subservient to media attention, popular expectations, and political pressure. Secondly, the difference in response may also be explained by the differences in budget procedures, as it is easier for national governments to find additional money during the financial year than it is for a multilateral donor like ECHO.

In summary, there is little doubt that new security concerns – and especially those of the USA – were able to explain the tremendous increase in the volume of

emergency assistance to Afghanistan since October last year. This claim is supported by the fact, that there was no massive increase in the media coverage of Afghanistan prior to the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, although it was well-known that the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan had already escalated dramatically long before that date.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this paper was to give some answers to the tricky question: What determines the level of emergency assistance? We have tried to explain why some humanitarian crises receive much more emergency assistance from the international donor community than others do. The paper has worked on the basis of a fundamental hypothesis, namely that emergency aid allocations are determined by three crucial factors: The intensity of media attention, the degree of donor interests in the crisis area, and the level of what this paper has called 'stakeholder commitment'.

The oft-repeated argument that media coverage is very crucial in relation to emergency aid allocation was confirmed in a number of cases analysed here. It was most unconditionally confirmed by the first comparison between the India cyclone (1999) and the Mozambique floods (2000). However, none of the other cases analysed in this paper lead to the same unambiguous confirmation that media attention is the most significant explanation as to the amounts of emergency aid going to specific crises. While the comparison between Angola, Sudan and Kosovo (the Balkans) did point towards the importance of media coverage in securing assistance from the outside world, the same comparison could be used to question the independent significance of media attention. In other words, the conspicuous differences in aid allocation to Angola, Sudan, and Kosovo in 1999 were undoubtedly also a result of the immense security interests vested in the European realm. Certainly, it seems plausible to claim that the massive international emergency assistance to Kosovo became one of a number of crisis management tools used by the Western powers in their warfare against the Serbs. Moreover, it is possible to argue that it was the Western politicians that set the agenda and the priorities, which, only afterwards, were communicated by the mass media to the populations around the world. The media, one could say, became an instrument of the decision-makers.

The same conclusion applies to the situation in Afghanistan after 11 September 2001. Here, security concerns were certainly also in the forefront, and rather than setting the agenda the media were turned into 'servants' by Western decision-makers. Like in Kosovo, one can say that the sudden massive level of international emergency assistance to Afghanistan became an instrument for crisis management. Our examination of emergency aid to North Korea also points to the immense significance of donor interests or, more specifically, security concerns. At least it seems difficult to explain the relatively high level of emergency assistance to a Communist one-party state with extremely limited media access and very meagre possibilities for aid evaluation unless it is accepted that security concerns was the driving force. Again, the North Korea case, just like Afghanistan and Kosovo, more than indicated that Western governments, i.e. the main aid donors, use emergency assistance as an instrument for crisis management.

Thus, the paper has produced the foundation for concluding that only occasionally do the media play a decisive role in influencing donors to allocate large amounts of aid to specific emergencies. Even humanitarian crises that are largely ignored by the media may very well uphold a substantial – albeit insufficient – level of emergency assistance, either because there are significant donor interests in the area or because the 'stakeholder commitment' is long-lived and strong. The latter was the case for Sudan and Angola where humanitarian networking and continuous lobbying by well co-ordinated UN agencies and international NGOs are prevalent conditions. Our analysis has not established a firm basis for claiming that one of the three explanations advanced in the beginning is much more valid than the other two are. Yet, it seems fair to conclude that, in relation to the allocation of emergency aid, media attention is no more crucial than donor interests are, and certainly not as important as the so-called CNN-effect would have it. Rather, the case seems to be that the media play a crucial role in influencing decision-makers only when there are no vital security issues at stake, i.e. when a humanitarian crisis occurs in a place of little strategic importance to aid-funding governments.

In fine, we may conclude that natural disasters and complex emergencies have a greater tendency to become 'forgotten crises' when major aid donors, i.e. Western governments, have no particular security interests vested in the afflicted regions. In that case, two factors may very

well determine the volume of emergency aid that is being allocated: the presence and strength of humanitarian stakeholders in the region, and the curiosity and persistency of the international press.

**Gorm Rye Olsen** is Senior Researcher at the Centre for Development Research, Copenhagen.

**Nils Carstensen** works as Information Officer with Dan-Church-Aid.

**Kristian Høyen** is employed in the International Department of the Danish Refugee Council.

## References and Further Reading

Giradet, E.R., 1996, "Reporting Humanitarianism: Are the New Electronic Media Making a Difference?", in: R.I. Rothberg & T.G. Weiss (eds.), *From Masscares to Genocide. The Media, Public Policy and Humanitarian Crises*, The Brookings Institution: Washington D.C., pp. 45- 67.

Gowing, N., 1994, *Real-time television coverage of armed conflicts and diplomatic crises: does it pressure or distort foreign policy decision*, Working paper 94-1, The Joan Shorestein Barone Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge MA.

HAC-ECHO, *Strategy 2001 - Reflections on a methodology to identify forgotten Crises*, Bruxelles 2001.

Livingston, S., 1996, "Suffering in Silence: Media Coverage of War and famine in the Sudan", in R.I. Rothberg & T.G. Weiss (eds.) *From Massacres to Genocide. The Media Public Policy and Humanitarian Crises*, The Brookings Institution: Washington D.C., pp.68- 89.

Maizels, A. & M.K. Nissanke, "Motivations for Aid to Developing Countries", *World Development*, No. 9, pp. 879- 900.

McKinlay, R. D. & R. Little, 1977, "A Foreign Policy Model of US Bilateral Aid Allocation", *World Politics*, No. 1, p. 58-86.

McKinlay, R.D. & R. Little 1979, "The US Aid relationship: A Test of the Recipient Need and the Donor Interest Model", *Political Studies*, No. 2, pp. 236-250

Natsios, A. 1996, "Illusions of Influence: the CNN effect in complex emergencies", in Rothberg, R.I. & T.G. Weiss (eds.), *From Massacres to Genocide. The Media, Public Policy and Humanitarian Crises*, The Brookings Institution: Washington D.C., pp. 149-168.

Robinson, P., 1999, "The CNN effect: can the news media drive foreign policy?" *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 2, pp. 301-309.

Rothberg, R.I. & T.G. Weiss 1996, "Introduction", in R.I. Rothberg & T.G. Weiss (eds.) *From Massacres to*

*Genocide. The Media, Public Policy and Humanitarian Crises*, The Brookings Institution: Washington D.C., pp.1-11.

Rosenblatt, L., 1996, "The Media and the Refugee", in: R.I. Rothberg & T.G. Weiss (eds.) *From Massacres to Genocide. The Media, Public Policy and Humanitarian Crises*, The Brookings Institution: Washington D.C., pp. 136-148.

<http://www.cred.be>

<http://www.reliefweb.int/appeals>



# GIVING VOICE TO SILENT EMERGENCIES

By Anna Jefferys

This paper is a slightly revised version of an article that appeared in the March 2002 issue of the *Humanitarian Exchange – The Magazine of the Humanitarian Practice Network*. See: [www.odihpn.org](http://www.odihpn.org).

Since 1989, more than four million people have been killed in conflicts, most of them internal, and many of them chronic, localised and long-running. Natural disasters too are costing more lives and causing more damage, particularly in the developing world. In the last ten years, 300 natural disasters have been recorded, affecting people in 108 countries and killing up to 150,000 annually. While some of these emergencies attract significant amounts of publicity and political attention, others fester outside of the public eye. How many people know, for instance, that famines are occurring right now in Malawi, Angola, Sudan and Somalia, and that famine conditions are currently unfolding in Zimbabwe? These emergencies are effectively silent: marginalised in donors' funding decisions; the object of little if any political interest in the West; rarely if ever covered in the media; and all too often neglected by humanitarian organisations themselves.

## Funding Patterns

Aid is apportioned in highly unbalanced and partial ways. While responses to UN consolidated appeals (CAPs) do not paint a complete picture, they are indicative of wider aid trends. In 1999, the donor response to CAPs for the former Yugoslavia was \$207 per person; for Sierra Leone, it was \$16, and \$8 for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Between 1993 and 1997, Africa as a whole received on average just half of the requested CAP funding. While these

Save the Children (UK) uses the following definition of a silent emergency: A crisis situation that overwhelms the capacity of a society to cope by using its resources alone, where the level of response, including political, humanitarian, multilateral and press, is insufficient to meet the level of immediate humanitarian need.

funding commitments reflect the different costs of doing business in Africa and Europe, the differential is nevertheless significant. The consistent under-funding of particular CAPs reflects a wider funding cycle, whereby low media attention leads to low donor interest, leading to low aid commitments, and low estimates of the funding that may be available, thus reducing levels of proposed programming for the next round of funding. Even lower down the scale are those long-running emergencies – the separatist war in the Western Sahara, the ethnic conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and the insurgency in the southern Philippines, for instance – that do not merit a CAP appeal at all.

Moreover, although the international donor commitment to humanitarian crises has risen in recent years, committed funds are often extracted from overall – and dwindling – aid budgets. During the 1990s, as the number of active wars increased, foreign aid budgets stagnated; OECD humanitarian aid decreased from 0.03% to 0.022% of total gross national product (GNP), and only five of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)'s 22 donors

**The 10 countries/areas receiving most humanitarian aid**

Country/area	Assistance (US\$m)
FRY (Serbia & Montenegro)	237.24
Europe (unallocated)	177.64
Ex-Yugoslav states (unspecified)	141.79
Ethiopia	102.39
Mozambique	94.59
East Timor	91.56
Iraq	75.77
Sudan	51.91
Angola	48.27
Bosnia	43.06

Notes: Bilateral allocations only; data refer to 2000  
Source: Development Assistance Committee

**The 10 countries/areas with the most people in need of aid**

Country/area	People in need
North Korea	8,044,000
Somalia	4,000,000
South-eastern Europe	3,500,000
Sudan	2,367,200
Angola	2,000,000
Afghanistan	2,000,000
Tajikistan	1,300,000
Burundi	860,000
Sierra Leone	760,000
Uganda	585,000

Note: Data refer to 1999  
Source: OCHA Consolidated Appeal data

reached the UN target for aid spending of 0.7% in 1999. Thus, aid from DAC donors in 1999 was 12% lower in real terms than it was in 1992. Over the last ten years, aid to Sub-Saharan Africa fell by 29%, from \$37 to \$21 per head.

### **International Interest and Political Will**

These patterns of funding are linked to the level of outside political interest and media attention that particular emergencies attract. In turn, this depends on how important these countries are to the interests of the relevant major states and regional organisations. Thus, the provision of assistance is decided more on the geo-strategic priorities of the main donors than on the objective existence of need. As many key donors increasingly channel their funding bilaterally, rather than through multilateral agencies like the UN (bilateral funding for humanitarian assistance was on average four times higher than in the previous decade), this linkage will probably become all the more prominent because it will become easier for individual donors to earmark their funds for particular countries. In the wake of 11 September, it appears that we may be returning to a world where aid is used to reward allies and punish or starve enemies within a wider security agenda. In December 2001, for instance, the US pledged Pakistan over \$1 billion in debt forgiveness, investment, trade and refugee relief as a reward for its part in the 'war on terrorism'. In the same month, sanctions against Iraq were extended by another six months, despite their clear humanitarian impact.

Donor, recipient and non-recipient countries can be seen to sit in interconnected spheres of influence, encompassing the geopolitical (political, economic, cultural and historical), as well as the geographic. The response to Hurricane Mitch, for instance, was strongest in the US, Canada and Spain; Australia, New Zealand and Japan tend to respond more to emergencies in Asia and the Pacific. In 1999, ECHO funding for the former Yugoslavia and Kosovo was four times that for all 70 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries combined. Between 1990 and 1994, Germany, Austria and Italy all increased their humanitarian assistance to respond to need in the Balkans. As Oxfam puts it: 'donors are more likely to help people who look like them, and whose history or plight they can relate to or understand'.

The media also plays an instrumental role in determining whether, and how, an emergency is communicated to the world. Editorial choices govern what constitutes a story, and what does not; in the US, for instance, the conflict in

### **Donors and forgotten emergencies: DFID and ECHO**

The Department for International Development (DFID) is at the forefront of a multi-donor study examining the relationship between basic needs and the global funding of humanitarian assistance. The study will be linked to the Montreux CAP reform process. One of its immediate objectives is to recommend ways to reform and strengthen needs-identification systems so that funding can be prioritised according to the need. Meanwhile, DFID's funding of emergencies has yet to catch up. In 2001, the former Yugoslavia was still the top recipient of DFID humanitarian aid, with £32 million committed. This was more than double the amount committed to the second-largest recipient, Ethiopia. While Africa received 35% of DFID bilateral humanitarian assistance, Europe was close behind with 29%.

The European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) has also emphasised its commitment to addressing forgotten emergencies, and it has developed a methodology to help pinpoint them. Each emergency is monitored for such things as media coverage and donor presence, and then grouped into one of three categories:

- High (the upper 25% of countries that are mentioned least in the media, with lowest donor support and highest needs);
- Middle (the middle 50%); and
- Low (the bottom 25%).

After an initial assessment, ECHO listed the following as priority emergency countries: Angola, Chechnya, Burma, Uganda, Tanzania and Yemen; those where media coverage was particularly lacking, either through lack of interest or lack of access, were identified as Burma, Equatorial Guinea, North Korea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Western Sahara and Uganda. However, while ECHO aid to selected 'forgotten' countries – Tajikistan and Western Sahara, for instance – did indeed increase in 2001, the former Yugoslavia was again the recipient of the largest tranche of ECHO humanitarian aid.

Bosnia received 25 times more press coverage than the Rwandan genocide. In the 1990s, evening news bulletins on US television devoted 82% of the airtime given to foreign coverage to just 14 countries, or 7% of the world's total. Europe received more coverage than all of Africa, Central and South America combined. Even where particular crises do attract media attention, coverage tends to be short-lived; within a week of the volcanic eruption in the DRC in 2002, for instance, British news channels had by and large stopped reporting on it.

This creates the misleading impression that these crises too are short-lived, with a finite beginning and a conclusive end. When the story is dropped, the crisis is perceived by the public to be over. In this way, emergencies are depicted as being a break from the norm, when in fact they may themselves be the normal condition for many affected people. Thus, while the eye-catching and sudden disaster – the earthquake, flood or eruption – grabs the headlines and attracts the lion's share of assistance, less dramatic yet equally severe catastrophes languish unnoticed, and under-funded. Each year between 1992 and 1998, an earthquake, flood, volcanic eruption or hurricane attracted the largest proportion of humanitarian aid devoted to natural disasters. Slow-onset disasters like drought are low on the list; in 2001, the drought in the Horn of Africa, for instance, received just 13% of requested funding.

### **Silent Emergencies and Humanitarian Principles**

Using a principled, needs-based approach would go some way to addressing the inequities that shape the international response to emergencies. While aid agencies cannot claim that a government does not have the right to defend itself in the face of civil war, they can press for the rights of civilians to life, food, shelter, clean water, and security to be respected in line with humanitarian principles. Save the Children (UK) and CARE Australia are among the few agencies so far to have produced guidelines in this area. Save has identified a series of quantitative indicators that could be used to judge the relative 'silence' of a given emergency in terms of:

#### Donor interest

- how much aid is received per capita?;
- what do DAC statistics reveal?;
- what percentage of CAP appeals is raised and allocated to a particular emergency?

#### Wider political interest

- how many times is a particular emergency raised in government and parliamentary fora, such as House of Commons debates or parliamentary questions in the UK (as listed in *Hansard*); in Congress in the US (as listed in the *Congressional Record*); in questions tabled by European Parliament members; or in the UN Security Council?;
- how much diplomatic activity is associated with a particular emergency, such as resolutions and démarches?;

- is there a Western military presence? If so, of what type, and whose?

#### Media interest

- how much coverage over time does an emergency receive in key outlets – the BBC, the UK's main broadsheets, continental European newspapers like *Figaro* and *Die Welt*, US television news programmes on ABC, NBC, CBS and CNN?

#### NGO capacity and response

- how did key NGOs respond to a particular emergency? What level of effort and resources did they expend, as described in their annual reports?

SC-UK has also outlined a series of key areas for action:

#### • *Information-gathering and analysis*

A centralised information resource should be set up to capture existing research relating to silent emergencies, drawn from humanitarian agencies, NGOs, governments and academic bodies. A 'watch group' should be formed to analyse this data, so as to elaborate a contextual analysis of the real risks and difficulties facing populations; to standardise relative levels of humanitarian need; and to monitor how and why certain emergencies are silent.

#### • *Public exposure*

Linked into the above process, the humanitarian community should adopt a more transparent, co-ordinated advocacy strategy towards the media and donors so as to promote a more in-depth awareness and analysis of emergencies occurring around the world. While advocacy alone cannot compensate for the lack of political will to resolve crises, it can at least raise the level and scope of debate.

#### • *Influencing international funding choices*

Save the Children (UK) is supportive of the Humanitarian Needs Study. It is hoped that this study will produce a working definition of 'basic needs' and will uncover ways in which these needs are not being met, as well as ways in which the existing system for determining needs and prioritising resources could be reformed. Save the Children (UK) will monitor the findings of this study, and will make efforts to encourage donors to translate its results, where viable, into action. Save the Children (UK) supports the CAP review process, which aims to improve co-ordination amongst the aid community and donors, to make prioritisation more effective, and to set more

realistic budgetary requirements. Governments, multilaterals and NGOs should increase the flexibility of their humanitarian response by bolstering their commitment to emergency preparedness in their humanitarian aid budgets.

NGOs aim to live up to a humanitarian ethic broadly articulated in the Red Cross and Red Crescent code of conduct. This means responding to all emergencies impartially, irrespective of their type, size or location. However, it is difficult to maintain these standards in silent emergencies because of the dependence on donor decision-making for institutional funding, and on the media to mobilise private fundraising. NGOs cannot hold 'special' appeals all the time, and must pick and choose their crises carefully in order to reap the requisite funds. To ensure that humanitarian principles are protected, that emergencies do not get sidelined, and that media pressures, donor interest, international profile and influencing opportunities do not cloud the emergency response, humanitarian agencies need to think through the criteria they apply in deciding whether, and how, to respond to a particular crisis.

Save the Children (UK) is currently undertaking informal analysis to explore to what degree its emergency response decisions are effected by those dynamics in the international funding system that have contributed to unbalanced donor responses to humanitarian emergencies. It is hoped that this study will unearth the degree to which Save the Children (UK) is accountable to its own humanitarian principles to respond impartially to the needs of vulnerable children in emergencies.

**Anna Jefferys** is a policy officer in the Emergencies section of Save the Children (UK). She would like to thank independent humanitarian policy advisor Jane Barry; Amelia Bookstein, Policy Advisor, Oxfam; and Mike Gaouette, Emergencies Director, Save the Children (UK), for their input into this article.

## References and Further Reading

*World Disasters Report 2001* (Geneva: IFRC, 2001).

Marcus Oxley, 'Measuring Humanitarian Need', *Humanitarian Exchange* 19, September 2001.

Jane Barry, 'When Should SC-UK Respond to an Emergency?', SC-UK Emergency Section Policy Paper, 2001.

*An End to Forgotten Emergencies?* (Oxford: Oxfam International, May 2000).

Development Initiatives, *Global Humanitarian Assistance* (London: Earthscan, 2000).

Tim Allen and Jean Seaton (eds), *The Media of Conflict: War Reporting and Representations of Ethnic Violence* (London: Zed Books, 1999).

# FAILING FAILED STATES

## WHO FORGETS THE FORGOTTEN?

By Hans-Henrik Holm

**ABSTRACT:** When states collapse. When basic state functions are no longer carried out. When people have no security. Then humanitarian crises erupt. This article will focus on the response to humanitarian crises in relation to state collapse. What are the roles and responsibilities of the media and the political decision-makers respectively? Confronting the problem of state collapse, the stronger states have followed an ad hoc policy of intervention and aid. Some times intervening, sometimes ignoring. Often the media are blamed for the lack of consistency and for determining the political agenda. Actually, politicians complain about the media both when the media 'interfere' (the CNN-effect) and when they do not. This article looks at how the media do cover the failing states. Sierra Leone and the Congo are used as examples. The analysis shows that there is little coverage describing the causes and complexities of the crises, and the interest is often short lived, leaving the rebuilding and reconstruction phases out. A Danish survey of the editorial process in newsrooms shows that a consistent coverage is prevented by the selection criteria, which follow the traditional news values and tend to reflect the national perceptions of the world. It is argued that the politicians are the ones determining the national interest in a specific situation, thereby setting the media agenda. Both media and politicians forget those who ought not to be forgotten.

On the eve of a trip to West Africa in February 2002, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, compared the intense international interest in helping Afghanistan rebuild a new state with the lack of interest in getting involved in helping the Congo. "If you allow a series of failed states to rise, then sooner or later you end up having to deal with them."<sup>1</sup> He went on to compare our lack of interest in the failing states and the humanitarian crises in Africa with our lack of interest in Afghanistan a decade ago. We know that state collapse is one of the main factors behind humanitarian crises and complex emergencies. Ignoring state collapse is leaving people in need – it is forgetting the forgotten. But who forgets? Is it lack of interest in the media or lack of political will in governments that prevent help in reaching the forgotten?

The argument presented here contains three elements: Firstly, it is argued that a review of the policy towards failing states reveals a high degree of policy inconsistency. Outside states will act in some cases, but not in others. Despite a strong collective state interest in maintaining order in the international society, state policy has been situational and inconsistent. Secondly, it is demonstrated that there is little continual media coverage of failing states and the related humanitarian crises. Thirdly, it is argued that the infrequent media coverage of failing states and humanitarian crises is the combined

result of two factors. One is the dominance of national foreign policy in framing the agenda of the news media. The other is the use of traditional news criteria in the selection of news stories. The conclusion is that humanitarian crises in failing states are sometimes forgotten both by the media and by the political leadership. It is sometimes easier to ignore yet another crises in a far away country than to do something about it. This phenomenon has been termed 'bystander apathy' or 'compassion fatigue'. This lack of interest leaves the political leaders with a special responsibility to place failing states and humanitarian crises on the agenda.<sup>2</sup>

### **Helping Some - Forgetting Others: A Policy of Inconsistency**

Since 1990, the world's dominant states have been trying to come to terms with the challenges presented by failed and failing states<sup>3</sup>. A failed or failing state is one in which basic state functions are no longer carried out. Groups of people or entire populations have no security. Military and police forces fail to maintain order. Chaos reigns. Communication breaks down, and with it, the apparatus of the state. Humanitarian crises and complex emergencies are the result.<sup>4</sup>

State failure and humanitarian crises have occurred with increasing frequency since 1990, and all over the world. State collapse has been particularly important in a few cases in Latin America and Asia: Haiti and East Timor. A few, but spectacular, cases in Europe: Bosnia and Kosovo; and many cases in Africa: the Sudan, Somalia, Congo, Rwanda, Angola, Sierra Leone, Liberia – to name but a few. And then there is Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> The list is long and the policy responses have been varied. In all cases, the failing of states and the manner in which they are failing has presented the stronger states and the UN with a new set of challenges.

What should strong states do about failing states, and, if something is to be done, who should do it?<sup>6</sup> Two sets of answers have been propounded. 1: Failing states should be allowed to fail. 2: Failing states should be rescued – with outside intervention if necessary. In the first case, the argument is that the problems are internal. The problems have to do with lack of state capability and authority, and effective help is beyond outsiders' ability. In the second case, it is argued that failing states is a collective problem and something must be done.<sup>7</sup> Human suffering places a moral burden on the international society. The fundamental norms of human rights define barriers that, if crossed as in large-scale humanitarian crises, make it legitimate for other states to intervene. Failing states is a problem for the entire international system, since the state system is meant to provide both order and justice. Disintegration of states opens the way for expansion by other states or seething instability and humanitarian crises. It is in the interest of all states that states do not fail.<sup>8</sup> Finally, the universality of the international system, as organised in the United Nations, is called into question if areas of the world are left to disintegrate. The UN was set up both to serve states and to serve humanity. The UN Secretary General expressed this in his Millennium Report when he identified the three core functions of the UN: to serve the member states, to introduce new principles in relations between states and to “serve the needs and hopes of people everywhere.”<sup>9</sup>

In choosing which type of crises policy to follow, states have drawn from both arguments. The actual policies of western countries towards failing and failing states have oscillated between these two. When arguing that nothing should be done in the face of the ongoing genocide in Rwanda, states argued that there was nothing they could do, because this was an internal matter in Rwanda.<sup>10</sup> The

opposite arguments were used in the spring of 1999 in the face of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Here, it was claimed that we could not sit idly by while genocide was being committed.<sup>11</sup> Both cases were internal conflicts and intervening required a violation of the rules of non-intervention. In the first case Western countries sat by and did nothing. In the latter case they sprang into action.

Two fundamental problems remain. First of all, there are cases of failing states where little or no international action has been undertaken. Rwanda with more than 800,000 victims stands as the primary example. But as this conference demonstrates the list is long. Secondly, even when international action has been undertaken, there is little public interest in the results. When state failure rises to crisis proportions there is a brief period of political interest. Somalia was the big concern in 1993, Bosnia in 1995, Kosovo in 1999 etc. However, in all cases the political interest has been short-lived. The long-range action of rebuilding and reconstructing failed states has attracted little attention and insufficient action. The events in Somalia are clear examples of this. More examples of the lack of political interest in protracted humanitarian crises are evidenced in the Congo, in Angola and in the Sudan. It is easy to forget.

### **Why the lack of political interest?**

The lack of political interest and will is demonstrable. Where does this lack of interest come from, and what determines that certain crises are forgotten or ignored? Several explanations have been given. Firstly, from a traditional foreign policy perspective certain countries are unimportant to the central foreign policy concerns of the dominant powers in the international systems. There are no real interests at stake.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the development problems, humanitarian crises, and the breakdown of fundamental state structures in parts of the Third World are rarely at the top of the political agendas.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, it has been argued that nothing can really be done. The problems are inherently so difficult to solve that there is, in fact, little effective action that can be undertaken from the outside. Robert Jackson notes a lesson learned from Kosovo: “There is some basis for believing that by intervening, NATO may have made the humanitarian disaster worse rather than better”.<sup>14</sup> Finally, most failing states in the developing world, like e.g. the Congo, are perceived as geographically and culturally distant. The publics in Europe and America find little to identify with.

Many of the failing countries are not democracies, but various forms of authoritarian regimes. There is little political inclination to support such regimes with funds or expertise. Also, there are no clear effective tools to solve the problems. The lack of political interest can be explained if not understood.

### Media Failure?

In both public and political debate, the media are often seen as the main culprit. It is claimed that lack of media coverage results in lack of political interest and low public awareness. Often, the media are blamed for not providing enough information about crises or for providing only spotlight coverage. The argument being that if the media would only do more, then more action would be forthcoming. Politicians will often echo this criticism. However, at the same time, they do not want the media to set the political agenda, determining how and when things should be done. They argue that the media show erratic, untimely interest in certain humanitarian crises and thereby force the politicians into unwarranted rash and unprepared action. This has been termed 'the CNN-effect'. The idea is that the media set the agenda and when they do, political action follows. The argument is that when images are broadcast by television, both the public, the politicians, and the governments are stirred into action.

Tony Blair complains that the CNN is setting the agenda: "We are continually fending off the danger of letting wherever CNN roves, be the cattle prod to take global conflict seriously."<sup>15</sup> Studies of the CNN-effect reveal a more complex story. The agenda setting role of the international media is often exaggerated. CNN's role in the US intervention in Somalia is often cited as the prime evidence for the existence of the CNN-effect. However, an analysis of the CNN coverage showed that "it started with the government manipulating the press, and then changed to the press manipulating the government."<sup>16</sup> The CNN interest in Somalia was first created by presidential announcements of the crisis, and the media coverage followed US political action. CNN did not initiate the placing of Somalia on the agenda. "The idea that critical and emotive media coverage forced policy makers to 'do something' in Somalia is at odds with actual events."<sup>17</sup>

### The CNN-effect: Does it really exist?

In a review of different aspects of the CNN-effect, Steven Livingston examines the CNN-effect in three areas: 1. As a political *agenda setting* agent. 2. As an *impediment* to the achievement of desired policy goals. 3. As an *accelerator* to policy decision-making. His conclusion is that the CNN effect is primarily important as an accelerator in shortening decision time.

1. The independent *agenda setting* effect of the media is often overrated by politicians. To a large extent, the media follow the political agenda. The reason for Reuters to release the story about West Africa, quoted in the beginning of this article, is that Tony Blair is going there. It is not due to an inherent interest in West Africa. Studies of the international coverage in the media reveal that the primary framing of international news comes from the outlook and world perception of the home country of the media. The British media develop an interest in Sierra Leone when the British government gets involved. Not before and not after. An analysis of the coverage of 13 severe humanitarian emergencies in the period January 1995 - May 1996 revealed that the major US quality media (print, radio and TV) showed a highly uneven coverage with a European bias. Bosnia was the dominant story, while the events in Afghanistan and the Sudan were rarely mentioned.<sup>18</sup> The media would safely ignore the complex emergency in Afghanistan for many years during the Taleban regime, because there was little or no foreign policy interest in the country.

2. The instant media coverage, when it is there, has had the effect of shortening response time for decision-makers, i.e. the media has served as an *accelerator* in the policy making process. This effect reduces decision time and the weighing of options. A response has to come quickly. On the other hand, it also serves as power-enhancer by allowing governments to send quick signals to both the adversarial government and directly to the world community.<sup>19</sup>

3. Finally, the CNN-effect may be seen as an *impediment* of two types: TV images of death and suffering can work directly on public opinion and thereby restrict governmental freedom of action. Secondly, TV and the media can be seen as threats to the operational security of the forces. In Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002, this was used as an effective argument to limit media coverage of the war on terror.

The research by Livingston documents that the CNN-effect is more rhetorics than reality. International media attention does not set the agenda to any significant extent. They follow rather than lead. Tony Blair is wrong in blaming CNN for inconsistencies in policy. But maybe he is right in his other criticism that the media do not provide sufficient sustained coverage. Do the media neglect the forgotten?

### The Media Coverage of Sierra Leone and the Congo

The claim is that the media ignore humanitarian crises in collapsing states. To examine the validity of this claim, a Danish study has analysed the newspaper coverage of Sierra Leone and the Congo in the period January 2001 to March 2002. The analysis shows that both news agencies and national media outlets do not provide detailed coverage of humanitarian crises in failing states except in relatively brief moments of crises. Sustained coverage is not provided. There is little coverage of developments in failing states per se and little coverage of international efforts to rebuild and reconstruct these failing states.

The study is based on the coverage in the international news agency, *Reuters*; the national Danish news agency, *Ritzau*; and the leading Danish daily *Morgenavisen Jyllands-Posten*.<sup>20</sup> The figures show that coverage is limited to a short period and following, little sustained coverage is provided.

Table 1: 14 months of media coverage (2001-2002) of the Congo and Sierra Leone<sup>21</sup>:

	Congo	Sierra Leone
<b>Reuters</b> , international news agency, no. of references:	3335	1440
<b>Ritzau</b> , national news agency, no of references:	284	78
<b>Jyllands Posten</b> , daily newspaper, no. of articles:	139	66
(share of articles on political or economical issues):	(66)	(10)

### The Congo

An analysis of the articles published on the Congo shows that 73 articles (53%) were related to sports, biographies or general articles of wildlife, weather patterns etc. A number of 66 articles (47%) dealt with the political situation in the country. A sizeable part of these were focused on Danish aid policy in general, with a passing reference to the Congo. The coverage was clustered in specific, limited time periods: From 17-29 January 2001, 15 articles with a total of 481 lines were published on the murder of Kabila on 17 January and on the succeeding leader. In the period from 23 February to 11 April the same year, eleven articles were published on the peace process and the UN involvement. In total 458 lines. The Congo then reappears in the news in January 2002, when the eruption of a volcano leads to the evacuation of a number of villages and to a major international aid effort. The majority of the articles are short notes that briefly highlight the development. In this period of 14 months, very few articles try to analyse causes and consequences of action/inaction and war in the Congo.

### Sierra Leone

The articles on Sierra Leone in the same period show an even more pronounced pattern. Of the 49 articles published in the period of 14 months, only 10 (20%) were on political developments and reconstruction efforts in the country. In the period 19 January to 3 March 2002, there were seven articles on the professed declaration of peace on 19 January. In total 682 lines. Some of the largest articles were on the charges of sex abuse by UN employees, and a major article was on Sierra Leone as the new 'Bounty Country', highlighting the potential for tourism in the future. In the proceeding 12 months period, there was no coverage of events in Sierra Leone at all.

### Scant coverage

In these two cases of humanitarian crises, only scant coverage reaches the readers of Denmark's largest and most internationally oriented daily newspaper. Despite UN actions in this period, despite the continuing war in the country, despite the heavy involvement of the EU and the NATO partner Great Britain, there is virtually no coverage of the events in Sierra Leone. The somewhat larger coverage of the Congo exhibits the same pattern. A murder brings out a certain brief coverage, but there is no sustained coverage of the humanitarian crises in this



prototypical failing state. As the data show, more information is available, especially through the international news agencies, but most of this information never reaches the readers. However, the coverage provided by Reuters also focused on reporting events, with little attempt to report causes of failure and efforts of reconstruction. The analysis shows that even in situations of major humanitarian crises like in the Congo or in Sierra Leone, the newspapers do not provide the information needed by the public.

### **New information platforms**

The importance of newspapers in informing readers about the news has been reduced. Today, the electronic media and the Internet are important sources for breaking news to the public. As a result of the Internet, there is now an enormous amount of information available, also on humanitarian crises. "By way of one medium or another, there is more coverage in text and video of more conflicts and emergencies from more parts of the world than ever before."<sup>22</sup> But, as Nik Gowing points out, many of these new information platforms are not subject to editorial scrutiny or standards. It is still in the hands of the main media to provide trustworthy and consequential information. Newspapers have adopted a role as the news medium proving more in depth coverage. When they fail it is serious.

## **Why Do the Media Fail to Provide Coverage?**

### **News values**

The most straightforward answer is that failing states do not meet enough of the traditional news criteria. The classical news values emerged with the advent of newspapers and they have proved remarkably resilient to technological change. Radio, TV and the Internet have all reused the classical values.

News values provide answers to questions such as:

- **Timeliness:** Did the event just happen?
- **Importance:** Who and how many will be affected by the events?
- **Conflict:** Is there controversy or drama?
- **Sensation:** Is it an unusual event?
- **Identification:** Is the event psychologically close to the reader?

The relative importance of the news values has changed, but in total they provide the selection criteria for what becomes news. Some stories will satisfy only some of the criteria, but stories that do not meet any will rarely be published. The news values are determined culturally, historically and ideologically. However, within the dominant western media they have been remarkably resilient to change, and journalists and editors placed in gatekeeper functions in the media still apply them to the events of the day. A comprehensive study of news values in Danish newsrooms in 1998, revealed that the traditional news values were the most common editorial arguments for selecting or rejecting a story (See table 2 below). In the selection process for foreign news, 'timeliness' and 'importance' received the highest scores (together they accounted for 40 % of the arguments).

Are Sierra Leone and the Congo forgotten, because they fail to meet these traditional news values? Though the crises in these countries may rate high on the criteria of drama, conflict and sensation, this is overshadowed by their low value on some of the other news values, as importance and identification.

### **Give me a simple story**

In a classical study of the structure of foreign news, Galtung and Ruge studied how the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus crises of the sixties had been reported in Norwegian newspapers. Their study showed that cultural proximity was an important variable for choosing to bring a story. In addition, elite nations and elite persons had more chance of being reported on. Also, 'clarity' was placed on the list of factors. "The less ambiguity, the more an event will be noticed", they concluded.<sup>23</sup> The story has to be 'sharply angled' in order to be published. Humanitarian emergencies are anything but simple. They are complex and ambiguous.

Failing states are certainly not elite states, and there are no elite persons associated with failed and failing states<sup>24</sup>. Their importance is rated very low. The consequences of a total breakdown in Sierra Leone or in the Congo are given scant consideration. Their timeliness becomes dependent on actions involving elite nations or elite people such as statesmen in powerful countries. Also, there is not much for the reading public to identify with. On a mass scale, the public expects killings, poverty, and war in Africa. The image of Africa is one of helplessness, poverty, and dictatorship.<sup>25</sup>

## Organisational considerations

News values are in themselves a major impediment to sustained coverage of failing states. In addition, what becomes a news story is also determined by practical and organisational considerations. A US study pointed out that the political orientation and organisational constraints in the newsroom were important factors shaping editors' perceptions of foreign news.<sup>26</sup> The Danish study mentioned above confirmed these conclusions by demonstrating that, in many cases, practical considerations determine whether or not a story is selected. Actually, the study indicated that as much as a third of arguments related to other considerations than the content of the news story. The news operation is structured in a way that makes coverage of failing states difficult: There are few or no correspondents in the developing world, most notably in Africa. There is a reluctance to send reporters on expensive and dangerous missions to states, which are falling apart. There is little knowledge in the newsrooms about these states. If one media organisation decides not to cover a specific crisis, then other media organisations often follow. A story is not a story before other media agencies have picked it up. If it is not on the newswire it is easily ignored.<sup>27</sup>

Table 2: Editorial arguments for selection or rejection of stories:

	Arguments (n=223)	% of total
Media structure/ competition:	16	7
Editorial structure:	62	28
Journalistic self- Conception/ news values:	145	65
Timeliness:	(44)	(20)
Importance:	(45)	(20)
Conflict:	(9)	(4)
Sensation:	(24)	(11)
Identification:	(23)	(10)

Two things stand out very clearly from the figures in the above table:

1. The classical news values are still by far the most influential arguments used in the selection of foreign news.
2. More than a third of arguments used reflect other considerations than news content.

The study shows, that 29% of all arguments for whether or not to select a story referred to organisational structure, staffing issues etc. (i.e. editorial structure): "The correspondents are very tired and have been working hard". Moscow doesn't want to produce more stories, because he already has three stories that haven't been used." "We can't get the people in the graphics department to do it today and the story needs graphics". Some arguments reflected considerations of picture coverage. A good photograph can put a story on the page, even if the story is not all that important. No pictures can kill a good story. How the story is told is also an important consideration in its own right.

The predominant arguments for story editing come from the category of journalistic self-conception/ news values. Table 2 shows that 64% of arguments are related to this category. Of these arguments, the most important are 'Timeliness' and 'Importance'. 40% of all arguments related to this: "This is an important story", "This just came in", "We have to go with this story, it may affect a lot of people." As much as 20% of the arguments refers to receiver identification or sensationalism, which is not to the benefit of stories covering failing states and humanitarian crises. The arguments are journalistic standard arguments, and they reflect a core understanding of what journalism is all about: The reporting of important events. In part, they may also be standard arguments used for any story that the gatekeeper finds relevant. Nevertheless there seems to be a general agreement on what is to be considered a relevant story.

When we looked at the stories that were selected as the top foreign news stories in the different editorial offices, about 80% of the stories were similar in the different offices. The classical hard-nosed news criteria are strongly internalised and mutually reinforced, as editors are looking at the selection made by others. The mainstreaming of news is the inevitable result. Failing states do not pass these barriers. Story selection based on traditional news values provide part of the explanation of why failing states are only covered in bursts of coverage, and why there is no consistent coverage of what happens after states fail.

## National World Views

Although Tony Blair seems correct in identifying the lack of media interest in failing states as part of the problem,

he neglects to mention that, as shown above, the media will cover issues in which the politicians involve the country actively. A series of recent studies have demonstrated that the national media to a large extent reflect the national world outlook as framed by the foreign policy. It is not that the media uncritically reflect the foreign policy of the country, but rather that the world outlook, which shapes the foreign policy, also shapes the media coverage. A recent FAO study examined print and online media in eleven countries through a six-week period in June and July 2001. The study showed that the UK press and the French press carried more Third World news than the other countries included (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the USA). The reason is simple. The more former colonies you have, the more news you have from the Third World. Also, the Scandinavian press has a certain focus on Third World issues but the focus is clearly related to the aid efforts of the national governments.<sup>28</sup> In both cases, the 'foreign policy filter' indirectly sets the agenda for press coverage.

In a comprehensive study of television news reporting of foreign conflicts, Kristina Rigert shows that foreign policy orientation is a strong predictor when assessing how an international conflict will be covered. Comparing British and Swedish television coverage she concludes that: "the greater the foreign policy involvement of the country, the greater the number of foreign policy aspects were employed by television news to make sense of the conflict."<sup>29</sup> Analysing the coverage of the US invasion of Grenada in 1991, she demonstrates that the Swedish coverage would include more on UN efforts, the regional context, and the traditional US hegemony in the region. In contrast, the BBC stressed the communist theme, positive reactions in the Caribbean, and reactions by the British government. The British coverage was more episodic than thematic. According to the classical study by Iyengar<sup>30</sup>, episodic news focuses on individuals and thereby removes the emphasis from the systematic causes and consequences. The Swedish news were more thematic in concentrating on the reasons and the structure behind the events.

### **September 11**

Anyone in doubt of the strong influence that the world view and prevalent perceptions in a given country have on the content and tone of the media, only needs to look at the US media coverage of world affairs in the period

following the attacks on September 11. Even in quality newspapers like the Washington Post, the Afghans were referred to as "the enemy". Reporters trying to inject criticism were either ostracised or, in isolated cases, fired outright from their jobs for unpatriotic coverage. An analysis of the US media showed that as late as December 2001, only 7% of all stories on TV, newspapers and newsmagazines contained predominately dissenting views to the stance of the US administration. 50% of the stories were predominately favourable to the administration.<sup>31</sup> The fact that the failing state of Afghanistan has received continued major coverage for several months serves to illustrate the extent to which the government (and the 'mood' of the country) sets the agenda. Despite the magnitude of coverage of Afghanistan the focus has been on the military action and not on the Afghan reconstruction efforts.

### **Conclusion: "And Now Over to Tony Blair in the Congo...."**

If public attention is deemed instrumental in creating change in failing states then obviously the media have failed. The media have shown little interest in covering state failures except in the most superficial manner. Coverage has been predicated on the involvement of major states. The traditional news values work against continued coverage of failing states. In addition, the structure and culture of the newsroom makes it unlikely that even in cases where there are some news to be told, it will not be told in any significant fashion.

Politicians like Tony Blair who lament this state of affairs are forgetting their own responsibility. In fact, in major ways it is government leaders like Tony Blair who set the agenda for the media. If Britain had involved itself in Afghanistan ten years ago, the media would have followed and much might have been different. If Britain had involved itself in the Congo much might have been different. The media and the politicians are increasingly two sides of the same coin. Lack of media interest makes the issues less relevant politically. Lack of policy initiatives make the issues of failing states less relevant to the media.

It is easy to forget. In the psychological literature this phenomenon is called the problem of *bystander apathy*. It is not that we do not care, the problem is that we do not do anything. Five steps are required before we act in a situation of humanitarian crisis: 1. We have to notice that

something is happening. 2. We have to interpret the event. 3. We have to decide that it is our responsibility. 4. We have to decide what form of assistance we will give. 5. We must decide on how to implement the assistance.<sup>32</sup> The study here shows that we do not notice because the media do not tell us about what is going on, and the politicians do not provide leadership to make us, and the media, notice.

**Hans-Henrik Holm** is Jean Monnet Professor at the Danish School of Journalism .

## Notes and References

<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister Tony Blair as reported in Reuters: *Daily report* 11.02.02.

<sup>2</sup> Both terms express public indifference to suffering that does not seem to be 'our' responsibility. See notes 12 and 36. This articles does not deal explicitly with the role of NGO's. However, they tend to dependent on either political will or on media interest in reaching their goals.

<sup>3</sup> See David S. Gibbs, "Realpolitik and Humanitarian Intervention", *International Politics*, vol. 37, no.1, 2000, pp. 41-55.

<sup>4</sup> In the failed states project, the definition of a failed state is where either: (1) Democracy is overthrown (2) Civil war occurs (3) Change of government with extensive violence occurring (4) Genocide occurs. See Ted Gurr, *Minorities at Risk. A Global View of Ethnopolitical Conflicts* (Washington: U.S. Institute of Peace, 1993). "Complex Emergencies" are defined as a combination of mass population movement, severe food insecurity, macro-economic collapse and acute military and civil conflict. See Report of a conference held by the International Committee of the Red Cross, December 2000, *State Collapse and Reconstruction: Lessons and Strategies* (Geneva: ICRC, 2001), p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> For a complete list of internal wars combining many of the existing datasets on wars see Michael W. Doyle & Nicholas Sambanis, *International Peacebuilding A Theoretical and Quantitative Analysis* (Washington: World Bank, 2000)

<sup>6</sup> See Lakhdar Brahimi, *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations* (New York: UN, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> R. J. Vincent and P. Wilson, "Beyond Non-Intervention", in I. Forbes, and S. Hoffmann, eds., *Political Theory, International Relations, and the Ethics of Intervention* (London: Macmillan, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> Laura Neack, " UN Peace-Keeping: In the interest of Community or Self?" *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 32, no. 2, 1995, pp. 181-196.

<sup>9</sup> Kofi Annan, *Globalization and Governance* (New York: UN, 2000), p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> There is extensive literature on the Rwanda case including an international report ordered by governments in an attempt to draw out the lessons of why nothing was done. See Holly J. Burkhalter, "The Question of Genocide", *World Policy Journal*, vol. 11, no.4, 1995, pp. 44-54. Arthur Jay Klinghoffer, *The International Dimension of Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

<sup>11</sup> Prime Minister Tony Blair expressed this the following way: "This is a just war, based not on any territorial ambitions but on values. We

The public without leadership will do little.<sup>33</sup> In many cases of humanitarian emergencies the leadership will do little without an active public. It is easy to be forgotten. Both more consistent political leadership and more consistent coverage will be enough to make a fresh start. It only takes one bystander to take notice.

cannot let the evil of ethnic cleansing stand. We must not rest until it is reversed". Speech in Chicago, April 22, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> See Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers. Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> See Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue. How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death* (New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>14</sup> See Robert H. Jackson, *The Global Covenant. Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 293.

<sup>15</sup> Speech by Prime Minister Tony Blair in Chicago, April 22, 1999.

<sup>16</sup> See Warren P. Strobel, "The Media and U.S. Policies Toward Intervention. A Closer Look at the "CNN Effect", in Chester A. Crocker & Fenn Osler Hampson & Pamela Aall, eds., *Managing Global Chaos* (Washington, USIP Press, 1996), p. 364.

<sup>17</sup> Piers Robinson, " *The News Media and Operation Restore Hope. The illusion of a media driven intervention*" International Studies Association 2000, paper, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> Steven Livingston, " *Clarifying the CNN Effect: An Examination of Media Effects According to Type of Military Intervention*", Research Paper R-18 (Boston: Shorenstein Center, Harvard, 1997), p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Livingston (note 19 above).

<sup>20</sup> If we look at the international news-agencies they argue, and research supports their claim, that they in fact provide much more media coverage of failing states than is actually being selected and presented to the public. The coverage in Reuters is therefore included. If we then look at national newspapers and electronic media they argue, and research supports them, that they are in fact providing far more stories about failed and failing states than the readers and viewers are interested in. See Hans-Henrik Holm & Lars Kabel & Torben Kitaj & Lars Møller & Flemming Ytzen, *Verden på tilbud. Om udenrigsjournalistik og mediernes udenrigsdækning* (The World on Offer. On foreign reporting and the foreign coverage of the media) (Aarhus: Ajour, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> Numbers of references include all mentions of the Congo or Sierra Leone (Reuters and Ritzau). The number for Jyllands-Posten is for the number of articles actually published. The time period is 1 January, 2001 to 3 April, 2002.

<sup>22</sup> Nik Gowing, "War and Accountability", *Forum*, April Issue 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Johan Galtung & Margit Ruge " The Structure of Foreign News. The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba, and Cyprus Crises in Four Norwegian Newspapers", *Journal of Peace Research* , vol. 1, no.2., 1965, pp. 64-91.

<sup>24</sup> An occasional visit from a Tony Blair, Bill Gates or Bono, a speech or a donation is the habitual extent of elite association.

<sup>25</sup> See Hans-Henrik Holm, "Afrika i vores hjerter" (Africa in our Hearts) in Gorm Rye Olsen, eds., *Afrika - det ukuelige kontinent* (Africa: the invincible continent) (Copenhagen: DR, 1994), pp. 13-33.

<sup>26</sup> Tsan-Kuo Chang, and Jae-Won Lee, "Factors Affecting Gatekeepers' Selection of Foreign News: A National Survey of Newspaper Editors", *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 69, no. 3, 1992, pp. 554-561.

<sup>27</sup> See Hans-Henrik Holm, "The Effect of Globalization on Media Structures." in Stig Hjarvard, ed., *News in a Globalized Society* (Gothenberg: Nordicom, 2001). The data is based on research undertaken by a research group at the Centre for Journalism and Further Education where a detailed survey of the foreign news coverage in the Danish media was undertaken. Based on a two week period (11-24 November, 1998) all foreign news (in a broad sense) in nine newspapers, two TV stations and the national radio network was collected. In addition, a study of the organisational structure of each of the news organisations was conducted. Finally, observation of the editorial process at seven of the major media was conducted with a specific focus on the process of editorial choice. See Hans-Henrik Holm (note 21 above).

<sup>28</sup> See the study: FAO, *Coverage of Third World Issues* (Surrey: Echo, 2001).

<sup>29</sup> Kristina Riegeret, *Nationalising Foreign Conflict. Foreign Policy orientation as a Factor in Television News Reporting* (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 1998), p. 229.

<sup>30</sup> Shanto Iyengar, *Is Anyone Responsible? How Television News Frames Political Issues* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991).

<sup>31</sup> Pew Research, *Return to Normalcy? How the Media Have Covered the War on Terrorism* (New York: Project for Excellence in Journalism, 2002).

<sup>32</sup> Bibb Latane & John Darley, "Bystander Apathy", *American Scientist*, vol. 57, no. 2, 1969, pp. 244-267; Michael Stohl, "Outside a Small Circle of Friends", *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1987, pp.151-166; Michael Stohl, "*Beyond a Small Circle of Friends*", Paper for Conference on Failed States (Purdue University, mimeo, April 1999).

<sup>33</sup> Herbert Kelman, "Violence without Moral Restraint: Reflections on the Dehumanization of Victims and Victimizers", *Journal of Social Issues*, vol.29, no. 4, 1973, pp. 25-61.

# FACT-SHEET (RELATING TO ARTICLE ONE)

## CONTENTS:

### **Comparison One – Natural Disasters: India Cyclone (October 1999) & Mozambique Floods (January 2000), p. I**

- Figure 1.1: Total value of received humanitarian assistance in US\$  
Figure 1.2: Media coverage – Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2)  
Figure 1.3: Media coverage – Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe)

### **Comparison Two – Complex Emergencies: Angola, Sudan & the Balkans (1997-2002), pp. II-III**

- Table 2.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)  
Figure 2.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)  
Table 2.2: Value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Table 2.3: Value of EU Member States humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Table 2.4: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Figure 2.2: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Figure 2.3: Media coverage – Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2)  
Figure 2.4: Media coverage – Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe)

### **Comparison Three – Complex Emergencies: Angola, Sudan & DPR of Korea (1997-2002), pp. IV-V**

- Table 3.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)  
Figure 3.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)  
Table 3.2: Value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Table 3.3: Value of EU Member States humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Table 3.4: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Figure 3.2: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Figure 3.3: Media coverage – Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2)  
Figure 3.4: Media coverage – Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe)

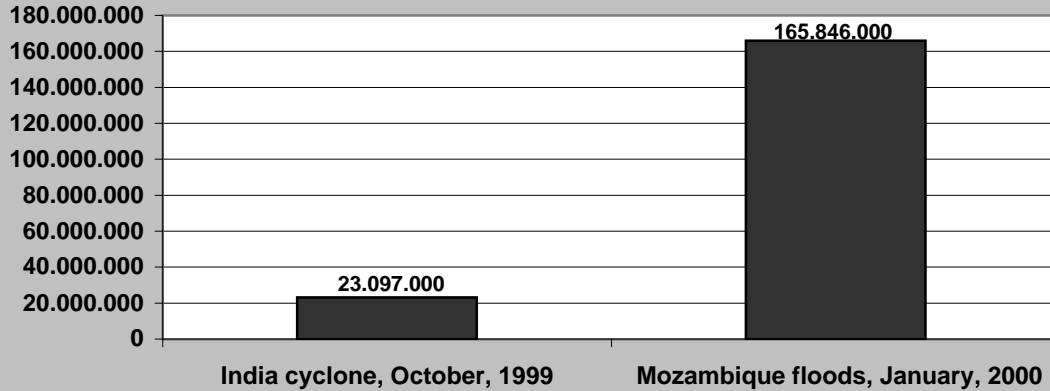
### **Comparison Four – Complex Emergency: Afghanistan (2000-2002), pp. VI-VII**

- Table 4.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)  
Figure 4.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)  
Table 4.2: Value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Table 4.3: Value of EU Member States humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Table 4.4: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Figure 4.2: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in EURO  
Figure 4.3: Media coverage – Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2)  
Figure 4.4: Media coverage – Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe)

### **Technical Notes, p. VIII**

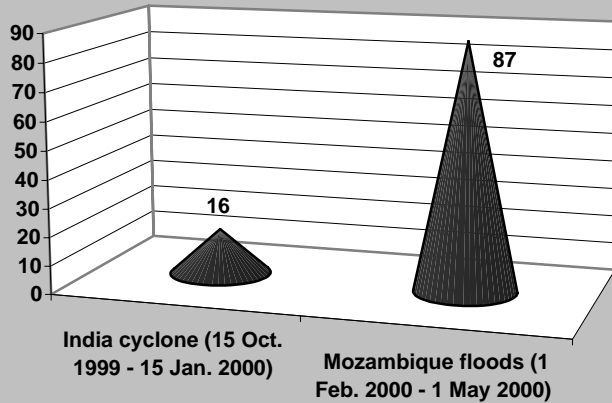
**Comparison One - Natural Disasters:  
India Cyclone (October 1999) & Mozambique Floods (January 2000)**

**Figure 1.1: Total value of received humanitarian assistance in US\$**



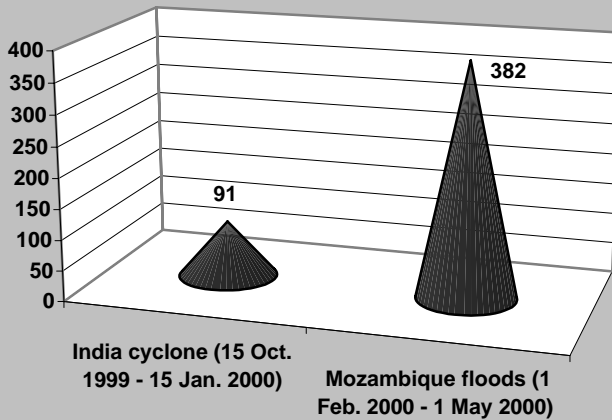
Source: OCHA

**Figure 1.2: Media coverage - Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2)**



Source: DR-TV & TV2

**Figure 1.3: Media coverage - Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe)**



Consulted Newspapers:  
*The Times (UK)*  
*Observer (UK)*  
*Guardian (UK)*  
*Independent (UK)*  
*Daily Telegraph (UK)*  
*Frankfurter Allgemeine (D)*  
*Tageanzeiger (D)*  
*Süddeutsche Zeitung (D)*  
*Figaro (F)*  
*Le Monde (F)*  
*Liberation (F)*  
*Il Sole 24 Ore (I)*  
*La Stampa (I)*  
*New York Times (USA)*  
*Washington Post (USA)*  
*USA Today (USA)*  
*Los Angeles Times (USA)*  
*Miami Herald (USA)*  
*Boston Globe (USA)*  
*Chicago Tribune (USA)*  
*El Pais (S)*  
*Politiken (DK)*  
*Jyllandsposten (DK)*

## Comparison Two - Complex Emergencies: Angola, Sudan & the Balkans (1997-2002)

**Table 2.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal):**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
<b>Angola</b>	177.597.000	100.346.000	150.084.000	100.798.000	148.580.000	143.648.000
<b>Sudan</b>	90.168.000	441.429.000	212.661.000	125.179.000	231.711.000	124.831.000
<b>The Balkans</b>	394.253.000	425.691.000	1.168.021.000	318.027.000	374.834.000	104.858.000

Note 1: The 2000 figure for Angola does not show a \$65.683.000 carry over (WFP) from 1999.

Note 2: The 1999 figure for Sudan does not show a \$16.480.000 carry over (UNICEF) from 1998.

Note 3: The 1997 figure for the Balkans does not show a \$91.644.000 carry over (UN miscellaneous agencies) from 1996.

Note 4: The 1998 figure for the Balkans does not show a \$39.596.000 carry over (UN miscellaneous agencies) from 1997.

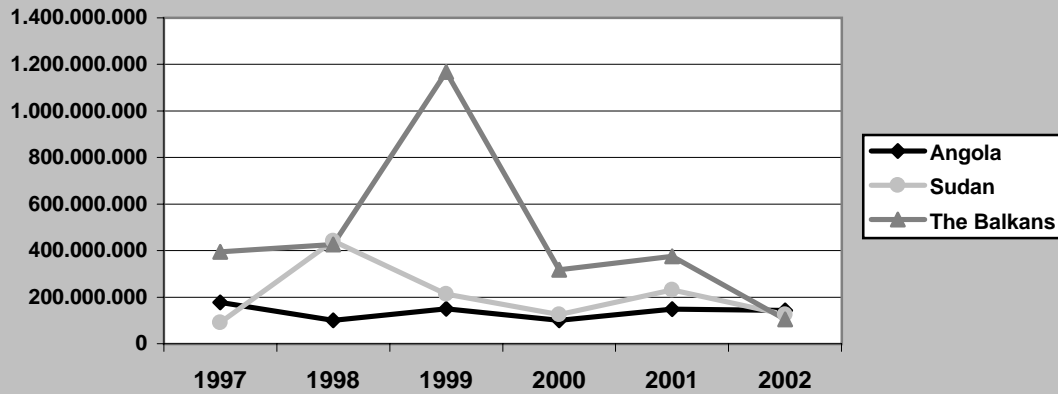
Note 5: The 2000 figure for the Balkans does not show a \$60.645.000 carry over (UN miscellaneous agencies) from 1999.

Note 6: The 2002 figure for the Balkans does not show a \$11.171.000 carry over (UN miscellaneous agencies) from 2001.

Note 7: Within the 1999 CAP for the Balkans, \$631.231.000 of \$786.721.000 (80%) went to Kosovo-related programmes.

Source:  
OCHA

**Figure 2.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)**



Source:  
OCHA

**Table 2.2: Value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding in Euro:**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
<b>Angola</b>	32.636.000	0	9.911.000	15.914.000	9.277.000	10.685.000
<b>Sudan</b>	22.724.000	33.548.000	13.442.000	11.000.000	16.985.000	16.488.000
<b>The Balkans</b>	140.201.000	135.105.000	445.913.000	97.648.000	83.231.000	28.673.000

**Table 2.3: Value of EU Member States humanitarian aid funding in Euro:**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
<b>Angola</b>	24.816.000	34.484.000	28.538.000	29.580.000	34.808.000	37.810.000
<b>Sudan</b>	34.486.000	83.330.000	39.248.000	35.276.000	45.585.000	31.964.000
<b>The Balkans</b>	91.612.000	90.196.000	334.083.000	183.111.000	83.681.000	108.627.000

**Table 2.4: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in Euro:**

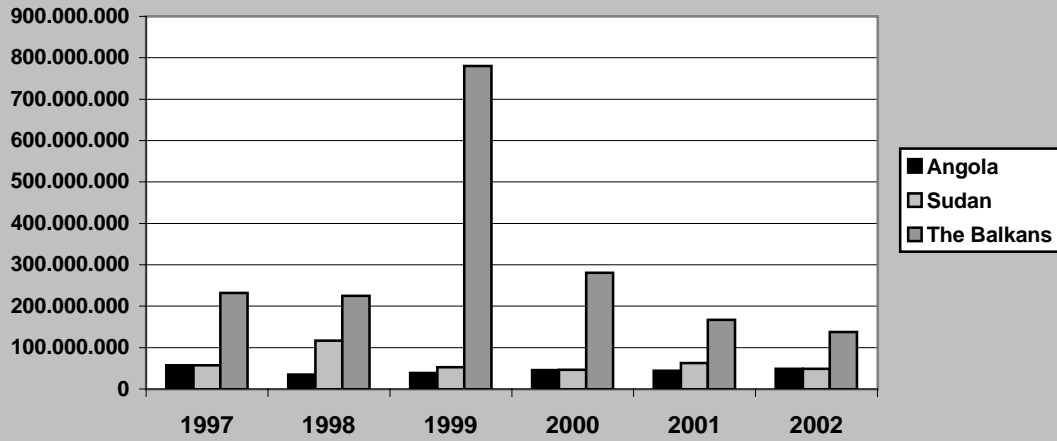
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
<b>Angola</b>	57.452.000	34.484.000	38.449.000	45.494.000	44.086.000	48.495.000
<b>Sudan</b>	57.210.000	116.878.000	52.690.000	46.276.000	62.570.000	48.452.000
<b>The Balkans</b>	231.813.000	225.301.000	779.996.000	280.759.000	166.912.000	137.300.000

Source:  
ECHO



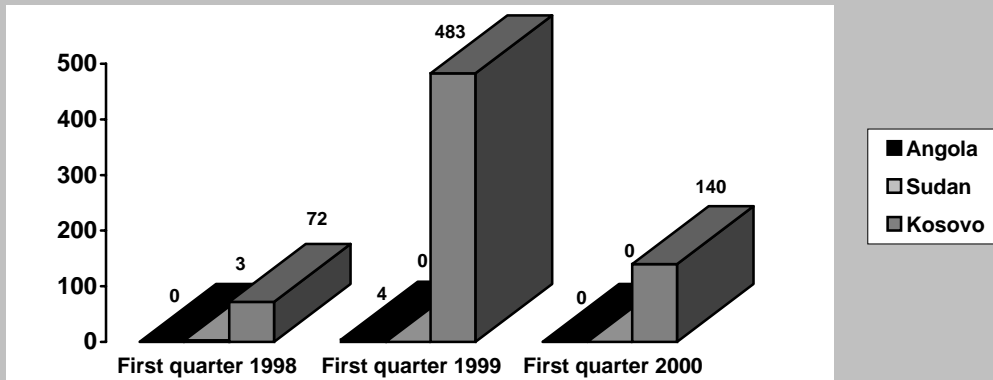
**Comparison Two - Complex Emergencies:  
Angola, Sudan & the Balkans (1997-2002)**

**Figure 2.2: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in Euro**



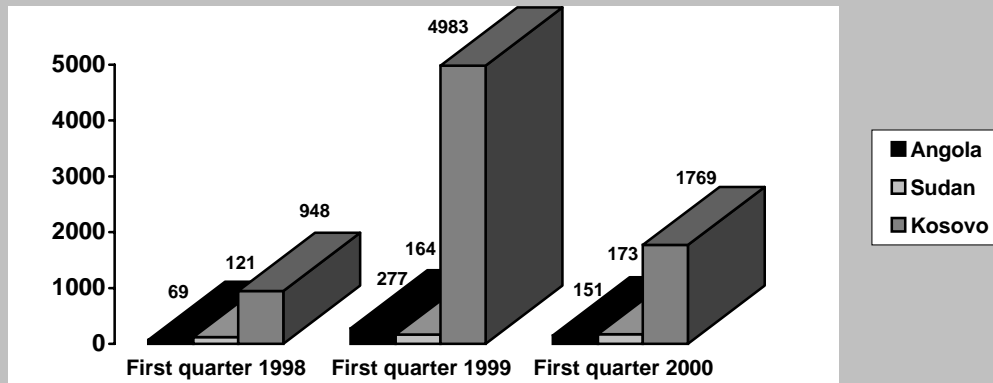
Source:  
ECHO

**Figure 2.3: Media coverage - Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2)**



Source:  
DR-TV  
& TV2

**Figure 2.4: Media coverage - Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe)**



For list of news-  
papers:  
see p. I

### Comparison Three - Complex Emergencies: Angola, Sudan & DPR of Korea (1997-2002)

**Table 3.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal):**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Angola	177.597.000	100.346.000	150.084.000	100.798.000	148.580.000	143.648.000
Sudan	90.168.000	441.429.000	212.661.000	125.179.000	231.711.000	124.831.000
DPR of Korea	292.858.000	335.093.000	235.854.000	223.726.000	375.249.000	174.639.000

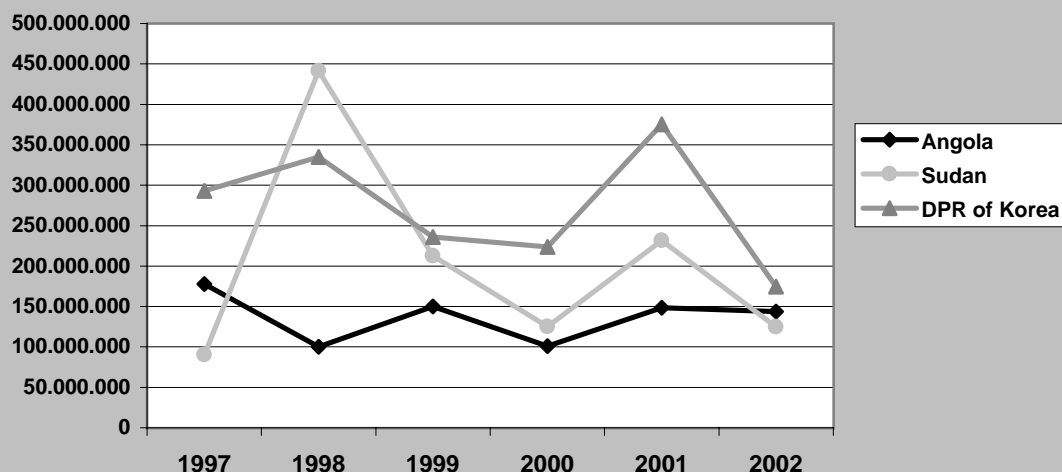
Note 1: The 2000 figure for Angola does not show a \$65.683.000 carry over (WFP) from 1999.

Note 2: The 1999 figure for Sudan does not show a \$16.480.000 carry over (UNICEF) from 1998.

Note 3: The 2002 figure for DPR of Korea does not show a \$52.267.000 carry over (WFP) from 2001.

Source:  
OCHA

**Figure 3.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)**



Source:  
OCHA

**Table 3.2: Value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding in Euro:**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Angola	32.636.000	0	9.911.000	15.914.000	9.277.000	10.685.000
Sudan	22.724.000	33.548.000	13.442.000	11.000.000	16.985.000	16.488.000
DPR of Korea	19.828.000	4.615.000	4.750.000	7.635.000	3.315.000	9.875.000

**Table 3.3: Value of EU Member States humanitarian aid funding in Euro:**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Angola	24.816.000	34.484.000	28.538.000	29.580.000	34.808.000	37.810.000
Sudan	34.486.000	83.330.000	39.248.000	35.276.000	45.585.000	31.964.000
DPR of Korea	9.935.000	5.945.000	3.875.000	4.659.000	9.881.000	9.375.000

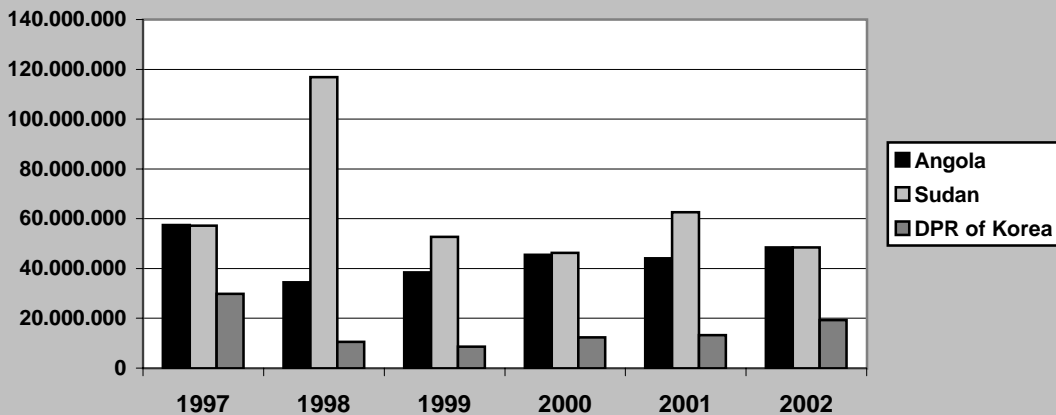
**Table 3.4: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in Euro:**

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Angola	57.452.000	34.484.000	38.449.000	45.494.000	44.086.000	48.495.000
Sudan	57.210.000	116.878.000	52.690.000	46.276.000	62.570.000	48.452.000
DPR of Korea	29.762.000	10.560.000	8.625.000	12.294.000	13.196.000	19.250.000

Source:  
ECHO

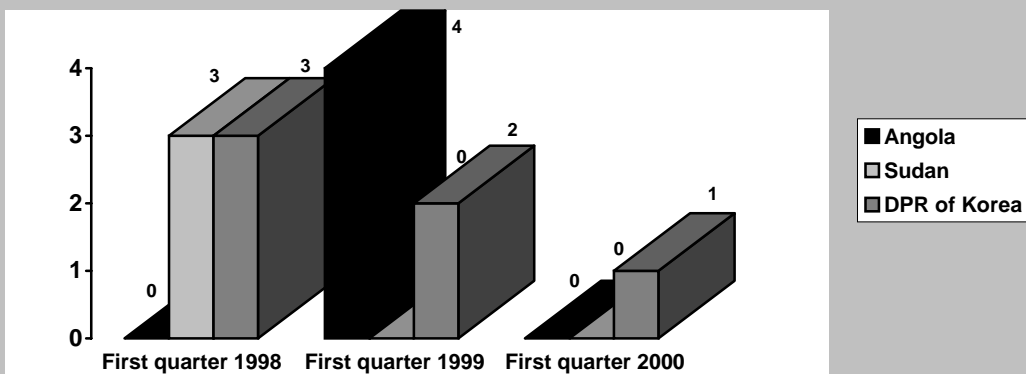
**Comparison Three - Complex Emergencies:  
Angola, Sudan & DPR of Korea (1997-2002)**

**Figure 3.2: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in Euro**



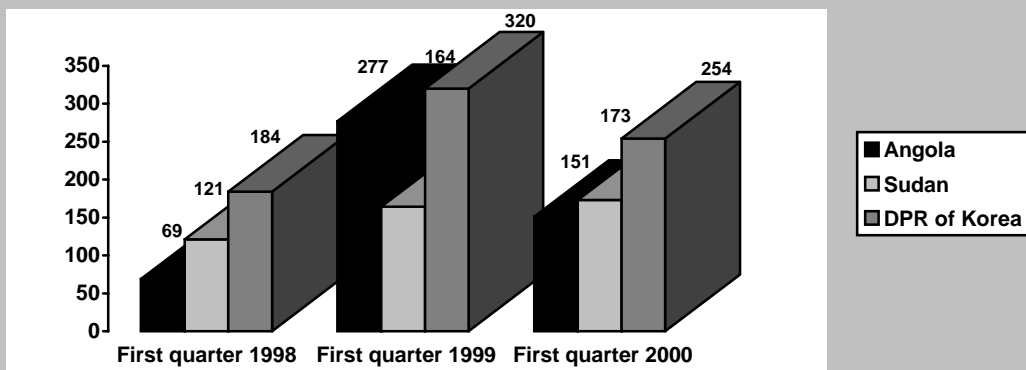
Source:  
ECHO

**Figure 3.3: Media coverage - Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2)**



Source:  
DR-TV

**Figure 3.4: Media coverage - Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe)**



For list of news-  
papers:  
see p. I

### Comparison Four - Complex Emergency: Afghanistan (2000-2002)

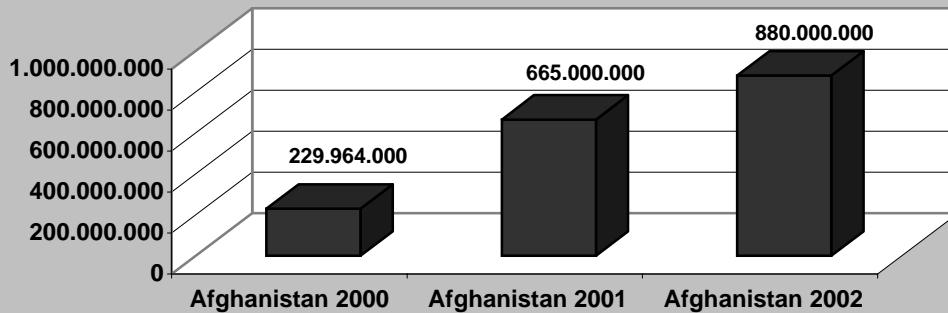
**Table 4.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)**

	2000	2001	2002
<b>Afghanistan</b>	229.964.000	665.000.000	880.000.000

Note: In 2001, \$433 million out of \$665 million was allocated during the last 3 months of the year (following a 'Donor Alert').

Source:  
OCHA

**Figure 4.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal)**



Source:  
OCHA

**Table 4.2: Value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding in Euro:**

	2000	2001	2002
<b>Afghanistan</b>	18.325.000	53.050.000	37.925.000

**Table 4.3: Value of EU Member States humanitarian aid funding in Euro:**

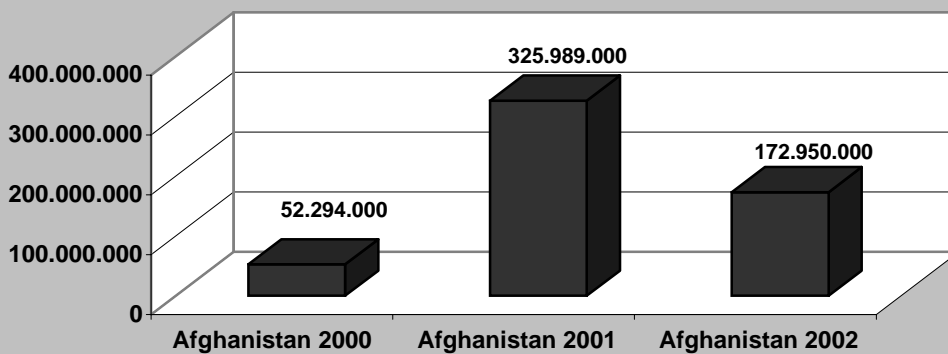
	2000	2001	2002
<b>Afghanistan</b>	33.969.000	272.939.000	135.025.000

**Table 4.4: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in Euro:**

	2000	2001	2002
<b>Afghanistan</b>	52.294.000	325.989.000	172.950.000

Source:  
ECHO

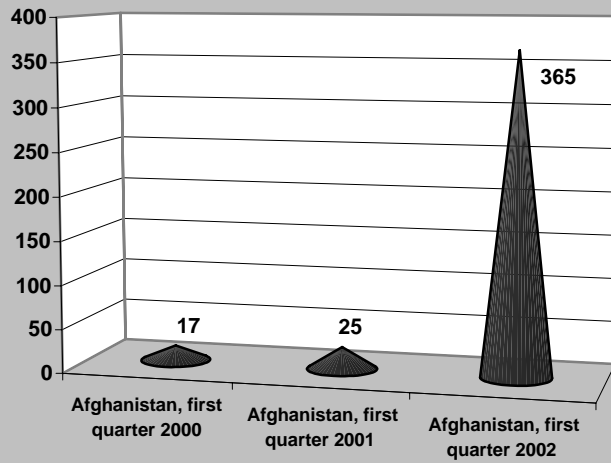
**Figure 4.2: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in EURO**



Source:  
ECHO

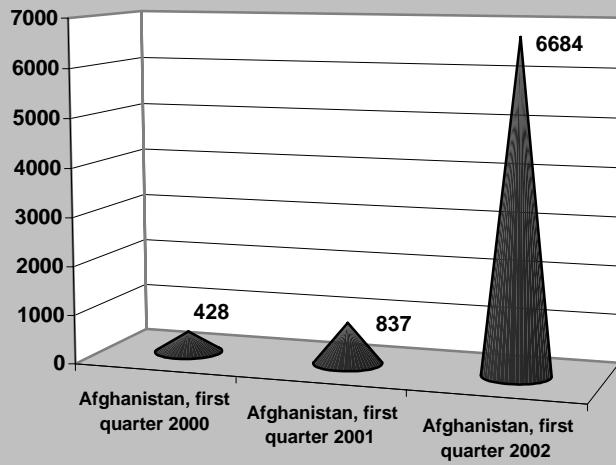
**Comparison Four - Complex Emergency:  
Afghanistan (2000-2002)**

**Figure 4.3: Media coverage - Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2)**



Source:  
DR-TV  
& TV2

**Figure 4.4: Media coverage - Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe)**



For list of news-  
papers:  
see p. I

## TECHNICAL NOTES

### General note:

Please note that all financial figures rendered in the above fact-sheet are mere estimates and not accurate representations of the amounts of humanitarian assistance given to India, Mozambique, Angola, Sudan, the Balkans, DPR of Korea, and Afghanistan for the years in question. All amounts have been rounded off to the nearest thousand for reasons of clarity and in order to abstain from a mode of representation that indicates absolute accuracy. It should also be noted that all humanitarian assistance figures relate to 'emergency aid' and are therefore exclusive of other types of financial assistance (e.g. ODA). Note, finally, that 'the Balkans' is an applied generic term for the following entities: Albania, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (incl. Serbia, Kosovo and Montenegro).

### Figure 1.1: Total value of received humanitarian assistance in US\$:

The amounts of humanitarian assistance depicted in figure 1.1 are derived from the ReliefWeb Financial Tracking System (OCHA).

### Tables 2.1, 3.1 & 4.1 + figures 2.1, 3.1 & 4.1: Total value of humanitarian assistance in US\$ (CAP + outside appeal):

The amounts of humanitarian assistance represented in tables 2.1, 3.1 & 4.1 and figures 2.1, 3.1 & 4.1 are derived from the ReliefWeb Financial Tracking System (OCHA) and OCHA's office in Geneva. All amounts are aggregates based on Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) numbers + outside appeal numbers, i.e. humanitarian assistance given outside the UN CAP framework. The CAP numbers include pledges and contributions, but not carry over. The outside appeal numbers are comprehensive to the extent that funding decisions have been reported to OCHA.

### Tables 2.2, 3.2 & 4.2: Value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding in EURO:

The value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding represented in tables 2.2, 3.2 & 4.2 have been retrieved from ECHO 4 in Brussels.

### Tables 2.3, 3.3 & 4.3: Value of EU Member States humanitarian aid funding in EURO:

The value of EU Member States humanitarian aid funding represented in tables 2.3, 3.3 & 4.3 have been retrieved from ECHO 4 in Brussels.

### Tables 2.4, 3.4 & 4.4 + figures 2.2, 3.2 & 4.2: Total value of European Union humanitarian aid funding in EURO:

The amounts of European Union humanitarian aid funding represented in tables 2.4, 3.4 & 4.4 and figures 2.2, 3.2 & 4.2 are aggregates derived from the value of ECHO humanitarian aid funding + the value of EU Member States humanitarian aid funding.

### Figures 1.2, 2.3, 3.3 & 4.3: Media coverage – Number of TV-news spots in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2):

The statistics depicted in figures 1.2, 2.3, 3.3 & 4.3 represent the number of TV-news spots that appeared in Danish national television (DR-TV & TV2) on the natural disasters and complex emergencies in question, during selected 3-months intervals. For Comparison One (India cyclone and Mozambique floods), the surveyed periods were 15 October 1999 – 15 January 2000 + 1 February 2000 – 1 May 2000, i.e. the 3-months intervals immediately following the two disasters. For Comparison Two and Three, the surveyed periods were the first quarters of 1998, 1999, and 2000, respectively. For Comparison Four, the surveyed periods were the first quarters of 2000, 2001, and 2002, respectively. All statistics have been retrieved from DR-TV and TV2 directly.

### Figures 1.3, 2.4, 3.4 & 4.4: Media coverage – Number of articles in 23 newspapers (USA & Western Europe):

The statistics depicted in figures 1.3, 2.4, 3.4 & 4.4 represent the number of articles that appeared in 23 major newspapers on the natural disasters and complex emergencies in question, during selected 3-months intervals. The examined periods were the same as for the survey of media coverage in Danish national television (see above). Of the 23 newspapers 5 were British: *The Times*, *Observer*, *Guardian*, *Independent*, *Daily Telegraph*; 3 were German: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Tageanzeiger*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*; 3 were French: *Figaro*, *Le Monde*, *Liberation*; 2 were Italian: *Il Sole 24 Ore*, *La Stampa*; 7 were American: *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Miami Herald*, *Boston Globe*, *Chicago Tribune*; 1 was Spanish: *El Pais*; and 2 were Danish: *Politiken*, *Jyllandsposten*. The article hit-search was done via LexisNexis, an international newspaper database, and Polinfo, a Danish newspaper database, and the applied search mode was 'major mention', so that articles with only peripheral mentioning of the natural disasters and complex emergencies in question were excluded.