

in the early stages of the conflict mediation process. For example, in the El Salvador case, the government refused to negotiate in any way with the FMLN. Their overriding concern was that negotiations with the guerrillas would confer on them a legitimacy the government was not ready to bestow. For the same reason, the government, would likely have been reluctant to allow an outside government to mediate with the rebels. But, because of their status as an NGO, the Salvadoran government was willing to let UNICEF, through the good offices of the Catholic church, make contact with the rebels.

Yarrow points to a similar pattern in the Nigerian civil war. He says that official bodies, such as the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the UN, or governments, such as the United States or Great Britain, could not visit Biafra or make contact with the Biafran rebels because Nigeria feared that they might give the breakaway state a legitimacy to which the Nigerian government insisted it was not entitled. The Quakers, says Yarrow, were not expected to operate under such inhibitions.⁹¹

Compounding this complication for governmental bodies is Article 2(7) of the UN Charter which forbids members from intervening in matters that are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state. Again, humanitarian NGOs are bound by no such restrictions.

3.4 Obstacles and Problems

A humanitarian ceasefire is a tentative affair. The longer the period of time that is agreed upon for the ceasefire, the greater the chance that the ceasefire will fall apart. Even when the period of time is short, there is never any real guarantee that both sides will abide by their unilateral commitments. In El Salvador, the two sides did not trust each other to stop fighting for more than one day. In Sudan, there were sporadic attacks on the convoys delivering relief. There were also, in some instances, endless delays in getting the relief vehicles moving.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 279.