

crisis action

Annual Report (2008 – 2009) with Accounts



Chair's Report

It has been another tremendously busy and impactful year for Crisis Action. Through the unstinting efforts of its hugely dedicated and professional staff, Crisis Action has clearly established itself in key European capitals as the first point of call for those wishing to mobilise NGO action on a range of high profile conflicts. At the same time, it has successfully expanded its international reach, by opening up presences in Cairo and New York. And it has done all of this while building a solid financial base to ensure the sustainability of its operations, in a particularly difficult financial climate.

Much of the credit for these achievements must go, in the first instance, to Brendan Cox, Executive Director of Crisis Action from 2006 to 2009, who stepped down in February this year to become Gordon Brown's Special Advisor on Africa and International Development.



Brendan did a formidable job in helping build Crisis Action into what it is today. Under his leadership Crisis Action grew from two staff in a single office, to twelve staff in six offices in six countries. Its income increased exponentially, from under £60,000 to over £700,000. Brendan ensured that Crisis Action became an organisation of international renown with a stellar reputation and record of success. On behalf of the Board I want to thank him for his remarkable legacy, and for leaving Crisis Action in such excellent shape.

I'm also delighted to welcome Gemma Mortensen as the new Executive Director. Gemma has been with Crisis Action since 2006, leading its UK advocacy during much of that time, and has effortlessly taken over the running of the organisation. In her short time in charge, she has successfully consolidated its operations, and skilfully positioned it to continue its critical role on an expanded stage. I have no doubt that, supported by her outstanding team, Gemma will ensure that Crisis Action continues to successfully fulfil its mission to avert conflicts, prevent human rights abuses and ensure governments adhere to their obligations to protect civilians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Grono'.

Nick Grono
Chair, Crisis Action
Deputy President, International Crisis Group

Who we work with

Core Partners

Aegis Trust
Amnesty International UK
Arabic Network of Human Rights Information (ANHRI)
British American Security Information Council (BASIC)
Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)
CARE International UK
Christian Aid
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART)
Human Rights Watch (HRW)
Inter-Church Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO)
International Alert

International Crisis Group
International Rescue Committee (IRC)
MEDACT
Mercy Corps
Muslim Aid
Oxfam International
Oxford Research Group (ORG)
Saferworld
Save the Children UK
Stichting Vluchteling (Netherlands Refugee Foundation)
Tearfund
The Elders
Waging Peace
War Child
World Vision UK

Network Members

Amicus/Unite section
Anti-Slavery International
Baptist Union
British Humanist Association (BHA)
British Muslim Forum (BMF)
British Refugee Council
Burma Campaign UK
Burma Initiative Asienhaus
Chatham House
Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW)
Church of England International Office
Council for Arab British Understanding (CAABU)
Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)
Foreign Policy Centre (FPC)

Friends of the Earth UK
Britain's General Union (GMB)
Greenpeace
Hindu Council UK
Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR)
International Action Network for Small Arms (IANSA)
Iraq Body Count
Methodist Church
Methodist Relief and Development Fund (MRDF)
Mothers Union
Muslim Council of Britain (MCB)
National Union of Students (NUS)
National Union of Teachers (NUT)
New Israel Fund (NIF)
Peace Direct
People & Planet
Quaker Peace and Social Witness (QPSW)
René Cassin
Responding to Conflict
Sudanese Organisation Against Torture (SOAT)
Three Faiths Forum
Trade Union Congress (TUC)
UNISON
United Nations Association (UNA)
United Reform Church
Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC)
War on Want
Welfare Association
Zimbabwe Europe Network

“By helping NGOs work more effectively together, Crisis Action helps to ensure a strong and coordinated voice on critical human rights and humanitarian issues around armed conflict. This more unified, strategic vision pays dividends, again and again.”

Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch

Year Overview

I joined Crisis Action three years ago, intrigued by its mission to harness the power of civil society to speak with one voice – with force and authority – and call on governments to avert unnecessary conflict and protect civilians from the ravages of war. Over that time, I have become convinced that the model is as workable in practice as it sounds compelling in theory, and that its potential grows with increased geographical reach.



Over the past year, out of the chaos of the global financial crisis, an accelerating shift of power from West to East has emerged and with it an acknowledgement that there can be no business as usual in the conduct of international relations. Crisis Action has sought to help partners increase their effectiveness in these changing circumstances by expanding its partner base and strategic presence internationally. Our new offices in New York and Cairo are now providing a crucial presence for partners at the United Nations and access to important players in the Arab world. We hope that the addition of an office in Sub-Saharan Africa next year will further increase the scope and impact of our collective efforts.

Working together, our partners present a formidable force of unrivalled expertise, credibility and geographical clout. At Crisis Action we feel privileged to work with such an extraordinary international network of major NGOs, opinion-leaders and experts who, through flexible coalitions, are able to influence the world's most powerful people to take action. Over the past year, strategic collaboration on a global scale has helped:

- Stop the supply of bank-paper from Germany to Zimbabwe that was being used by President Mugabe to pay the militias responsible for an orchestrated campaign of violence against civilians
- Support Arab and African civil society to generate intensive regional debate and political attention on the Darfur conflict and link their efforts to global campaigning stretching from New York to Ukraine
- Push the UN Security Council to send vital reinforcements needed by the UN peacekeeping force in the Democratic Republic of Congo to protect civilians on the ground
- Secure a UN Security Council resolution leading to a UN-mandated ceasefire to the Gaza conflict

There is still much to do. As armed conflict continues to rage at a huge cost to civilian life and livelihoods, we cannot afford to be complacent. Our responses must deal with the tough complexities of the situations we confront by combining sophisticated analysis with an unerring focus on action and impact. I am confident that, through the expertise and creativity of our international team, the coming year will present important opportunities to help our partners secure lasting change on the ground.

We are deeply grateful for the generous support of all our partners, donors and advisors. We hope you will continue to help us to help people whose lives have been blighted by conflict around the world.

Gemma Mortensen, Executive Director

Sudan

Throughout 2008, civilians in Darfur faced further acute suffering, living under the threat of continued fighting with over two million people still living displaced by the conflict. The decision

of the Government of Sudan to expel international humanitarian agencies in March 2009 demonstrated further disregard for the protection of vulnerable communities and left millions of people at even greater risk. At the same time, escalating violence in South Sudan and tensions between North and South sparked growing fears that widespread violence could erupt once more.

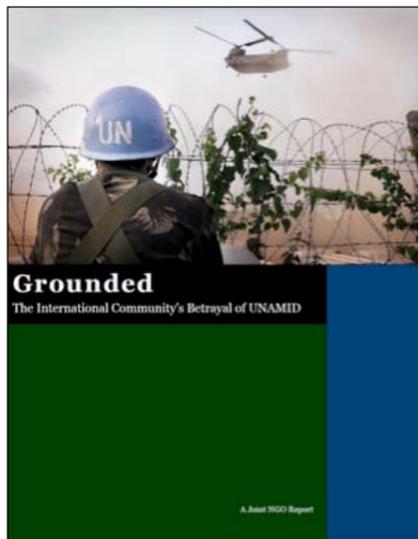
Crisis Action stepped in to enable organisations from London to Cairo to mount joint responses around moments of crisis as well as undertaking more long-term work to prevent deadly conflict

returning. Six years into the Darfur conflict, the campaign succeeded in ensuring that governments have renewed their commitment to push for a resolution to the conflict and a peaceful transition towards the referendum in the South.

Throughout the year Crisis Action worked to maintain the global community of activists working on Darfur, bringing together over a hundred groups across the world via virtual meetings to share intelligence and plan campaigns.

UNAMID: Equipping the peacekeeping force to protect civilians

A key priority of our campaign work was to push for the United Nations peacekeeping force in Darfur (UNAMID) to be deployed speedily and given the resources to do the job. Crisis Action responded to partners' concern that the peacekeeping force did not have the support it needed to fulfil commitments to protect civilians in Darfur.



Helicopters from Ukraine

Working with partners, and through discussions with the United Nation's Department of Peace-Keeping Operations (DPKO) and other key officials, Crisis Action identified helicopters as the most appropriate focus for a campaign in order to both secure this vital component in an effective force on the ground and to highlight the wider need to equip UNAMID adequately to protect civilians.

In July we facilitated the release of a report in the names of forty of our partners providing the details of the countries with helicopters that could be deployed in Darfur. A preface from members of The Elders – Desmond Tutu, Jimmy Carter, Lakhdar Brahimi and others – ensured widespread attention, with the UN Secretary General publicly welcoming it as supporting his efforts to secure contributions to the peacekeeping force. As a result of the joint efforts DPKO found a cost-effective means to enable Ethiopia to provide helicopters to UNAMID.

“ Crisis Action plays an important and catalytic role in informing, mobilising and supporting organizations – including The Elders – to act decisively and strategically in response to emergency situations in many parts of the world. I am a strong supporter of Crisis Action's impressive work.

Mabel van Oranje, CEO, The Elders

Ukraine was identified as a key target for the campaign and within weeks its President publicly declared it might be able to provide UNAMID with the helicopters. With the support of partners, Crisis Action reacted immediately, including:

- Organising a fact-finding trip to Kiev to meet with key diplomats, Ukrainian politicians and military officials and identify potential Ukrainian partners
- Hosting a joint roundtable in Kiev with the Centre for Army Conversion and Disarmament Studies – a Ukrainian think-tank – for Ukrainian defence ministry and company representatives to discuss Ukrainian capabilities
- Liaising with DPKO to provide information on the unfolding discussions on the issue in Ukraine
- Working with German MPs to investigate the potential for European financial support for Ukraine to provide helicopters

The campaign sustained pressure throughout the year on Ukraine and the international community to find a solution to enable UNAMID to have the extra equipment it needed, though wrangles over finance prevented a final deal being signed within the timeframe for this report.

Air support from Italy

Crisis Action also supported Italian advocacy groups to campaign to ensure Rome fulfilled its promise to provide air support for UNAMID through:

- Parliamentary work to increase pressure on the Italian government, including promoting parliamentary debates
- Coordinating a letter-writing campaign to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and key parliamentarians
- Promoting the issue in the Italian media and mounting public events

The campaign succeeded in securing concrete commitments from the Italian government and parliament to deploy air support to UNAMID. The Senate also reauthorised expenditures for UNAMID in 2009.

Crisis Action's focused and strategic approach and keen eye for opportunities have been of great benefit to Oxfam International's work on armed conflict. Crisis Action enables us to work together with a wide range of organisations from New York to Cairo and, in doing so, have far greater impact on the decision-makers we seek to influence.

Jeremy Hobbs, Executive Director, Oxfam International

The UN and the Secretary-General in particular, has systematically asked Member States to provide the missing aviation assets to UNAMID... And the report that has been put out really strongly encourages capable countries to make available transport helicopters to UNAMID.

Michelle Montas, Spokesperson for U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, speaking at a UN Press Conference, 31 July 2008

Responding to the expulsion of the humanitarian agencies

After 13 international and three national humanitarian agencies were expelled from Darfur by the Government of Sudan in March 2009, Crisis Action worked with international partners to press the government to reverse its decision and to put in place measures to fill gaps in vital humanitarian aid.

“ Following the Sudanese Government’s decision to expel 13 international NGOs in March 2009, Crisis Action reacted extremely quickly, establishing contact between NGOs affected by the decision, coordinating information exchange, and helping us to agree common objectives and implement joint international activities. At a critical moment, Crisis Action’s intervention brought real added value and resulted in a faster and more coherent response.

François Danel, Executive Director, Action Contre la Faim

- Coordinated a letter by Arab intellectuals, released in the Arab press in advance of an African Union (AU) summit in Libya in June 2009, to draw attention to the plight of civilians and call for a stronger AU response
- Organised a high-level delegation to Cairo and Addis Ababa to meet with Amr Moussa, Secretary General of the Arab League (AL), and AU Chairperson Jean Ping to highlight the impact of the expulsions on the safety and living conditions of civilians and request they help ensure their needs were met across northern Sudan
- Supported partners across Europe to ensure the EU denounced the expulsions in a statement from the Czech presidency and the Council of Ministers
- Assisted Sudanese diaspora groups to organise demonstrations and petitions to call for a robust international response to the expulsions

Crisis Action:

- Coordinated regular virtual meetings with partners, from New York to Cairo, to share information on the impact of the expulsions and identify the assistance needed
- Helped partners devise joint strategies to influence decision-makers and coordinated high-level advocacy in Berlin, Brussels, Cairo, London and New York, including meetings with diplomats from key countries such as China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda
- Supported independent efforts to map the impact of expulsions, including a report issued by the Overseas Development Institute in the UK
- Briefed journalists and key commentators on developments



Kalma Camp for internally displaced persons, South Darfur, 2008.

Photo: Susan Schulman

Extending international campaign impact

During the year, Crisis Action responded to requests to help increase the effectiveness of international campaigning to influence decision-making on Darfur and Sudan. Crisis Action stepped up its role in coordinating strategy and action by national and regional groups of campaign organisations working on the issue across the world – underpinned not only through our existing offices in Brussels, Paris, Berlin and London, but also our new offices for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in Cairo and for the United Nations in New York.

Crisis Action worked with partners across the world to keep Darfur and Sudan at the top of governments’ agendas through targeted advocacy and campaigns. Across our network activities included:

- Organising regular national and international meetings between partners to agree joint policy platforms and advocacy strategies
- Feeding intelligence and analysis to our partners from our international network of contacts across key capitals, the EU, UN and Arab League
- Organising briefings for partners by policy experts to inform understanding of the conflict and equip them to promote informed public debate
- Helping partners secure media coverage and provide regular briefings for journalists in key countries
- Facilitating regular meetings between partners and high-level officials to influence and inform policy-making
- Supporting initiatives to increase the participation of Darfuri civil society in the peace process
- Facilitating a joint NGO statement to inform a debate on Sudan in the German parliament in September 2009
- Drawing together and presenting a series of policy recommendations for German MPs on the anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2009
- Supporting the work of the Arab Coalition for Darfur by providing strategic advice, facilitating high-level political contacts in the region and helping boost the media profile of the Darfur crisis in the Arab world
- Bringing together an open letter from more than sixteen Arab NGOs calling for the region to engage more on the Darfur crisis ahead of the Arab League Summit in March 2009
- At the request of partners, convening an NGO working group on Chad/Sudan in New York to improve the coordination and effectiveness of advocacy towards the UN



Arab Coalition for Darfur meeting, Cairo, July 2009.

Photo: Maddah Idriss

Having Crisis Action in the Middle East and North Africa adds great value to the work of the region on Darfur. It draws the different capacities of organisations together and channels them in the most effective and strategic direction. Its support to the Arab Coalition for Darfur work has been extremely useful and impressive.

Haggag Nayel, Secretary General, Arab Coalition for Darfur

Justice for Darfur

Crisis Action supported the launch of the Justice for Darfur Campaign in early 2008, bringing together many international and regional organisations to bring those responsible for international crimes in Darfur to account.

Justice for Darfur



“The Cairo Institute for Human Rights’ advocacy on Darfur has been maximised by the collective action that is encouraged and coordinated by Crisis Action. The global campaign on Justice for Darfur has moved our advocacy concerns into the global level. Crisis Action knows exactly how to build on the strengths of each organisation to promote the policy impact of our lobbying on decision-makers internationally.

Moataz El Fegiery, Executive Director of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)

had been indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity in May 2007. EU foreign ministers, followed by EU heads of state, then increased pressure via an unprecedented statement in which they said they were ready to consider sanctions if Sudan continued not to cooperate with the ICC.

Up to June 2008, the Justice for Darfur campaign worked to encourage the UN Security Council and EU to support the efforts of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to bring those indicted for war crimes and crimes against humanity to justice. Through joint advocacy and media efforts, work with allies in the UN Security Council and EU, and taking advantage of the growing frustration in these institutions with Khartoum’s obstructive attitude to the ICC, the Justice for Darfur campaign achieved considerable impact on both fronts.

At the UN Security Council, ambassadors from its ‘Permanent Five’ members on a mission to Khartoum urged the Government to cooperate with the ICC. Upon their return, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement calling on Sudan to cooperate fully with the ICC, the first time the Security Council had taken formal and unanimous action on Sudan’s failure to comply with the ICC. In the European Union, the European Parliament condemned Sudan for obstructing the ICC arrest warrants for Ahmed Harun and Ali Kosheib, who

Challenging immunity

After the ICC Prosecutor’s request for an arrest warrant against Sudan’s President Omar al-Bashir, from July 2008 African and Arab governments exerted strong pressure for an ‘Article 16 resolution’ of the UN Security Council to defer the arrest warrant for a one-year period. With the situation still grave on the ground in Sudan and the Government of Sudan still obstructing positive change, Crisis Action ensured a quick and coordinated response from the Justice for Darfur campaign to strengthen the opposition of key UN Security Council members to the use of Article 16 in this case. Crisis Action helped ensure that the support of Darfuri, African and Arab civil society and personalities for the work of the Court was heard in the debate.



Media coverage for the campaign exposing France considering giving ‘Article 16’ immunity to Sudan’s President Bashir from being prosecuted for crimes against humanity.

Crisis Action activities to achieve this included:

- Facilitating the exchange of views among organisations in Justice for Darfur to help them forge a clear, joint position on this controversial issue
- Coordinating joint advocacy meetings, NGO lobbying letters and media work in France and the UK to expose the weakness of these countries’ initial opposition to the use of Article 16
- Coordinating the drafting of a report – ‘Rhetoric Versus Reality’ – to document the gap between the progress the Sudanese government alleged they had made to justify an Article 16 suspension and the actual situation on the ground
- Organising two trips for a Sudanese human rights activist to lobby decision-makers in Europe and generate media coverage on the need for justice for Darfur
- Coordinating a joint statement from NGOs from regions across the world supporting the arrest warrant against President al-Bashir, and thereby promoting the voice of African and Arab organisations in media coverage of the campaign
- Supporting Darfuri diaspora groups organising memorials for the victims of the conflict in The Hague, Brussels, London and Rome to underline that justice had to be part of any long-term solution
- Coordinating a joint letter from 27 Darfuri women about the continuing plight of women in Darfur arguing that the victims of the conflict had to be at the centre of policy-making
- Facilitating a letter from international and Arab region NGOs to the Arab League Summit, calling on its members not to push for an Article 16 deferral



Darfuri diaspora demonstration in support of justice, London, March 2009.

Crisis Action’s support in the past year has helped the Justice for Darfur campaign (composed of groups with different mandates, members, geographical bases and positions on the impact of the ICC arrest warrant against Bashir) promote the need for justice as a core element of a permanent resolution of the conflict in Darfur.



Darfuri diaspora demonstration in support of justice, Brussels, March 2009.

These are the underpinnings of the trade-off argument – that in Sudan’s case, in the immediate interests of the hungry and oppressed, and the long-term interests of stability, justice should take a back seat to peace. The strongest counter to this position comes from an unexpected quarter – from Sudanese human rights and civil society activists who would surely bear the brunt of any government backlash. They insist that there can be no trade-off between justice and peace in Sudan.

Julian Borger, “Khartoum conundrum”, The Guardian, 16 October 2008

Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory



Photo: Amnesty International
Destruction in Gaza following Operation Cast Lead.

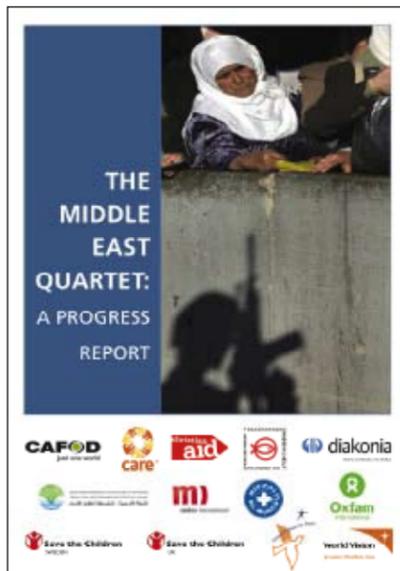
During the year, intense conflict and the continued blockade of the Gaza strip left civilians destitute while hopes for a negotiated solution have been thwarted by continuing political divisions. Crisis Action worked to empower a progressive, mainstream constituency of NGOs and international experts to push for more courageous and consistent political leadership on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It has combined long-term campaigning – to expose the inconsistencies and inadequacies in international approaches – with emergency responses to amplify the voices of those calling for the international community to protect civilians caught up in the conflict.

Gaza crisis response

In response to the Israeli military offensive on Gaza in December 2008 – January 2009, Crisis Action quickly escalated its existing work on the territory to coordinate a forceful civil society campaign calling for a comprehensive and sustainable ceasefire and an end to the blockade. The campaign succeeded in achieving its aims of a UN Security Council-mandated ceasefire and the temporary freeze of an upgrade in relations between the EU and Israel in order to exert greater pressure for change on the two issues.

Crisis Action offices coordinated a rapid response with partners, including:

- Organising lobby meetings for NGO chief executives with foreign ministries across Europe – including in the UK with Foreign Secretary David Miliband – to relay their pressing concern about the plight of civilians in Gaza
- Setting up regular briefings with key officials for partners, including advisors in the UK Prime Minister’s office
- Assisting partners to collate first-hand information from the field on the inadequacy of the daily three-hour lull agreed by the parties for humanitarian work, using this to undertake joint media work – including an emergency press conference in New York – to call for a full ceasefire
- As a response to the ban on foreign journalists entering Gaza, Crisis Action linked journalists up to field-based NGOs to provide first-hand testimony of the impact of the conflict on civilians inside Gaza



Jewish and Muslim voices for peace

Crisis Action also worked with leading figures from the Muslim and Jewish communities to increase pressure for an immediate and permanent ceasefire for the benefit of both Palestinians and Israelis by:

- Facilitating and publishing a joint statement by the UK Government’s leading Muslim counter-extremism advisors calling on the Government to intensify efforts to secure a ceasefire, and setting up prime-time radio and TV interviews with signatories
- Providing further support to the signatories of the statement to publicly condemn anti-Jewish reprisals in Britain to the Gaza conflict
- Facilitating a joint letter from mainstream Jewish leaders, including rabbis and prominent community leaders, all writing as profound and passionate supporters of Israel, calling for an immediate ceasefire, an end to all rocket attacks and the permanent lifting of the blockade of Gaza – and getting it published as a front page exclusive in The Observer newspaper in the UK, also generating wide international media coverage

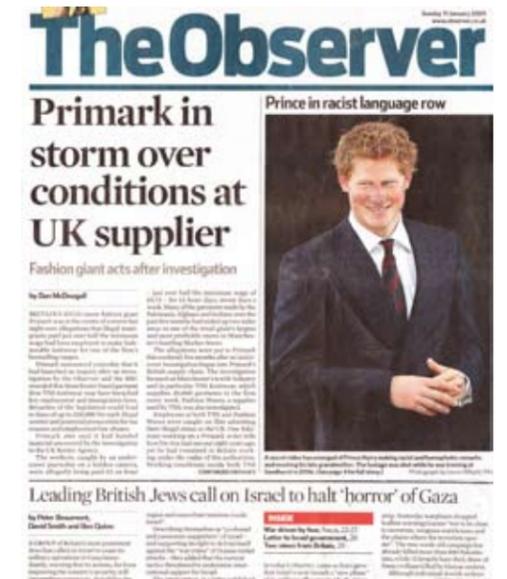
Building a European network

During the year Crisis Action built a network of over thirty leading international humanitarian, human rights and development organisations across fifteen EU member states working on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Becoming a hub for building systematic, targeted advocacy in Brussels and across key member states, the network also linked into wider international campaigning to lever greater impact on decision-making and policy.

These efforts contributed to a discernable shift by key EU member states to adopt stronger positions and public statements on stopping Israeli settlement construction in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and ending the blockade of Gaza, as well as showing greater openness to engage with a possible Palestinian unity government involving Hamas. Crucially, it has also encouraged the EU to be more willing to use levers – such as the EU’s trade arrangements with the settlements and the proposed upgrade of EU-Israel relations – to apply substantive political pressure to achieve change on the key issues on the ground.

On Sunday morning, The Observer carried a letter from leading Jews sharply criticising Operation Cast Lead. The signatories were not the usual suspects; they could not be dismissed as marginal or, heaven forbid, “self-hating” Jews. They included the leaders of Liberal and Reform Judaism in Britain, along with the pre-eminent British scholar of Jewish history, David Cesarani, and the architect of Holocaust Memorial Day, Michael Mitzman... Theirs is a welcome intervention. They confirmed that you do not have to stand with either the pro-Israel hawks or the anti-Zionist left. There is a space in between, filled by Jews who wrestle daily with doubt and anxiety. These Jews continue to love Israel, but they fear Cast Lead is at best futile and at worst bound ultimately to hurt Israel much more than it helps Israel.

Jonathan Freedland, The Jewish Chronicle, 14 January 2009



The coordinated network of organisations has included groups such as United Civilians for Peace (Netherlands), Broederlijk Delen (Belgium), Oxfam France, Agir Ici, Oxfam Spain, Intermon, EED and Misereor (Germany), Diakonia (Sweden), DanChurchAid (Denmark), Trocaire (Ireland), Amnesty International, CARE member organisations, and others.



A young boy plays outside his house in Jebalia, Gaza, following the ceasefire. Campaigning for an immediate ceasefire by both sides was a key aim of Crisis Action's campaigning.

Europe-wide campaigns

Across the EU, joint activities were focused on the Gaza conflict and blockade, Israeli settlements in the West Bank and the role of the EU in pushing to resolve the conflict and included:

- Coordinating and launching a joint NGO report, *Middle East Quartet: A Progress Report*, demonstrating the failure of the Quartet (the US, EU, Russia and UN) to hold the parties accountable for their commitments on the peace process. The report, published internationally ahead of the Quartet summit in September 2008, and accompanied by intense lobbying activities across the EU and in New York, was read at the highest levels and secured international media coverage
- Coordinating advocacy in Brussels and across national capitals ahead of important decision-making events – such as a meeting of EU foreign ministers on the Middle East in December 2008, and the EU-Israel Association Council in June 2009 – to push for EU leadership
- Acquiring and sharing intelligence between Brussels and member state capitals, enabling partners to compare positions they were hearing from their governments in Brussels and at home, so as to work more effectively with national parliaments in several member states and make a distinct difference to their governments' positions
- Initiating and coordinating public events on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the EU's role, such as a seminar on 'Perspectives on the Gaza War – The Next Steps' for the EU held in the European Parliament in April 2009

“ Crisis Action's excellent information sharing and advocacy support have been essential to our efforts to bring human rights considerations into the Czech government's questionable handling of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during its EU presidency. The advocacy delegation they brought to Prague was the first of its kind on this issue, had a perfectly clear strategy and helped us deliver our message to the highest levels.

Dáša van der Horst, Director, Amnesty International Czech Republic

- Facilitating meetings through our German office between Issam Younis, the Palestinian winner of the prestigious Weimar Human Rights Award, and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the development minister, MPs, journalists and German NGOs

Lobbying the Czech

Presidency of the EU

With the Czech Republic set to take over the rotating Presidency of the EU in January 2009 Crisis Action responded to partners' concerns about the Czech position on the conflict by organising a senior delegation of international, Israeli and Czech human rights and humanitarian organisations to Prague. The delegation focused on the role of the Presidency in dealing with the Middle East conflict and included meetings with ministers, a public debate and media work.

Peace talks to include all sides

To support partners' calls for a peace process that genuinely included all sides in the conflict, Crisis Action coordinated an open letter by a group of fourteen prominent former peace negotiators including Lord Patten, Lord Ashdown, Sir Kieran Prendergast, Gareth Evans and Professor Shlomo Ben-Ami (former Israeli Foreign Minister) calling for an end to the policy of isolating Hamas and stating that Israeli-Palestinian peace would not be possible without inclusive negotiations. The call received intense media coverage worldwide and reinforced pressure on the new US administration and the EU to rethink their approach.

Arab Peace Initiative

Crisis Action supported the work of the Oxford Research Group on an initiative to bring together key players outside the formal negotiations, including senior Israeli and Arab figures such as Prince Turki of Saudi Arabia, to explore how the Arab Peace Initiative could be used to accelerate negotiations towards peace.

To coincide with the first visit of US President Barack Obama to the Middle East in June 2009, Crisis Action's MENA office coordinated a letter by former Arab leaders including H.E. Dr. Esmat Abdel Meguid (Former Secretary General of the League of Arab States, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs), H.E. Professor Ghassan Salame (Former Lebanese Minister of Culture, Currently Advisor to the UN Secretary General), and H.E. Leila Sharaf (Former Jordanian Minister of Information, Senator in the Jordanian Senate), to the leading regional Arabic newspaper Asharq Al Awsat, calling for the Arab Peace Initiative to become the cornerstone of the United States Middle East policy and recognising the need for Arab leadership to bring an end to the conflict. The letter received wide media and political attention.

Gaza: Calling to account

Crisis Action was also asked by partners to support the calls for an independent inquiry into gross violations of international human rights and humanitarian law committed by all parties to the Gaza conflict. Crisis Action organised an open letter signed by sixteen leading international judges, investigators and human rights advocates including Antonio Cassese, Richard Goldstone, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, Mary Robinson, and Desmond Tutu, calling for such an investigation. Launched in March 2009, it was publicised in the international media.

A few weeks later, the UN Human Rights Council appointed an investigation team on Gaza headed by Justice Goldstone (and involving two other signatories of the letter) who declared their intent to deal impartially with abuses by all parties as requested in the letter. Crisis Action also led coordinated advocacy in key EU member states calling on governments to support an international independent investigation.

They were part of the peace settlements in Cambodia, Somalia and Bosnia, they negotiated with militant groups like the Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka or the IRA in Northern Ireland and a few of them were also engaged in the Middle East peace process. Fourteen elder statesmen from Europe, Australia, South America, Africa and Asia are calling in an open letter for the Mideast Quartet...to end their diplomatic boycott against Hamas.

Spiegel Online, 26 February 2009

Crisis Action played a discreet but vital role in coordinating a public statement by leading international jurists on Gaza: ensuring it got widespread media attention and had impact on the important decision-makers. On issues of such sensitivity, it is invaluable for Crisis Action to bring together experts to speak with one voice.

Justice Richard Goldstone, Head of UN Gaza Inquiry

Democratic Republic of Congo

“ NGOs increasingly seek to influence the UN Security Council. Many Council members encourage NGOs to provide input based on their experience in the field. Still, nothing reinforces our persuasiveness more than coordinated messaging. Crisis Action has therefore become a vital agent for promoting NGO collective action.

George Rupp, President & CEO, International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Action also supported the work of partners in Brussels, France, New York and the UK to get the EU to respond so as to protect civilians. Crisis Action coordinated a two month campaign which included:

Following escalating conflict in North Kivu in September 2008, in which hundreds of thousands of civilians were at risk from a devastating cycle of violence and abuse, Crisis Action worked with partners globally to forge a common strategy to push for their immediate protection. The coalition campaigned for a new UN Special Envoy to push the political process forward and address the underlying causes of the conflict, and for the UN to deploy more peacekeepers to provide security on the ground.

Following the UN Secretary General's request for an EU bridging force to underpin the UN peace-keeping force for Congo (MONUC), Crisis

- Working with EU countries who supported the Secretary-General's request, such as the Belgian government, to provide critical intelligence to partners to inform joint advocacy efforts
- Organising meetings in Paris, London, Brussels and New York between NGO representatives and Alan Doss, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, as well as for a senior MONUC official who had been operating in the conflict zone
- Providing background briefings for journalists and assisting partners and Congolese diaspora groups to organise demonstrations in London and Paris to raise pressure to strengthen government positions on the conflict
- Running advertising campaigns in the UK to push for greater political leadership from the Prime Minister
- Organising a demonstration outside a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels, which gained international media coverage
- Coordinating an open letter signed from presidents, prime ministers and high level individuals including Mary Robinson, Desmond



Photo: Thierry Dethier



Photo: Crisis Action



Photo: Jean-Pierre Ferré

Demonstrators call for timely action on D.R. Congo in Brussels, Berlin and Paris.

Tutu, F.W. De Klerk, Václav Havel and others calling for political leadership from the EU to take action on the conflict

- Organising meetings with EU ministers and advisors to heads of state and a joint letter to EU ministers from NGO partners in key EU states
- Assisting partners to work with the European Parliament on a resolution calling for the EU bridging force
- Organising an emergency press conference at the UN in New York to press the Security Council to take concrete steps to protect civilians and prevent mass atrocities

Though a number of key European states swung behind the idea, in the end the EU failed to deploy a bridging force. However, as a result of the campaign the UK, France and other countries supported an increased commitment of UN troops for MONUC and stronger measures to halt the violence and provide long-term security for civilians.

Coordinating EU action

At the request of partners, Crisis Action Brussels began hosting a monthly roundtable for all the organisations and platforms working on the conflict in the DRC and wider Great Lakes region to take advantage of opportunities to push DRC higher up the EU agenda.

Crisis Action's Paris and Berlin offices set up coordinating structures for French and German NGOs working on the DRC conflict and supported partners by:

- Organising regular NGO meetings and roundtables with experts to give background briefings for NGOs and government representatives
- Coordinating high level meetings – including with the German foreign ministry and the cabinet of The Chancellor, Angela Merkel – that have built stronger relations between partners and officials
- Organising a rally in front of the German Parliament and coordinating media work, to highlight the dire situation in DRC and ask the German government to support UN efforts
- Coordinating lobbying by partners to support the EU initiative for a Special Rapporteur on DRC

Coordinating pressure at the UN

Following emergency work on DRC, Crisis Action's New York office was asked to convene the Great Lakes NGO Working Group focusing on DRC, to assist partners to coordinate more effective UN advocacy.

Crisis Action proved to be a formidable force in responding to the upsurge in violence in Eastern Congo. Their ability to bring together powerful individuals and organisations within civil society to lobby and campaign internationally cuts straight through to decision-makers. Crisis Action helped ensure that the protection of civilians in DRC was central to the political agenda. And the efforts of their team, supporting their many partners, directly contributed to mobilising international efforts to contain the crisis.

Alan Doss, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Crisis Action has brought real added value to advocacy and campaigning in Germany. They have successfully brought together different NGOs to push collectively, and more powerfully, around our shared concerns – including strengthening women's voices from conflict areas. Their flexible and action-orientated approach is of great benefit to our work.

Selmin Çaliskan, Advisor on Women's Human Rights and Politics, Medica Mondiale

Zimbabwe

Preventing political violence against civilians

In June 2008, following the contested presidential, parliamentary and local elections in Zimbabwe, Crisis Action helped to coordinate a civil society response to the serious upsurge in state violence against civilians.

“As Zimbabweans faced violence and repression after controversial elections, Crisis Action brought local, regional and international organisations together to share information and develop common messages and campaigns. Their strategic support was crucial in stopping the export of paper used to print Zimbabwean dollars, which was used to pay militias committing the violence.

Pascal Richard, Coordinator, Zimbabwe Europe Network

sanctions were in place. Ahead of the Zimbabwean presidential election run-off, Crisis Action initiated a joint campaign with German NGOs working on Zimbabwe and within days:



TV report of demonstrators protesting in front of Giesecke & Devrient headquarters in Munich

Stopping torture funds

The biggest impact on Zimbabwe was through our Berlin office, where Crisis Action assisted partners to mount a joint public campaign against the German company, Giesecke & Devrient, responsible for supplying the Zimbabwean central bank with banknote paper. Partners with access to information within Zimbabwe alerted Crisis Action to the fact that President Mugabe was relying on printing bank notes to pay soldiers responsible for violence against civilians. Individual journalists and NGOs had already been trying to expose the delivery of banknote paper by the company, but it had dismissed all calls to rethink delivery, claiming they were legally bound by existing treaties and World Bank regulations so long as no official

- Worked with partners to explore the link between the company's activities and human rights abuses in Zimbabwe
- Organised a rally in front of the company's headquarters in Munich
- Coordinated a joint public letter calling on the company to suspend delivery which received wide media coverage
- Briefed key MPs and government officials on the impact of the company continuing its operations

As a result of these joint efforts, the German development minister criticised the company harshly in a radio interview and the German

foreign minister directly called on the company to shut down its Zimbabwe business.

Four days after the NGO rally, Giesecke & Devrient bowed to the pressure and announced that it was immediately stopping delivery of banknote paper to Zimbabwe. On 1 July 2008 Dr. Karsten Ottenberg, Chairman of the Management Board and CEO of Giesecke & Devrient GmbH, stated:

“Our decision is a reaction to the political tension in Zimbabwe, which is mounting significantly rather than easing as expected, and takes account of the critical evaluation by the international community, German government and general public.”

Crisis Action was informed by partners that, as a direct result, the Zimbabwean Government had to stop paying some of their security forces due to restricted currency flows. Several camps in which security forces were reported to be torturing civilians were then closed.

Rapid Response: Georgia, Sri Lanka and Burma

Crisis Action has developed an alert system to respond rapidly to partners' concerns over potential or escalating conflicts to enable prompt discussion and initial coordination of an NGO response. When this happens, Crisis Action decides whether to reallocate capacity from existing priorities to assist partners' collective response to an emergency. Crisis Action then hands over coordination to partners to ensure joint work can be sustained before returning to existing priorities. Last year Crisis Action has undertaken such quick-fire responses on Georgia, Sri Lanka and Burma.

Georgia

In August 2008, Russia launched a large-scale military operation across the Georgian border, occupying South Ossetia. Crisis Action responded to partners by organising regular conference calls to exchange information on the rapidly changing situation, where lack of access to the Russian-controlled territory was a serious concern for humanitarian agencies.

Crisis Action continued to coordinate information-sharing and help develop joint positions, particularly on what humanitarian help was then needed and coordinating its delivery. Crisis Action liaised between partners and relevant officials at the European Commission and the UN representatives in Georgia to ensure a clear channel of communication with key donors.

Sri Lanka

During February to May 2009, the final months of the Sri Lankan government's military campaign against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), Crisis Action worked with partners to address the humanitarian tragedy in the Vanni area of Sri Lanka. Our New York office:

- Organised meetings of New York-based NGOs working on Sri Lanka, to lay out and help implement a common advocacy strategy
- Prepared a letter to the UN Secretary-General and the UN Security Council to recommend specific steps for a fair and sustainable resolution of the conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE
- Organised a press conference at UN headquarters, where five NGOs presented rare, fresh information from the conflict zone in Sri Lanka and recommendations to end the crisis leading to widespread media coverage by CNN, Al-Jazeera, and Le Monde, amongst others

Crisis Action has developed an impressive record of politically astute and effective work on areas of great sensitivity. Their promotion of influential NGO coalitions and their impact on prominent international leaders are instrumental in building collective efforts to protect civilians from violent conflict.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock, Director of the Ditchley Foundation and former UK Ambassador to the United Nations



The remains of a shelter destroyed in an attack on March 2009 in Putumattalan

Financial Statements

Statement of Activities for the year ended 31 May 2009

	2009 £	2008 £
INCOME		
Projects	191,208	77,877
Donations	546,919	442,131
Partners	35,037	27,000
Miscellaneous	0	301
Interest	3,411	6,513
Sale of Equipment		800
Exchange Gain	7,485	
Total	784,060	554,622
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries and National Insurance	441,387	120,494
Consultants	14,922	176
Pension	12,007	7,578
Rent, Rates & Insurance	43,489	12,810
Telephone & Office Expenses	21,361	8,377
Events	16,020	75,594
Reports & Publishing	3,174	1,082
Staff, Training & Recruitment	21,701	8,327
IT Fees	5,558	4,115
IT Equipment	0	-
Other Equipment	0	-
General Expenses	8,965	10,350
Travel & Subsistence	19,059	13,717
Audit	5,460	2,730
Bank Charges	2,620	43
Paris *	0	66,240
Brussels *	0	62,263
Germany *	0	65,059
Portugal	0	18,837
Depreciation	1,040	-
Total	616,763	477,792
Surplus for the year	167,297	76,830
Taxation	429	1,348
Excess of income over expenditure	166,868	75,482
Accumulated fund at the beginning of the year	143,197	67,715
Accumulated fund	310,065	143,197
Balance sheet as at 31 May 2009		
Fixed Assets	3,121	
Debtors	20,125	15,173
Current assets – cash in bank	346,469	253,303
Total assets	369,715	268,476
General creditors	-59,647	-125,276
Net Current Assets	310,068	143,197
Represented by:		
Share capital	3	3
Profit & Loss Account	130,065	143,197
Operating overhead Reserve	180,000	
Total funds at 31 May	310,068	143,197

*Individual office figures incorporated into main expenditure for 09/10 accounts

Crisis Action would like to thank the following organisations and individuals for their generous support in 2008-2009: Cordaid, Humanity United, Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, MacArthur Foundation, Network for Social Change, Open Society Foundation, Oxfam GB, Pears Foundation, Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation, Reuben Foundation, The Roddick Foundation, The Sigrid Rausing Trust, The Tinsley Foundation, G S A Cox & S Cox, W A Cox & G I Cox, E M Crook & M Blington, E Farnworth & J E Farnworth, N Holliday, MG M Lyne, Victor Somers.

Crisis Action's London office:

- Hosted regular conference calls to share information and work on joint advocacy strategies
- Collated NGO briefing papers to develop more consistent advocacy messages and better influence UK decision-making
- Organised joint lobby meetings with senior officials, ministers and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Sri Lanka, to push for the UK to take greater action and coordinate strategy with other embassies in Colombo

Following this, the UK pushed in the UN Security Council for stronger international action and led opposition within the IMF to taking forward a multi-million dollar loan to the Sri Lankan government until concerns over the protection of civilians were addressed.

Burma

Following the Burmese military regime's decision to put Aung San Suu Kyi on trial for breach of her house arrest and their failure to respond to international calls

to release political prisoners, Crisis Action agreed to help partners prepare an intense period of campaigning to coincide with Aung San Suu Kyi's 64th birthday in June 2009. The campaign aimed not only to raise the profile of the unresolved crisis in Burma, including continuing conflict, but to compel governments to commit to further action in the event of her conviction.

In May 2009, the London office supported partners to build the '64 for Suu' campaign (www.64forSuu.org) calling for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners in Burma, culminating in actions across the globe.

Over twenty human rights and civil society organisations came together to boost public and political attention on repression in Burma. Highlights included:

- Gathering 64-word statements of support for Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners from celebrities and prominent politicians, including Bono, Paul McCartney, Julia Roberts, Gordon Brown, Mary Robinson, 41 German MPs and a wide range of Asian politicians and celebrities
- Releasing a 64-word statement by over 100 former political prisoners from more than 20 countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe, including the Nelson Mandela Foundation, Anwar Ibrahim (former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia), Ingrid Betancourt (former senator and Nobel Peace Prize nominee) and Dr Kim Dae-Jung (former President of the Republic of Korea and Nobel Peace Prize laureate)
- Coordinating and securing media coverage, especially in Asia, of gatherings in over twenty cities across the world commemorating Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday

The campaign resulted in an EU commitment to take further targeted measures against the Burmese regime if the opposition leader was not released and a decision by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon, to visit Burma to press for her release and that of other political prisoners.

“Crisis Action's campaign coordination and strategic public advocacy are invaluable in the movement for peace, justice and equality. The Nobel Women's Initiative is deeply appreciative of the skill and dedication of the Crisis Action team.

Liz Bernstein, Executive Director, Nobel Women's Initiative



www.64forSuu.org

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We would like to thank the following for their contribution to Crisis Action's work over the past year: Alei Eldorri, Alice Haynes, Anja Erbel, Christina Stahl, Corinna Pieper, Dorthe Engelcke, Florian Valette, Jillian Convey, Johanna Fihman, Jonathan Zigrand, Judith Hartmann, Marianne Vantini, Markus Mayr, Massimiliano Fabbri, Nino Zhghenti, Norikazu Takeuchi, Sara Dehkordi, Sahar Youssef, Stefaan Ghesquiere, Tremaine Williams, Valentina Torricelli, and Zahra Abbas.

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Board

Nick Grono (Chair) is Vice-President for Advocacy and Operations for the International Crisis Group, based in Brussels. He is a lawyer by background and previously worked for the Australian government as chief of staff to the Attorney-General.

Lotte Leicht is EU Director of Human Rights Watch. She has worked extensively on conflict crises including Bosnia and Darfur.

Sarah Mulley is a Senior Research Fellow in the Global Change Programme at the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR). Prior to this, Sarah was coordinator of the UK Aid Network, a coalition of UK NGOs working together to develop policy and advocacy on international aid. She was previously a research associate at the Global Economic Governance Programme in Oxford, and a senior policy analyst at HM Treasury.

Nicola Reindorp is Director of Advocacy for the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. She was previously head of Oxfam International in New York.

All board members sit on the Crisis Action Board in their personal capacity.

Crisis Action has changed the advocacy and campaigning landscape in Brussels.

From DRC to Israel/Palestine, Crisis Action's coordination, intelligence sharing and engagement have visibly raised the game for civil society's work on armed conflicts.

Pol Degreve, Director, Broederlijk Delen, Belgium

crisis action

What we do

Crisis Action is an international, non-profit organisation which aims to help avert conflicts, prevent human rights abuses and ensure governments fulfil their obligations to protect civilians.

Crisis Action works behind the scenes to support a diverse range of partners who are all concerned with tackling the immediate effects or long-term consequences of conflict. We aim to help them increase the impact of their responses to current and emerging conflict-related crises.

Crisis Action has offices in Berlin, Brussels, Cairo, London, New York and Paris.

Why we're here

Stopping and preventing armed conflict are among the most pressing – but difficult - challenges for concerned citizens and campaigners. There are few decisions that governments have to take that are as critical or as complex as those to do with war and peace, involving not only the most secretive parts of government but also the most complicated multilateral structures. In the face of powerful interests and entrenched positions, any organisation working alone will struggle to change decisions and policy on armed conflict. Only by working together, drawing on the diverse expertise, campaigning strengths and political constituencies of a wide range of organisations can we consistently have impact. This is at the heart of Crisis Action's approach.

There are few organisations that specialise solely on responding to specific armed conflicts. Most NGOs – whether development agencies, human rights organisations or peace groups - work on individual conflicts as one of a host of other issues. Few, if any, organisations alone have the capacity to launch the sustained, coordinated campaigns that are required to have impact on particular conflicts around the world. Pooling knowledge and resources is a vital first step to mobilising an effective strategy that individual organisations can contribute to without feeling that they have to take on the whole campaign alone.

A further constraint is that the risk of campaigning on armed conflict can be high for individual organisations. For example, if they have staff working on the ground in the region concerned. Working collectively reduces the risk to individual organisations and their staff and can provide them with opportunities to contribute to a strategy in a way that would not otherwise be possible.

Of course, working in groups on such issues is not a new idea. However, coalitions often find it hard to have impact even when they have committed a great deal of time and resources. Crisis Action has pioneered a new approach of developing and coordinating 'opt-in coalitions' to develop specific, highly-focused campaigns. This model reduces transaction costs for coalition members, particularly on controversial issues, and ensures that strong positions and rapid action are part of any collective response.

Organisations have different mandates and agendas on individual conflicts and may struggle to bring together coalitions on their own. Crisis Action tries to be a neutral arbiter who can bring together diverse organisations with a wide range of perspectives to identify common ground and forge a common agenda. Furthermore, by working solely behind the scenes, Crisis Action avoids replicating work or competing with our partners and instead can put energy into multiplying the impact of civil society organisations. This allows Crisis Action to add value far in excess of its size.

For more information visit us at www.crisisaction.org

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Crisis Action always welcomes enquiries from organisations and individuals who share our objectives and may wish to become Crisis Action partners.

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Cover photo: Civilians flee FDLR rebels in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo. (Susan Schulman).