

# Safety and Security Update

OCTOBER 2015

## OVERVIEW

USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) staff and relief agency partners frequently operate in countries with security challenges. To mitigate risk, USAID/OFDA enhances the safety and security of the humanitarian community through outreach and dialogue with implementing partners and the donor community. USAID/OFDA supports established networks of humanitarian security personnel, improves security mechanisms and capacity at the global and country levels, and strengthens policies that affect safety and security. In addition, USAID/OFDA's Safety and Security Unit directly supports USAID/OFDA staff in the field by providing real-time analysis and guidance on security issues from Washington, D.C., and by deploying safety and security officers to the field. USAID/OFDA aims to enable humanitarian activities in volatile situations by increasing access while minimizing risk to staff and operations. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2015, USAID/OFDA provided more than \$2.6 million for activities that improved operational security, facilitated security-related coordination and information management, promoted best practices, provided innovative security training to humanitarian actors, and built a better understanding of the international humanitarian security landscape.

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## STRENGTHENING SECURITY THROUGH INNOVATIVE TRAINING



Participants learned to address critical safety and security issues during USAID/OFDA's SHOP course. (Courtesy USAID/OFDA)

Providing training to humanitarian personnel results in safer operations on the ground by increasing staff capacity to assess threats, mitigate risk, and prepare contingency plans. In FY 2015, USAID/OFDA continued supporting the multi-year Mission Ready program through partner RedR. Mission Ready, an innovative online training program, incorporates cutting-edge video game technology that allows participants to simulate video scenarios and receive real-time feedback. The program also provides a variety of support materials, including documentaries and interviews with specialists. RedR is coordinating with other humanitarian organizations to ensure Mission Ready's content is comprehensive and relevant and addressing issues such as security awareness, field travel safety, and stress and psychosocial support.

In addition, in July 2015 USAID/OFDA piloted a Security in Humanitarian Operations (SHOP) course. USAID/OFDA is working to further develop the course and integrate it into core USAID/OFDA training for overseas responses.

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## IMPROVING SAFETY AND SECURITY WITHIN THE HUMANITARIAN COMMUNITY

Humanitarian organizations in the field, particularly those with limited resources, face many security challenges and risks. In FY 2015, USAID/OFDA continued to partner with InterAction—the largest alliance of U.S.-based international non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—to improve the safety and security of member agencies' staff and their ability to reach disaster-affected populations in high-risk environments. InterAction provides technical and strategic assistance to NGOs developing their own security frameworks and engages the private sector in providing security services to NGOs to ensure

services are afforded in accordance with NGO principles and sensitivities. Through \$145,000 in FY 2015 assistance, USAID/OFDA supported InterAction to continue providing global leadership in safety and security coordination, outreach, and policy, including liaising with UN agencies, NGOs, and the U.S. Government and other donor agencies.

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## **SUPPORTING THE EUROPEAN INTERAGENCY SECURITY FORUM**

Since 2010, USAID/OFDA has supported the European Interagency Security Forum (EISF), a group of security managers from more than 50 humanitarian organizations, to enhance the safety and security of aid workers providing humanitarian assistance in complex and increasingly volatile environments. Through coordination with fellow agencies on security issues and strengthening of integrated security risk management approaches, EISF facilitates increased and sustainable access to populations in need. EISF activities also include capacity-building workshops, biannual forums, and knowledge-sharing events. In FY 2015, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$195,000 to EISF through Christian Aid.

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## **ENHANCING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN INSECURE LOCATIONS**

Insecurity in several countries threatened humanitarian operations and challenged the ability of aid workers to provide humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected and hard-to-reach populations in FY 2015. In response, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$2.1 million to the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) to support operations in countries such as Ethiopia and Sudan. USAID/OFDA assistance reduced the vulnerability of humanitarian staff and informed the delivery of assistance, allowing aid to reach populations in need—often in hostile areas. For example, USAID/OFDA funding facilitates security training for UN and NGO partners operating in insecure environments and enables UNDSS to conduct risk mitigation and critical incident response activities.

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## **IMPROVING ACCESS TO AID THROUGH DATA AND ANALYSIS**

The Aid Worker Security Database (AWSDB) collects and analyzes data on violent incidents targeting aid workers; publicly available, the data allows the humanitarian community to assess changing security environments. USAID/OFDA previously funded the establishment of the AWSDB, and in FY 2013, USAID/OFDA supported Humanitarian Outcomes to increase data analysis related to operational security. With approximately \$201,000 in FY 2015 assistance, USAID/OFDA continued supporting Humanitarian Outcomes to strengthen data collection and analysis. The AWSDB is available at: <https://aidworkersecurity.org/>.

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