



**HCRI ESRC Seminar, 24-25 November 09
Hulme Hall at The University of Manchester**

Who are the humanitarians now?

**Was Hezbollah's rebuilding effort in Southern Lebanon a *humanitarian* effort?
Was the Government of Sri Lanka's routing of the Tamil Tigers an act of *humanitarian* liberation?
Was the attempted kidnap of 100 African children by the French charity Zoe's Ark an act of *humanitarian* assistance?
Was Michael Jackson deserving of his 2003 Radio Music Award for *Humanitarian* endeavours?**

The first ESRC seminar by the *Humanitarian and Conflict Response Institute* aims to highlight and debate contemporary controversies of humanitarian practice.

In 2007 Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) were ordered out of Niger in a dispute about the reporting of the levels of malnourishment amongst children. In 2009 they are still there. In 2009 the Sri Lanka government asked the Red Cross to close down certain offices because 'the war was over' and also expelled the spokesperson for UNICEF. However, other organisations continue to provide relief after the recent war. There are many examples where agencies have been forced, required or felt compelled to leave a conflict or disaster zone – but efforts labelled by some as 'humanitarian' continue. Humanitarian and relief organisations question when they should keep working in spite of government obstacles, political pressure or manipulation of their effort. Similarly governments are increasingly asking when do international agencies overstep their remit.

Questions about what to report from situations of war or crisis arose within humanitarian agencies as early as the 1968-70 Biafran war. *When not to provide aid* has been a central issue to recent research in this area, most particularly in the fierce debates about the provision of relief in the camps in Eastern DR Congo after the 1994 Rwanda genocide. In 2009, the international outcry about the 'humanitarian liberation' of Tamil communities in northern Sri Lanka has been followed by a debate about what role agencies should be playing in providing relief in the government controlled camps. In light of the problems of over zealous aid delivery during the post-tsunami period and in the infamous Zoe's Ark case, are governments now right to challenge the action of many agencies?

This two-day event will be chaired by Rony Brauman, Director of the HCRI, ex President of MSF, and Director of Research at the MSF Foundation in Paris. It will offer a platform to articulate and debate these challenges and will involve practitioners and scholars of contemporary and historical humanitarian crises. The seminar will include keynote speeches, research papers and master classes and is aimed at students, practitioners and academics with an interest in humanitarianism and contemporary conflict.

Detailed programme overleaf

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Tuesday 24 November, 2009	
9am	Registration
9.30am	<p>Rony Brauman, 1989 – 2009 What has changed?</p> <p>Director of the HCRI, Associate Professor at L'Institut d'Études Politiques, Director of Research at the MSF Foundation, Paris, and ex President of MSF (1982 – 1994). Rony has worked in the field of international medical assistance since 1977.</p>
10.30am	Coffee
11am	<p>Panel discussion: 1989 – 2009 What has changed?</p> <p>Chair: Professor Bertrand Taithe</p> <p>Rony Brauman will be joined by:</p> <p>Dr Mandy Turner, Lecturer in Conflict Resolution & Assistant Editor of International Peacekeeping, Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford <i>What does Palestine tell us about the humanitarian agenda?</i></p> <p>Dr Dan Brockington, Lecturer in the School of Environment & Development, The University of Manchester <i>Celebrity & humanitarianism</i></p> <p>Isabelle DeFourny, MSF France – representative from the Niger feeding programme <i>MSFF nutritional programmes in Niger</i></p>
1pm	Lunch
2pm – 4pm	<p>Masterclass 1 - Rony Brauman - A review of the last 2 decades of humanitarian assistance</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Masterclass 2 - Isabelle DeFouny - MSF intervention in the field of nutrition – an overview of the different aspects and objectives of the various programmes reflecting the main changes of orientation in the last 10 years</p>
Wednesday 25 November, 2009	
9.30am	<p>Jonathan Benthall, Islamic charities, the “religious field” an the international aid system</p> <p>Honorary research fellow, Department of Anthropology, University College London. Formerly Director of the Royal Anthropological Institute (1974-2000), Founding Editor of Anthropology Today (1985-2000) and Chair of the International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC 1997-2003)</p>
10.30am	Coffee
11am	<p>Panel discussion: Who are the humanitarians now?</p> <p>Chair: Rony Brauman</p> <p>Jonathan Benthall will be joined by:</p> <p>Dr Jonathan Goodhand, Reader in Conflict and Development Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies <i>Aid, counterinsurgency and stabilization in Eastern Sri Lanka</i></p> <p>Andy Bearpark, Director General of the British Association of Private Security Companies <i>Who are the humanitarians now?</i></p> <p>Lou McGrath OBE, Chief Executive, Mines Advisory Group <i>Preparing a humanitarian response to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 - Was MAG right in remaining and preparing for war?</i></p>
1pm	Lunch
2pm – 4pm	<p>Masterclass 1 – Jonathan Benthall - The disasters - media - relief nexus: a stable system?</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Masterclass 2 – Lou McGrath - Preparing a humanitarian response to the invasion of Iraq in 2003 - was MAG right in remaining and preparing for war?</p>