CHAIR’S REPORT

THE PAST YEAR HAS SEEN CRISIS ACTION COME OF AGE. WITH OFFICES IN SEVEN COUNTRIES, ON THREE CONTINENTS, IT HAS WELL AND TRULY ESTABLISHED ITSELF AS AN INTERNATIONALY RECOGNISED AND RESPECTED ACTOR ON THE CONFLICT PREVENTION STAGE.

The scope of its work is impressive – from bringing together civil society across 19 countries to campaign on Sudan, to mobilising an unprecedented network of European organisations on Gaza. Through the efforts of its Cairo office, it is now a trusted and valued partner for Arab civil society and has managed to scale up its activities tremendously in the Middle East and North Africa region. It will soon be doing similar work with African partners through its newly established Nairobi office.

Given the rapid expansion of Crisis Action over the last three years, the focus will now be on consolidation, and ensuring that the larger organisation doesn’t lose its nimbleness and responsiveness. The financial position is good, and sustainable: income passed the €1 million mark for the first time this year, and the Board is confident that the organisation can continue to raise this amount on an ongoing basis with the support of its core partners and donors.

The impact Crisis Action achieves with its limited means continues to impress. Despite its geographical spread, the organisation has just 14 staff. This is worth bearing in mind as one reads through the extensive list of achievements and results in this year’s annual report.

Crisis Action’s Board is also undergoing its own changes. On behalf of the Board and Crisis Action, I would like to thank Sarah Mulley, one of the founding board members, for her longstanding and dedicated service over the past six years. I also welcome Fiona Napier, who takes over from Sarah as Treasurer this year. The Board will look to expand by a couple of members, and further internationalise itself, during the coming 12 months.

The year ahead will present many challenges to Crisis Action on the work front. Sudan in particular – the organisation’s longstanding international priority – risks a return to war if the January 2011 referendum process is not well managed. With its offices in Cairo and Nairobi, and its teams, partners and contacts in key Western capitals, Crisis Action will be at the forefront of international civil society efforts to ensure that peace prevails both in Sudan and elsewhere.

Nick Grono
Chair, Crisis Action
Deputy President & Chief Operating Officer, International Crisis Group
“Crisis Action has proven time and again that it is able to turn the strong commitment and goodwill of a diverse group of organisations internationally into clear strategy and tangible campaign results on the ground.”

Jeremy Hobbs, Executive Director, Oxfam International

WHO WE WORK WITH

Core Partners
- Action Contre la Faim (ACF) France
- Aegis Trust
- Amnesty International
- Arab Coalition for Darfur
- Arabic Network of Human Rights Information
- British American Security Information Council (BASIC)
- Bonn International Center for Conversion
- Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
- Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD)
- CARE International
- Christian Aid
- Cordaid
- Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l’Homme (FDH)
- Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
- Global Witness
- Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust
- Human Rights First
- Human Rights Watch
- Inter-Church Organisation for Development Cooperation (CCO)
- International Alert
- International Crisis Group
- International Rescue Committee
- MEDACT
- Media in Cooperation and Transition
- Medecins du Monde
- Medico International

Network members
- Amicis/Unitas section
- Anti-Slavery International
- Baptist Union
- Britain’s General Union (GMB)
- British Humanist Association
- British Muslim Forum
- British Refugees Council
- Burma Campaign UK
- Burma Initiative Asienhaus
- Chatham House
- Christian Solidarity Worldwide
- Church of England International Office
- Council for Arab British Understanding
- Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
- European Council on Foreign Relations
- Foreign Policy Centre
- Friends of the Earth UK
- Greenpeace
- Hindu Council UK
- Institute of Public Policy Research
- International Action Network
- Islamic Human Rights Commission
- Iraq Body Count
- Medical Aid for Palestinians
- Methodist Church
- Methodist Relief and Development Fund
- Mothers’ Union
- Muslim Council of Britain
- National Union of Students
- National Union of Teachers
- New Israel Fund
- Peace Direct
- People & Planet
- Quaker Peace and Social Witness
- René Cassin
- Responding to Conflict
- Three Faiths Forum
- Trade Union Congress
- UNISON
- United Nations Association
- United Reform Church
- Verification, Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC)
- War on Want
- Welfare Association
- Women’s Institute
- Zimbabwe Europe Network

YEAR OVERVIEW

IT IS RARE FOR CRISIS ACTION TO HAVE A DULL MOMENT, AND THIS YEAR HAS BEEN NO EXCEPTION.

In Sudan, the threat of implosion ahead of the southern referendum on independence has focused minds on the need for a surge in diplomatic engagement. Many of Crisis Action’s partners witnessed the horrific consequences of the civil war between North and South Sudan and are acutely aware of the dire risks to the Sudanese people, and to the region, if widespread conflict returns.

The challenge of forging effective preventative campaigns on armed conflict is significant. Activists and decision-makers are often more adept at responding to unfolding crises than looking ahead to extremely complex scenarios to determine what action now could prevent bloodshed later.

We have endeavoured to meet this challenge by working with partners to invest in innovative campaign approaches designed to convince those in power to take steps now to avert violence. Coordinated global action on Sudan has already helped bring about a greater intensity and coherence in international efforts, and improved measures to protect civilians on the ground. Of course, this is just the beginning. With tensions likely to increase in the months ahead, our advocacy and campaigning on Sudan must intensify further.

Our continued work on Gaza has demonstrated the strength of a very different approach. We have combined carefully choreographed advocacy behind the scenes with a successful international media strategy highlighting how the blockade prevents people in Gaza rebuilding their war-shattered lives. This work helped secure a stronger joint position from EU foreign ministers, a ground-breaking visit to Gaza by new EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton and concessions by Israel to allow in previously banned building materials.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, collaboration between international organisations and Congolese civil society helped prevent a premature drawdown of the UN peacekeeping force that would have left civilians in grave danger.

The past year has shown that we must constantly adapt and learn from our experiences. We have much knowledge to gain from partners in different regions to identify approaches that will be effective for NGOs operating in very different circumstances around the world.

We have benefited greatly from the unflinching support of our funders and advisors. We are enormously grateful to all of you who, despite the financial crisis, supported us to complete our planned growth so that we could generate the impact required to make a real difference. As ever, we hugely appreciate the tireless efforts and continued support of our partners, without which none of this would be possible.
Sudan

The historic Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that brought an end to Sudan’s bloody civil war in 2005 remained largely unimplemented five years on in January 2009. Leaders from Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the US had signed up as ‘guarantors’, but then failed to sustain the level of diplomatic engagement required to ensure the agreement was upheld. With increasing tensions between north and south, and a serious spike in violence in south Sudan in 2009 which killed over 2,500 people and displaced a further 350,000, Crisis Action and its partners shared acute concern about the potential for further escalation.

In September 2009, with the support of Humanity United, Crisis Action brought prominent Sudanese civil society leaders together with Sudan experts from Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the US to provide analysis on strategic priorities for international engagement. Informed by this meeting, Crisis Action and its partners built a global coalition working together to advocate for the protection of civilians from further conflict in Sudan. The innovative Sudan365 campaign has created a strong global coalition working on Sudan in the run-up to the scheduled 2011 referendum.”

Claudio Cordone, Interim Secretary General, Amnesty International

Sudan365: Positive global action

During autumn 2009, Crisis Action worked with partners to design Sudan365 (www.sudan365.org), a global campaign bringing together activists from 19 countries across Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and the US.

Sudan365 was launched on 9 January 2010, the fifth anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and 365 days from the referendum. Its objective was to extract solid commitments from relevant governments for the year ahead.

Activities included:

• Coordinating a global day of action across 15 countries. In the UK, for example, Crisis Action organised a demonstration for members of the Sudanese diaspora and supported a high level visit by Sudanese Archbishop Daniel Deng. He met with UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Foreign Secretary David Miliband, in the same week the UK announced £54 million in aid for Sudan. Sarah Brown, the Prime Minister’s wife, tweeted her one million followers about Sudan365.

• In Cairo, Crisis Action supported the Arab Coalition for Darfur to host a public event at the Egyptian Press Syndicate. Featuring a roundtable discussion with Sudan experts and celebrities, the event was attended by representatives from the League of Arab States and more than 50 journalists from key regional media.

• The launch of a global ‘Beat for Peace’ viral film featuring musicians from five continents, including drummers from Pink Floyd, The Police and Radiohead, Egyptian jazz drummer Yehia Khalil, Mustapha Tettey Addy from Ghana and pop star Mohammed Munir. The video premiered on the home page of YouTube, attracting over 100,000 hits.

• Engaging prominent personalities. Crisis Action reached out to Lieutenant General Lazarus Sumbeiywo (former Kenyan and IGAD Special Envoy for the Sudan conflict and chief mediator in the Naivasha peace talks) and John C. Danforth (Special Envoy for Peace in Sudan, 2001-2004, and former US Ambassador to the UN) to produce an opinion piece on Sudan. This was placed in leading media outlets across the US, Europe, Africa and the Middle East and used as an advocacy resource by NGOs.

Preventing violence around Sudan’s elections

The elections in April 2010 fell far short of meeting international standards for a free and fair process. Amidst fears of violence and human rights abuses, Crisis Action assisted partners to:

• organise an open letter by parliamentarians from twelve countries highlighting the threat of violence and calling for international vigilance throughout the election period

• host joint advocacy meetings with the heads of the European Union and League of Arab States election observation missions to urge them to report on human rights abuses as well as technical irregularities

• connect key European journalists covering the elections with Sudanese civil society organisations to ensure they gained a true picture of events on the ground

• coordinate a second global day of action in 19 countries in April 2010 on the eve of the elections to call for increased international vigilance

• support Sudan Vote Monitor, a project through which accredited Sudanese civil society organisations reported on the conduct of the elections from the ground

• tweet her one million followers about Sudan365.

“Crisis Action’s skilful coordination brought diverse organisations together to advocate for the protection of civilians from further conflict in Sudan. The innovative Sudan365 campaign has created a strong global coalition working on Sudan in the run-up to the scheduled 2011 referendum.”

Claudio Cordone, Interim Secretary General, Amnesty International

“Crisis Action’s support through the Sudan365 campaign and the organisation of events in Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Kenya, South Africa, and Burkina Faso allowed our partners in Africa, to contribute and to be connected to, a truly international movement, bringing home to governments across the world that the crisis in Sudan must be addressed.”

Dismas Nkunda, Co-Chair, Darfur Consortium
Coordinating global advocacy

Crisis Action coordinates networks of organisations working on Sudan in Brussels, France, Germany, the Middle East and North Africa, the UK and the US. Supporting partners by:

- sharing information on political developments and key governments’ positions, and assisting partners to align advocacy messages towards political targets
- bringing organisations and experts together ahead of significant meetings to present joint recommendations, for example the consultative forum hosted by the AU in May 2010
- securing the network’s support for pivotal pieces of work, such as Oxfam’s report ‘Rescuing the Peace in Southern Sudan’, which was endorsed by leading NGOs, including Christian Aid, ICCO, IRC, Save the Children, Tearfund and World Vision
- convening regular meetings for partners with senior officials on Sudan, including Sudan envoys, representatives of foreign affairs ministries, leading UN and EU officials, and senior figures within the League of Arab States and Organisation of Islamic Conference
- coordinating lobbying of the US, UK and Norway to reactivate their ‘Troika’ group – which provided vital support during negotiation of the CPA – through joint statements on Sudan

Engaging parliamentarians

Crisis Action assisted partners to engage parliamentarians to push Sudan up their respective government agendas.

In the UK, NGOs worked with the Associate Parliamentary Group on Sudan, and mobilised individual MPs via a letter campaign calling on Government to lead on implementation of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. In January 2010, Crisis Action invited senior figures from the three major parties to speak at a day of action on Sudan, securing commitments from each party to prioritise the issue ahead of the UK General Election.

In Germany, Crisis Action helped major NGOs to convince an inactive German administration to prioritise Sudan and push for greater leadership at EU level. Following NGO input, a joint parliamentary motion on Sudan was passed in March 2010, and the German Parliamentary Subcommittee on Crisis Prevention took up Sudan as its priority country.

Safeguarding EU funding for vulnerable people in Sudan

Following the Sudanese Government’s refusal to sign the Cotonou Agreement, the EU lacked a legal basis to channel funds to Sudan from the new European Development Fund. Crisis Action assisted partners urgently to inform all European foreign ministries that Sudan’s most vulnerable rural populations would soon be without EU support, and worked with humanitarian agencies to suggest to the EU Commissioner for Development alternative ways in which EU funding could reach them. In May 2010 the campaign was successful; the European Council announced it would allocate €150 million “to address the needs of the most vulnerable populations in Sudan, in particular in the war affected areas”. This funding will enable crucial EU support in the critical period following the referendum.

“With intensive support from Crisis Action’s MENA office, we have greatly improved our advocacy strategies and have increased the effectiveness of our work. We have been able to move Sudan up the public agenda through targeted media work and have joined forces with civil society organisations across the Arab world to call on Arab leaders to help find peaceful solution to Sudan’s crises.”

Haggag Nayel, Secretary General, Arab Coalition for Darfur

“The global campaign has contributed to the biggest ever coalition of organisations working on Sudan in Norway. It has enabled us to coordinate our advocacy towards the ‘Troika’ of US, UK and Norway, helping to reactivate the Norwegian government’s engagement on Sudan.”

Marit Herres, Coordinator, Norway Sudan Forum

“Crisis Action plays a fantastic role in supporting NGOs and individuals like me to keep Sudan on the agenda of policymakers and the broader public. Their approach of enabling others to jointly make a difference is as unusual as it is effective.”

Gerhart Baum, UN special rapporteur on human rights in Sudan 2000–2004, and former German interior minister
Strengthening UN civilian protection

Crisis Action supported partners in New York, Paris and London to launch and sustain a four-month advocacy campaign ahead of the renewal of the mandate for the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Sudan (UNMIS). UN Security Council resolution 1919 (30 April 2010) reflected the campaign’s calls for greater emphasis on protection of civilians by the UN and formal authorisation by the Council for contingency planning ahead of the referendum on independence. Crisis Action and partners also advocated for adequate resourcing of UNMIS.

Encouraging constructive leadership from the Arab world

Crisis Action’s Middle East and North Africa (MENA) office increased its support to the Arab Coalition on Darfur, a group of civil society representatives from more than 17 Arab countries. Crisis Action supported the coalition to adopt an ‘all Sudan’ approach, and to call for constructive Arab leadership on Sudan in key media. Crisis Action has worked with the Arab Coalition to increase the profile of Sudan in the media. This involved supporting the establishment of the Arab Media Crisis Network, launched in December 2009, which brought together leading journalists from nine Arab countries who have since regularly covered Sudan’s crises.

Prior to the Arab Summit in Libya in March 2010, Crisis Action set up a coalition of over 100 Arab civil society organisations on Sudan from 20 Arab countries – the largest ever alliance of its kind. The group issued a high profile statement, distributed to members of the League of Arab States, calling on leaders to help end the Darfur conflict, to protect displaced people and to work towards a peaceful transition through the referendum. In particular,”

Albaqir Al Mukhtar, Director of Al-Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment and Human Development (KACE), Khartoum, Sudan

Justice for Darfur

Crisis Action continued to coordinate the Justice for Darfur campaign, bringing together organisations to hold to account those responsible for international crimes in Darfur. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) referred the situation in Darfur to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in March 2005, under resolution 1593. This imposed on Sudan a binding legal obligation to cooperate with the Court. The ICC issued arrest warrants for Ahmad Harun and Ali Kushayb in April 2007, and for Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir in March 2009, for crimes against humanity and war crimes. Sudan’s government has repeatedly refused to transfer any suspects to the ICC.

This year, the Justice for Darfur campaign focused on preparing the ground for future arrests. To this end, Crisis Action:

• established a network of African representatives interested in the campaign
• consulted African organisations about strategies to promote the ICC’s work in Sudan
• supported activities to highlight the report of the African Union High-Level Panel on Darfur, in particular its strong stance on the need for justice for crimes in the region
• helped publish a high profile article by Desmond Tutu, Wangari Maathai and Wole Soyinka describing the Court as a necessity on the road to genuine peace
• sought opportunities to emphasise, particularly to sceptical African governments, that the Court promotes justice for all African victims - achieved through highlighting cases with pan-African relevance in the media, such as Bahar Idriss Abu Garda’s trial relating to the deaths in Sudan of African Union peacekeepers from four nations

Justice for Darfur also focused on the ICC’s unenforced arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir. The campaign urged governments hosting international summits not to invite President Bashir, and to state clearly that they would enforce the Court’s warrant of arrest should he enter their territory. Coordinated action with French partners successfully changed the French government’s position on inviting President Bashir to the bi-annual France-Africa summit. Crisis Action also supported lobbying efforts against his attendance at events in South Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, Kenya, Denmark and Turkey.

“The resounding call from across the Arab World should be heeded by the League of Arab States. The League… must show it is able to address one of the most important challenges of our time in order to have credibility and respectability among the Arab population in general and the people of Sudan in particular.”

Albaqir Al Mukhtar, Director of Al-Khatim Adlan Centre for Enlightenment and Human Development (KACE), Khartoum, Sudan
ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

IN THE WAKE OF ISRAEL'S CAST LEAD MILITARY OFFENSIVE IN GAZA, CONDITIONS FOR THE 1.5 MILLION ORDINARY PALESTINIANS LIVING UNDER THE CONTINUED BLOCKADE HAVE DETERIORATED FURTHER OVER THE LAST YEAR.

About 90 percent of Gaza’s factories are closed or functioning at around ten percent capacity and over 80 percent of Gaza’s residents are dependent on food assistance. Import restrictions have resulted in millions of litres of untreated sewage being discharged into the environment daily, creating serious health concerns.

Wider tensions in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remained high. Despite President Obama’s ‘new beginning’ speech in Cairo in June 2009, attempts to restart peace talks struggled to gain traction, while efforts to secure a freeze on Israeli settlement-building in occupied Palestinian territory also foundered. Political divisions among Palestinians remained unresolved despite extensive reconciliation talks, and both Israeli and Palestinian security concerns remained acute.

Spurred by the tragedy of the Gaza Flotilla incident in May 2010, international governments began to show the level of engagement to end the blockade that Crisis Action and partners had long campaigned for. Key players shifted position from viewing efforts to end the blockade as a distraction to show the level of engagement to end the blockade that Crisis Action and partners had long campaigned for.

Lift the blockade!

Against this background, in 2009 and 2010, Crisis Action mobilised a powerful network of European NGOs to develop a campaign for greater international action to persuade Israel to lift its blockade on Gaza. With many governments saying they disagreed with the blockade policy, the challenge lay in convincing them to take concerted action to end it. Strategy focused in particular on urging the European Union to adopt a more united, proactive, leading role.

In December a major Crisis Action partners’ report, Kilometers without Freedom: Gaza under the Blockade, was released to media in five languages across eleven countries, to coincide with the anniversary of the Israeli Cast Lead military offensive. Documenting how the blockade prevented Gaza’s people from rebuilding their lives and the region’s shattered infrastructure, the report secured extensive international print, broadcast and online coverage.

In the wake of the flotilla

The anti-blockade campaign yielded positive results in December 2009, when Israel agreed to allow through a number of previously prohibited building materials. Later on making further allowances for key UN reconstruction projects in March 2010. While these were tiny concessions against a backdrop of continued heavy restrictions, they demonstrated that international pressure on the blockade, as supported by Crisis Action, could bring results, and that delivery of vital reconstruction materials would compromise Israel’s security. These small steps created a precedent from which to press for more far-reaching change.

On 31 May 2010, Israel interrupted a flotilla of ships attempting to bring aid to Gaza, leaving nine activists dead. Crisis Action worked intensively with partners to secure both a genuinely independent international inquiry into the incident and an end to the blockade. The coalition put pressure on the EU, as well as lobbying the Middle East Quartet (of the EU, US, UN and Russia) while its envoy, Tony Blair, negotiated with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. When the Israeli government announced some relaxing of the blockade in June, Crisis Action helped coordinate further pressure to urge the international community to insist on the full lifting of the blockade and to ensure that greater tangible progress was delivered on the ground.

High-level visits

Since June 2009, no foreign minister had been allowed into Gaza via Israel. In February 2010 the EU’s new High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Baroness Catherine Ashton, began preparing for her first visit to the Middle East. Crisis Action coordinated a joint letter to Baroness Ashton and all 27 EU foreign ministers which called on her to insist on visiting Gaza during her trip, as well as pressing the EU to challenge Israel’s policy on visits to Gaza and take action against the blockade.

In March, Baroness Ashton announced her intention to visit Gaza. Both she and UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon – also soon due to visit the region – were granted entry by the Israeli government. These visits highlighted the blockade and generated increased EU political engagement in the region. Leading Israeli daily newspaper Haaretz reported that ‘the reason for the unusual permits is reportedly to ease the international pressure on Israel relating to the blockade on the Gaza Strip’.

“In a short space of time, Crisis Action has become indispensable to work on armed conflict in the region. Crisis Action has been able to mobilise and bring together Arab civil society around areas of mutual concern and translate this into joint action that makes a difference. We value our partnership with Crisis Action and have been greatly impressed by their work in the region so far.”

Moazaz El Fegiery, Executive Director, Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
A unified voice in Europe
Crisis Action coordinated a broad-based international coalition of development, human rights and peace-building organisations to win public and political support for greater international action not only on the Gaza blockade, but also on key aspects of the wider conflict. Crisis Action has functioned as a hub for intelligence sharing and as a facilitator of comprehensive, collaborative campaign activities.

The OECD and Israel
Lengthy negotiations on Israel’s bid to become a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) were due to be completed in May 2010. In advance of this, Crisis Action worked with partners to highlight the contradiction between the OECD’s stated position that members must share its commitment to upholding democracies, respect for human rights and the promotion of sustainable economic development, and the reality of life in the occupied Palestinian territory. As the final decision on Israeli membership was being made in Paris, Crisis Action had also prepared a briefing that was distributed to members of the OECD by Crisis Action’s Brussels office on how to assess the implications for the OECD’s stated position, and the implications for the OECD’s stated position, and the reality of life in the occupied Palestinian territory.

Mobilising EU leverage for change
The planned upgrading of economic and political relations between the European Union and Israel had been frozen since the military offensive on Gaza in January 2009. Crisis Action worked with partners to ensure the EU maintained this suspension until major progress was achieved on the ground, including an endpoint to the Gaza blockade. Despite repeated attempts by the Czech and Spanish EU presidencies to resume the upgrade, opposition by several member states, supported by Crisis Action’s partners’ advocacy, had so far succeeded in maintaining the freeze, sending a clear signal to the Israeli government.

Opting to exclude
In early 2009, the EU had decided to opt out of the OECD in recognition of the creation of the new organisation – the G20 – that had been set up to deal with global financial crises. Although a number of EU member states – including France, Germany, Britain and Spain – opposed excluding the EU from the OECD, the final decision was made by the Council of Ministers. Crisis Action’s Brussels office worked with partners to ensure that the final decision was made with full respect for the underlying causes of the exclusion and the need to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its underlying causes.

Over the past year, over one thousand civilians have died during armed hostilities between rebel groups and the Congolese state army, forces armées de la république démocratique du Congo (FARDC). Thousands more have been victims of sexual violence or had to flee their homes due to conflict.

Exposing the impact of military operations on civilians
Against this backdrop, Crisis Action was approached by partners to intensify work on the DRC. Many human rights and humanitarian partners had undertaken serious work to document and publicise the level of abuses involved in 2009’s anti-FDLR operations, being openly critical of the strategy. However, influential EU and UN Security Council members insisted that the offensives were a positive sign of diplomatic rapprochement between the DRC and Rwanda, representing a welcome collaboration to rid the region of the scourge of the FDLR. Civilian losses were seen as the price to be paid. Crisis Action mobilised its international partner network to share information on the impact of the offensives on civilians, and to increase pressure on governments to uphold their responsibilities to protect the Congolese population. Efforts focused in particular on France, in view of the country’s leading role on the DRC within the EU and the UN Security Council. Based on evidence from those on the ground, Crisis Action compiled briefings on the DRC situation for circulation to relevant EU bodies and all member states on behalf of NGOs across the EU. Crisis Action’s Brussels office arranged meetings with the Special Representative of the EU on the Great Lakes Region and other officials to advocate for the need for the EU to take a more critical view of the prevailing military strategy.

“Crisis Action magnifies the diverse strengths of its partners around the world by helping them forge common, and strategic, advocacy campaigns. When NGOs work together, international policymakers are more likely to take note – and to take action.”
Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch
At the UN level, Crisis Action in New York supported partners to advocate against any UN support for the joint military operations, unless those activities were adequately and jointly planned, excluded collaboration with known human rights abusers and minimised the danger of FDLR reprisals against the population. Crisis Action and partners also pressed for consistent application of MONUC’s so-called ‘conditionality policy’, which states that it should provide material and logistical assistance only to certain vetted units of the Congolese army.

In this context, Crisis Action organised information gathering and advocacy meetings for partners with senior UN officials, including the former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General to the DRC, Alan Doss, and representatives of UN Security Council members.

One after another, influential governments have acknowledged that the terrible price being paid by the civilian population is unacceptable:
- In October 2009, the UN suspended its support of a Congolese state army (FARDC) brigade which had reportedly been involved in the killing of 62 civilians.
- In October 2009, the European Council raised deep concerns about the atrocities carried out during joint anti-FDLR military operations, and urged all sides to respect international humanitarian law and human rights, including the protection of civilians.
- In December 2009, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning widespread violence in the DRC and demanding the EU increase efforts to improve the civilian situation and strengthen the fight against impunity for crimes committed.

Securing greater protection for civilians

In December 2009, ahead of the renewal of MONUC’s mandate, Crisis Action supported partners to push for better protection of civilians in the DRC. Crisis Action coordinated a letter endorsed by leading international NGOs to all UN Security Council members, setting out ways to secure better protection for the Congolese people. Crisis Action also assisted partners with media work to raise awareness about the need for urgent action.

In the same month, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1906 which extended MONUC’s mandate for five months and instructed the mission to focus on the effective protection of civilians as a first priority.

Fighting impunity

The head of the FDLR, Ignace Murwanashyaka, reportedly oversaw the group’s operations from his base in Germany, allegedly issuing military orders which resulted in gross human rights violations in Eastern Congo. Crisis Action’s Berlin office supported partners to push the German authorities to take action against Murwanashyaka, assisting their efforts by:
- setting up a parliamentary briefing about the situation in DRC and the importance of neutralising the European FDLR leadership, especially Murwanashyaka
- coordinating meetings of a DRC/German NGO delegation with German government representatives and other NGOs
- supporting partners’ media work on the arrest of Murwanashyaka

In November 2009, the German authorities took action. Murwanashyaka was detained and proceedings against him are now in progress.

Preventing the premature drawdown of peacekeepers in the DRC

At the beginning of 2010, another threat to stability and security in the Democratic Republic of Congo loomed on the horizon: the Congolese government’s request that UN peacekeeping mission MONUC withdraw quickly from the country. Despite concerns about MONUC’s effectiveness, many of Crisis Action’s partners believed that an immediate drawdown of the force would leave civilians in grave danger. The lead up to the renewal of MONUC’s mandate in May 2010 became a crucial period in shaping the future of the UN military presence in the DRC.

Crisis Action supported partners and Congolese civil society in a campaign to persuade the DRC’s President Kabila to reconsider his decision, and to lobby the UN Security Council (UNSC) to stress to the Congolese government that a hasty withdrawal of MONUC would endanger national stability. Crisis Action coordinated a letter to foreign ministers, UNSC Ambassadors and the DRC’s President, stressing that any downsizing of the UN peacekeeping mission should be based on the Congolese government’s ability to meet benchmarks in the areas of governance, security and civilian protection. The statement was endorsed by 119 NGOs globally, delivering a resounding call to decision-makers.

UN Security Council members recognised the need to prevent a rushed exit and agreed a mandate for a new mission (MONUSCO) in May 2010. While the mandate emphasised the primary role of the DRC government, it also preserved the mission’s key objective to protect civilians. The concerns of civil society were further reflected in the maintenance of troop levels, and strengthening the fight against impunity for crimes committed.

Pushing for EU Leadership

Crisis Action hosts a monthly roundtable for European partners to exchange information on the DRC and agree on collaborative activities to push the EU to sustain its support for security reform in the country. In April 2010, Crisis Action coordinated a letter from European NGOs, distributed to envoys and selected EU permanent representations, calling for a renewal of EU support ahead of a Great Lakes Contact Group meeting. Crisis Action has also organised regular joint meetings to inform European parliamentarians about the issues.
AFGHANISTAN

As public and political debate about international military engagement in Afghanistan grew louder, and President Obama initiated a wide-ranging review of the US approach, Crisis Action responded to growing interest from partners for more active public campaigning on Afghanistan in the UK.

Crisis Action helped organise a consultation process during 2009-2010 to analyse the policy and political landscape for such a campaign, and to identify potential joint objectives and approaches as a basis for charting the best way forward.

In the run up to the London 2010 Afghanistan conference, the newly elected German government reviewed and started to adjust its general strategy on Afghanistan. At the request of German organisations, Crisis Action coordinated efforts to push the country’s government to strengthen human rights considerations in its Afghanistan strategy.

ZIMBABWE

The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme provides a system for guaranteeing that diamonds on sale in Western markets do not fund conflicts in Africa.

In July 2009, the Kimberley Process Review Mission to Zimbabwe documented grave human rights abuses in the country’s diamond fields. This led many of Crisis Action’s partners to recommend the suspension of Zimbabwe from the Process, on the basis that this would strengthen the system, and increase pressure on the government to take action against those responsible.

Crisis Action’s German partners asked for assistance to push the German government to call for a stronger EU position on the suspension of Zimbabwe. Crisis Action organised lobby meetings for partners with German government officials as well as high level meetings for a delegation of international human rights experts, including a member of the Kimberley review mission.

Following this lobbying work, the EU voted in favour of Zimbabwe’s suspension from the Kimberley Process, but unfortunately could not win enough support from other continents to put it into effect.

EMERGENCY RESPONSES: PAKISTAN AND SRI LANKA

Pakistan

During the Pakistan government’s military offensive against the Taliban in the Swat Valley in June 2009, around two million civilians were displaced.

Crisis Action worked to ensure that the humanitarian impact and long-term consequences of these military operations were fully considered in international political decision-making.

In the London office, this included holding meetings with UK partners and experts on Pakistan to share information and develop joint advocacy strategies. Crisis Action also coordinated lobbying meetings with the UK government to ensure that key messages were transmitted at every level. This resulted in further UK representations to the Pakistani government and military on the humanitarian impact of the operations, as well as increased dialogue between UK NGOs and government around longer-term strategies on Pakistan.

The first EU-Pakistan summit in Brussels in June 2009 provided the opportunity to address the humanitarian impact of the offensives on the Taliban, and to press for protection of civilians. Crisis Action’s Brussels office coordinated information exchange between partners ahead of the summit and organised joint advocacy meetings, including one with Pakistani Interior Minister Rehman Malik. At the summit the EU offered an extra aid package of €124 million to support displaced Pakistani civilians and fund post-conflict rehabilitation.

Crisis Action continued to coordinate input into new EU strategies on Pakistan and Afghanistan being developed in summer 2009. This included a partner meeting with the Swedish presidency of the EU in July, giving partners the opportunity to communicate their concerns directly to decision-makers.

Sri Lanka

The culminaton of Sri Lanka’s civil war in 2009 saw large-scale atrocities committed by both the Sri Lankan security forces and the Tamil Tiger Insurgents, resulting in immense civilian suffering.

One year after the war ended in May 2009, no credible investigation of alleged war crimes had been instigated to bring the perpetrators to account and so enable reconciliation among Sri Lankan communities. At the same time, tens of thousands of displaced people remained in camps, with little prospect of returning home.

Crisis Action was asked to host a visit to Brussels by a delegation of three Sri Lankan human rights defenders at a key moment in EU discussions about a potential international investigation into the Sri Lankan atrocities, and possible suspension of trade preferences for Sri Lanka due to human rights violations. The group were accompanied by Sri Lanka experts from CCfD Terre Solidaire, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and International Crisis Group, who had been spearheading calls for an international investigation.

Crisis Action coordinated a series of meetings for the delegation with EU institutions (including the European Parliament, the Council Secretariat and the Commission), as well as a joint meeting with member state representatives to discuss the political and human rights situation in Sri Lanka and the role of the EU in bringing relief and justice to those whose lives had been destroyed by the conflict. Following these meetings, the EU suspended part of its trade preferences for Sri Lanka under the framework of the Generalised System of Preferences (GSPs).

“One of the things we really value about Crisis Action is the way it helps piece together the latest international political intelligence about what governments around the world are thinking with reports from NGOs on the ground. This helps provide a firm foundation for effective collective action through high quality lobbying, media work and public action across the coalition of partners working on a particular conflict.”

Geoffrey Dennis, Chief Executive, Care International UK

“Being a Crisis Action partner directly boosts the scope and effectiveness of our advocacy to protect civilians caught in conflicts where we work. When a crisis threatens or strikes they are always on the front foot: bringing partners and experts together to discuss a joint strategy and coordinating engagement with high-level policymakers to ensure a rapid but effective response.”

Meryslyn Lee, Executive Director, Mercy Corps

Annual Report 2009/10
“Crisis Action has demonstrated an impressive ability to strengthen the impact of civil society advocacy and campaigning on armed conflict. By coordinating information sharing and joint strategic activities, Crisis Action has increased the effectiveness of its partners and member organisations.”

Louise Arbour, President, International Crisis Group

**WHAT WE DO**

Crisis Action is an international, not-for-profit organisation which aims to help prevent 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.


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**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2009-10**

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MAY 2010**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Operating surplus</td>
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<td>$270,774</td>
</tr>
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<td>Special Campaign Fund Activities*</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surplus for the year</td>
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<tr>
<td>LESS: Taxation</td>
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**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MAY 2010**

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<tbody>
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<td>Fixed Assets</td>
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<td>Debtors</td>
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<td>Current assets – cash in bank</td>
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<td>Share capital</td>
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<tr>
<td>Profit &amp; Loss Account</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operating overhead Reserve</td>
<td>$413,433</td>
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*The Sudan Special Campaign Fund was established by Crisis Action in order to support joint NGO advocacy and campaign activities on Sudan. Use of the fund requires authorisation from the donor and, as such, does not form a standard part of Crisis Action’s operations and is accounted for separately.

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- Oxfam GB,
- Peers Foundation,
- Polden Puckham Charitable Foundation,
- The Roddick Foundation,
- The Sigrid Rausing Trust,
- The Tinsley Foundation,
- A.M. & E. Andrews,
- Mr & Mrs Bond,
- Dr G.S.A. Cox & Mrs S. Cox,
- E. M. Crook & M. Blinston,
- Mr & Mrs C. Crook,
- Mr & Mrs Greenhalgh,
- Mr & Mrs W. Phillips,
- Miss V.S. Rogers,
- J.P. Shuttle & M.C. Riddell,
- Mrs H. Wallace & K. Rowe,
- Miss M.G. Williams,
- Geoff Wilson,
- Mr & Mrs Wrigley,

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The risk of campaigning on armed conflict can be high for individual organisations, in particular if they have staff 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 campaign 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 aims to be a neutral arbiter, helping diverse organisations with a wide range of perspectives to identify common ground and forge a shared agenda. By working solely behind the scenes, Crisis Action avoids replicating work or competing with partners, and can instead devote its energy to 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
we would like to thank the following for their contribution to Crisis Action’s work over the past year:


Susanne Baumann
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Fiona Napier (Treasurer) is International Advocacy Director with the Open Society Institute (OSI). Prior to joining OSI in February 2009, she served with Save the Children for 15 years as Global Adviser, Country Director in South Africa and Regional Adviser in southern Africa.

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.

Design and project management
by Miriam Hempel | www.daretoknow.co.uk

Printed on FSC recycled paper using vegetable based inks

Back cover: A Congolese mother and child sit on the floor of a disused medical centre in Sange, DRC, which is shared by 21 other families. In large tens of thousands of people had arrived in the summer of 2009 after being made homeless by renewed fighting.

Photo: Sue JU/NovartisFunds
“Crisis Action has proven time and again that it is able to turn the strong commitment and goodwill of a diverse group of organisations internationally into clear strategy and tangible campaign results on the ground.”

Jeremy Hobbs, Executive Director, Oxfam International

“Crisis Action magnifies the diverse strengths of its partners around the world by helping them forge common, and strategic, advocacy campaigns. When NGOs work together, international policymakers are more likely to take note – and to take action.”

Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch

“Crisis Action has been able to mobilise and bring together Arab civil society around areas of mutual concern and translate this into joint action that makes a difference.”

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