

Table 2. UN information sources and their advantages/disadvantages for UN crisis warning and conflict management.

Information Source	Advantages	Disadvantages
Governmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UN Member States have a duty to provide UN with information - no financial cost to receive such information - specific individuals may not be available elsewhere - important to know and understand government policies and assumptions for UN policy development, contingency planning and action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - national bias and self-interest - domination of Western intelligence capabilities - incomplete and selective info. provided on a "need to know" and "need to know" basis) - often only analyses are provided without raw data and vice versa - sometimes may be placed at risk and dissemination of information provided (e.g. to avoid compromising intelligence sources)
The Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - wide ranging - maximum cost - non-intensive for UN - usually up-to-date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - media bias; sensationalistic approach - danger that information is broadly incorrect (due to rush conditions and dependence on oral interviews) - Western (US) media dominance
UN Personnel on-site (UN Agencies, Information Centres and field offices/peace-keeping missions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - first-hand observation, physical proximity - generally, more objective than above sources, but usually more cautious - direct communications with locals - possibility of assessing directly with protagonists - permits better targeting of desired information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - may overextend capacity of the UN agencies/offices - may displace host state, which might affect UN of trying - may compromise other functions (e.g., development work, UN publicity role) - is dependent on consent and cooperation of the host state and local authorities - requires caution to avoid accidental staged events - may be dangerous
NGOs and Individuals (e.g. humanitarians and organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - generally less biased - usable sources and contacts possible - less sensitive to criticism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - members states may protest to UN for role of non-state actors in UN - danger of lack of professionalism and accountability