

The provision of assistance during a humanitarian ceasefire can contribute to correcting the false perceptions that disputants may have of each other. Mohammed writes that providing relief within a conflict situation encourages the cooperation of people from different communities, building trust by identifying and working on problems of mutual concern while minimizing the sources of dispute.⁷⁷ Interestingly, he describes the role of aid-giver in this context as that of facilitator rather than provider.

When parties in armed conflict cooperate in a humanitarian effort, for example, the immunization of young children, they may change their perceptions of each other. They may no longer be able to sustain the fiction that members of the other side are sub-human or a near facsimile. Instead, like the ideal conclusion of a problem-solving workshop, disputants may see that their antagonists are men of good will who subscribe to opposing viewpoints with an intensity and conviction as strong their own.⁷⁸ In that event, a humanitarian ceasefire may serve, in some small way, to de-escalate the conflict.

A prerequisite for negotiators who hope to implement successfully a humanitarian ceasefire is that they be perceived by the disputants as neutral and impartial. This, of course, is why Jim Grant insisted that no one use the immunization ceasefire in El Salvador to advance their own political ends and why he insisted upon giving credit to all for the success of the enterprise. Repeated or consistent application of humanitarian aid can bolster further the reputation of the supplier as an impartial, neutral and, therefore, trusted and respected third party. That reputation may then be traded upon by the aid-giver to interject itself more forthrightly into the conflict resolution process.

This interjection may take several forms. For example, during the India-Pakistan war of 1965, the Quakers formed the Pakistan-India Advisory Group. It included State

⁷⁷ Abdul Mohammed, "An NGO Perspective on Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict: A Case Study of Sudan," Paper Prepared for: An International Workshop on Humanitarian Emergencies and Conflict Resolution: Consultations on Africa, 7-9 March 1989, Harare, Zimbabwe, p. 4.

⁷⁸ Doob, *supra* note 14, p. 116.