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First Austrian Humanitarian Congress

21st of October, University of Vienna

Program

08:00 Registration opens

09:00 Opening Speech

09:15 – 10:30 Humanitarian Challenges - 10 Years after 9/11

As a consequence of the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 – the so-called „War on Terror“ – has changed the nature of armed conflicts: today’s wars are characterized by high technical complexity and an increase in casualties among civilians, mainly in the context of asymmetric conflicts in which fragmented irregular armed groups use attacks on civilians and civilian shields as tools of warfare, and state actors engage in disproportionate and indiscriminate methods of warfare.

The harnessing of humanitarian vocabulary and techniques in support of military and foreign policy objectives has further changed the working environment of NGOs in complex emergencies. From the perspective of aid worker security, there is ample evidence that humanitarian space is diminishing. The number of attacks in which aid workers were killed, kidnapped or injured has tripled over the last ten years. What have we learned from these last ten years and are we able to meet these new challenges?

Keynote Speech

Antonio Donini, *Feinstein International Center – Tufts University*

Moderator & Master of Ceremony

Ulrike v. Pilar, *Humanitarian Aid Consultant*

Panel Members

Bruno Jochum, *Médecins Sans Frontières*

Karin Kneissl, *Author and Lecturer*

John Nduna, *ACT Alliance*

Matthias Schmale, *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

11:00 – 12:30 Humanitäre Hilfe: Österreich, Quo Vadis?

This panel will be in German only. For all non-german speaking guests, we recommend visiting the panel “The Hunger Crisis at the Horn of Africa – Natural Disaster or Complex Emergency?” taking place at the same time in the Senate Hall.

Österreich setzt sich in den Einrichtungen der internationalen Staatengemeinschaft mit verschiedenen diplomatischen Aktivitäten in den Bereichen Menschenrechte und Humanitärer Hilfe deutlich in Szene. Im Widerspruch zur offiziellen Darstellung der Bedeutung Österreichs in den internationalen multilateralen Einrichtungen stehen die konkreten finanziellen Beiträge zur Humanitären Hilfe in den vergangenen Jahren. Die organisatorische und strukturelle Fragmentierung bei der Humanitären Hilfe und eine permanente Unterfinanzierung dokumentieren fehlenden politischen Willen und stehen im Gegensatz zur großen Bereitschaft der österreichischen Bevölkerung in Krisensituationen solidarisch einen Betrag zu leisten.

With its diplomatic activities, Austria is pleased to showcase its involvement in the areas of human rights and humanitarian assistance. However, the concrete financial contributions, which the government of Austria is willing to make, are completely disproportional to the country's diplomatic engagement. The organizational fragmentation and the resulting chronic under-funding of humanitarian assistance, underlines one thing: A lack of political will.

Keynote Speech

Max Santner, *Austrian Red Cross*

Moderator

Christoph Prantner, *Journalist – Der Standard*

Panel Members

Gunther Müller, *Journalist - Profil*

Christoph Schweifer, *Caritas Austria*

Andrea Wagner-Hager, *CARE*

Gerhard Weinberger, *Austrian Foreign Ministry*

11:00 – 12:30 The Hunger Crisis at the Horn of Africa – Natural Disaster or Complex Emergency?

East Africa's hunger crisis has been described as one of the worst humanitarian crises in decades, amid stepped-up efforts by the international community to provide relief aid and emergency assistance. In the face of severe protracted drought for more than 30 months a total of 12 million people all over the horn of Africa are struggling to survive and to secure their livelihoods. In southern parts of Somalia the situation has deteriorated to the extent of a famine threatening the lives of millions of people forced to seek refuge in camps in neighboring Kenya and Ethiopia. This humanitarian crisis however is not only the result of adverse weather and climate conditions. Other factors have contributed as well and need to be taken into consideration when planning appropriate humanitarian (food security) interventions and emergency response. This includes factors such as political reluctance to cope with this crisis and poor governance, market failures and soaring food prices, environmental degradation as well as armed conflicts and unremitting political strife.

Keynote Speech

Alistair Dutton, *Caritas Internationalis*

Moderator

Sabine Kampmüller, *Médecins Sans Frontières*

Panel Members

Rainer Lang, *Diakonie*

Margit Maximilian, *Journalist - ORF*

Ton van Zutphen, *World Vision*

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch Break

13:30 – 15:00 Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) – Is Humanitarian Aid becoming more and more a Tool for Foreign Policies?

Traditionally in line with the Geneva Convention, humanitarian aid organizations are committed to independence, impartiality and neutrality. Over the past years we have seen an expansion of military involvement in the design and delivery of aid and infrastructure, and other forms of non-traditional assistance. The number of possible contacts and at the same time points of friction between the two former largely separate sets of actors has increased, particularly during armed conflicts. New military concepts and security and stabilization strategies look for better coordination and cooperation, to win the hearts and minds of the population in conflict areas in order to support the achievement of military and political objectives. Humanitarian actors are facing a dilemma: Does this new approach better help people in need or not and what kind of impact does it have on Humanitarian Actors?

Keynote Speech

Rainer Lucht, *Diakonie*

Moderator

Walter Feichtinger, *Austrian National Defence Academy*

Panel Members

Jean-Marc Biquet, *Médecins Sans Frontières*

Alois Hirschmugl, *Austrian Armed Forces*

Thomas Starlinger, *National Defence Academy*

Andreas Wigger, *International Committee of the Red Cross*

13:30 – 15:00 Humanitarian Aid meets Development Cooperation – Synergies and Challenges for the 21st Century

The most important difference between humanitarian aid and development cooperation is the time-frame of the assistance: While humanitarian aid aims to decrease short term human suffering, development cooperation in contrary focuses on long-term social, economic and political transformations. In spite of different functions, principles, strategies and instruments the difference between humanitarian aid and development cooperation may get blurred in particular in long-lasting crises. Especially in these contexts the alleviation of human suffering is only one of plenty tasks for humanitarian agencies – how do they deal with the broad variety of spheres of activities? What kind of risks and potentials are connected to the combination of humanitarian aid, development cooperation and peace-building – the “New Humanitarianism”?

Keynote Speech

Dieter Reinhardt, *University of Duisburg-Essen*

Moderator

Petra Dannecker, *University of Vienna*

Panel Members

Johanna Mang, *Light for the World*

Robert Moosbrugger, *Caritas Austria*

Nicole Peter, *World Vision*

Wolfram Schaffar, *University of Vienna*

15:30 – 17:00 The Perception of Western NGOs in the Muslim World

Humanitarian aid workers have a proud record of bringing assistance to the world’s disaster zones. But how difficult is it for western NGOs to work in the Islamic world? The difficulties that western NGOs face when operating in an Islamic context are largely due to a combination of misperceptions, mistrust and suspicion. Are we culturally too insensitive? Respect for the local culture and adherence to its traditions increase acceptance by the local population, and thus enhance the NGOs work environment. In the aid world as elsewhere, transparency and openness always pay off. Raising local awareness of an NGO’s mandate, aims and core values holds the key to better understanding and acceptance. It has been increasingly complicated for Western NGOs to gain access and work securely in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan or Somalia. Has it become too difficult for Western humanitarian agencies and NGOs to work in the Islamic world? If so, why is that, and what is the way forward?

Keynote Speech

Andreas Wigger, *International Committee of the Red Cross*

Moderator

Jonathan Benthall, *University College London*

Panel Members

Caroline Abu-Sada, *Médecins Sans Frontières*

Khalid Roy, *Islamic Relief Worldwide*

Samuel Schubert, *Webster University*

15:30 – 17:00 Gender in Emergencies: Why Gender Matters – Empowering Women and Girls as a Key Strategy towards ending Poverty and Conflict

The panel will focus on approaches and experiences to ensure that the consideration of women and girls is given particular emphasis and focus in our efforts. By addressing the context and dynamics of how women and girls are both subject to external societal conditions as well as are actors in internal family interrelationships, we strive to ensure that life-saving humanitarian response efforts reach all vulnerable community members in a fair and equitable manner. The experience in complex natural and conflict related emergencies demonstrates a need to incorporate a gender lens in all interventions undertaken, or else we risk contributing to women and girls becoming even more vulnerable in the future. NGOs strive to ensure that this is not a one-dimensional approach focusing only on the female gender, but on the dynamics between men and women, boys and girls, at different societal, political and family levels. These complex relationships must be understood and considered for an effective humanitarian response.

Keynote Speech

Barbara Jackson, *CARE*

Moderator

Petra Ramsauer, *Author and Journalist*

Panel Members

Andrew Collodel, *HelpAge International*

Christine South, *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

Christina Stummer, *Austrian Development Agency*

Richard Walker, *Médecins Sans Frontières*