

difficult practice to implement. For instance, the Bosnia intervention included nine agencies and departments of the United States government, a dozen other governments, seven international organizations, and 13 major NGOs - from the Red Cross to the International Crisis Group to the American Bar Association.¹⁸ While co-ordination between NGOs and international/national military forces is an ongoing difficulty, so is competition and rivalry amongst NGOs. In his thorough study of the Red Cross in a 1997 issue of *The New Yorker*, Michael Ignatieff wrote:

Interagency competition for donors, headlines, and victims is now a vast, unruly humanitarian bazaar, and the ICRC is struggling to be heard above the din and to maintain its principles. Its doctrine of neutrality is called into question by organizations like Médecins Sans Frontières...¹⁹

According to Shenstone, as agencies engage in rivalry with each other for control and management of the peace effort, NGOs become vulnerable for manipulation by host belligerents, confused over roles and run the risk of a great deal of misplaced activity.²⁰ Through cooperation, the specialization and abilities of different NGOs have the potential to be complementary to each other. In addition, NGOs must find a suitable coexistence with nation states and international organizations. Surely, the effects of real conflict should be adequate evidence to persuade those with a common peace agenda to work together.

As NGOs gain prominence as peacebuilders, they are also faced with the same calls for transparency, accountability, and effectiveness that countries and international institutions have come to expect. NGOs must account to the victims they serve, the host governments and the donors who fund their programmes. The legitimacy of NGO activities is dependent on their accountability to those they assist, those who fund their work and ultimately to international humanitarian and human rights law. Through public transparency, the work of NGOs may gain the credibility and respect needed to carry out their work.

Conclusion

The 1990s bore witness to the proliferation of a new kind of conflict. Rather than conventional interstate war, the past decade has seen numerous internal conflicts in which the brutality and the victimization of civilians has been lurid. This new form of conflict has forced the international community to rethink the whole concept of security and has jettisoned NGOs into a vital role as peacebuilders. As the nation-state and international organizations appear to be withdrawing from intervention, NGOs are faced with heightened expectations for capacity, efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy of NGOs in addressing complex civil conflicts. This study has surveyed these expectations and has also commented on a few of the problems NGOs have faced in the past decade.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

¹⁹ Michael Ignatieff, "Unarmed Warriors," *The New Yorker*, 24 March 1997, p. 58.

²⁰ Barbara Shenstone, "Civilian Roles in Peace Support Operations."