



The Alan Shawn Feinstein International Famine Center



The Humanitarian Agenda 2015: Principles, Power, and Perceptions

Building on earlier Humanitarianism and War Project studies, the Feinstein International Famine Center at Tufts University is embarking on new independently-funded policy research, aimed at equipping the humanitarian enterprise to better address emerging challenges. The new research focuses on four specific issue areas for which the key questions are:

Universality

- ☐ Although humanitarian principles are viewed by practitioners as universal, are the philosophical, institutional, funding, and operational roots of the international humanitarian apparatus inescapably Western and Northern?
- ☐ To what extent does this reality affect the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian work, and what can be done to enhance the universality of the humanitarian enterprise?

Terrorism

- ☐ How do terrorism and counter-terrorism affect the concept and conduct of humanitarian action?
- ☐ What can be done to delimit those impacts?

Coherence

- ☐ Should humanitarian work be integrated into the political and peace-building aspects of multidimensional peace missions and other political frameworks?
- ☐ Does the cost to humanitarian action of integrating it into such frameworks exceed the benefits reaped by humanitarian action? If so, what strategies might alter the balance?

Security

- ☐ Is the security environment for humanitarian action becoming more volatile worldwide or only in specific contexts? What accounts for the changes?
- ☐ Based on a more in-depth understanding of the vectors of insecurity, what strategies are humanitarian organizations pursuing, and might they pursue, to enhance the security and effectiveness of their work?

In late 2005 and 2006, an international and interdisciplinary team of six researchers will investigate these issues in countries such as Afghanistan, Colombia, the DRC, Iraq, Liberia, and the Sudan. Members of the team are Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam, Antonio Donini, Larry Minear, Tasneem Mowjee, Karina Purushotma, and Ian Smillie. They will interview members of local communities and aid agency personnel in the field, and, using electronic questionnaires, personnel in aid headquarters as well.

The team's findings will be the subject of a number of reports and articles scheduled for completion in mid-2006. Input into the study is welcome. Further details, including the survey instruments being used in the research, are available at <famine.tufts.edu>.

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