

HEROS ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

Humanitarian Emergency
Response Operations and
Stabilisation programme
2024-2025



Contents

- Foreword
- HEROS in numbers
- We are HSOT
- We deliver HEROS
- HSOT capabilities
- Spotlight intervention: Myanmar
- Spotlight: health emergencies
- How deployed experts deliver impact
 - Managing rosters of deployable experts
 - Humanitarian Adviser
 - Humanitarian Affairs Officer
 - Technical Programme Adviser
- Beyond responses
 - Safeguarding
 - HSOT humanitarian advice and policy support
 - Humanitarian supply chain advice

Foreword

2025 was a year of profound upheaval. Conflicts intensified and crossed borders, with new technologies – low-cost drones and cyber disruption – shaping how violence unfolded. Climate shocks came one after another: record floods across South Asia displaced millions, and devastating storms struck communities across the Caribbean and the Pacific. These pressures would have stretched the system in any year, but in 2025 they collided with a drop in global humanitarian funding.

Against this backdrop, the Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team (HSOT) continued to deliver, with a clear focus on providing the best possible value for money to the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), ensuring the UK had the expertise, systems and readiness required for rapid, cost-effective action.

HSOT responded at pace throughout the year. Alerts were issued within minutes of major events, and specialist teams deployed quickly. Work carried out in advance – strengthening rosters, stockpiles, supply routes, and preparing for emergencies – translated directly into faster and more cost-effective responses. In fast-moving and often difficult situations, colleagues combined practical delivery with clear, timely advice so decisions could be made quickly and with confidence.

People remained at the heart of delivery. Through the humanitarian and stabilisation rosters, HSOT enabled the deployment of more than 270 experts worldwide. With stronger oversight and risk management, three quarters of specialists received top performance



Rebecca Pankhurst-Lapiña
HSOT Director

ratings, reflecting the team's commitment to readiness, quality, and duty of care. The strength and professionalism of the standing team continued to anchor HSOT's delivery, providing trusted expertise across every response.

This year was also marked by loss. Our colleague and friend Nido Guijon died in July. He was deeply committed to humanitarian work, and his contribution

to it was felt across everything he did. Nido was a light – bright, warm and unforgettable. Known and respected across the Palladium and FCDO community, he combined sharp professional instinct with deep humanity. His kindness, generosity and good humour strengthened everyone around him. We were proud when he received a humanitarian medal for his work in Gaza; it recognised the impact he made everywhere he served, and his legacy lives on in the standards he set and the spirit he brought to this work. His absence continues to be felt deeply.

As we look to the year ahead, we do so with stronger capability, a renewed commitment to value for money, and a clear focus on ensuring the UK can act quickly and effectively when the next crisis hits. I want to thank all HSOT and FCDO colleagues for their

professionalism, resilience and exceptional commitment. The challenges ahead will not lessen, but the achievements of this year – and the example set by those we have lost – show the difference that preparation, partnership and purpose can make. Together, we move forward better prepared for what comes next.

HEROS in numbers

Year 8



277

new expert
deployments and
remote advisory tasks



8,700

core relief items delivered,
supporting over

43,000

people with life-saving
humanitarian aid

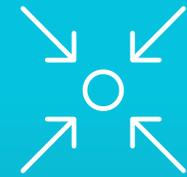


151

maps created for information
and analysis, and

63

humanitarian
situation reports



Since 2017, HSOT has
supported the UK
Government to
respond to over

90

major humanitarian
emergencies

HEROS in numbers

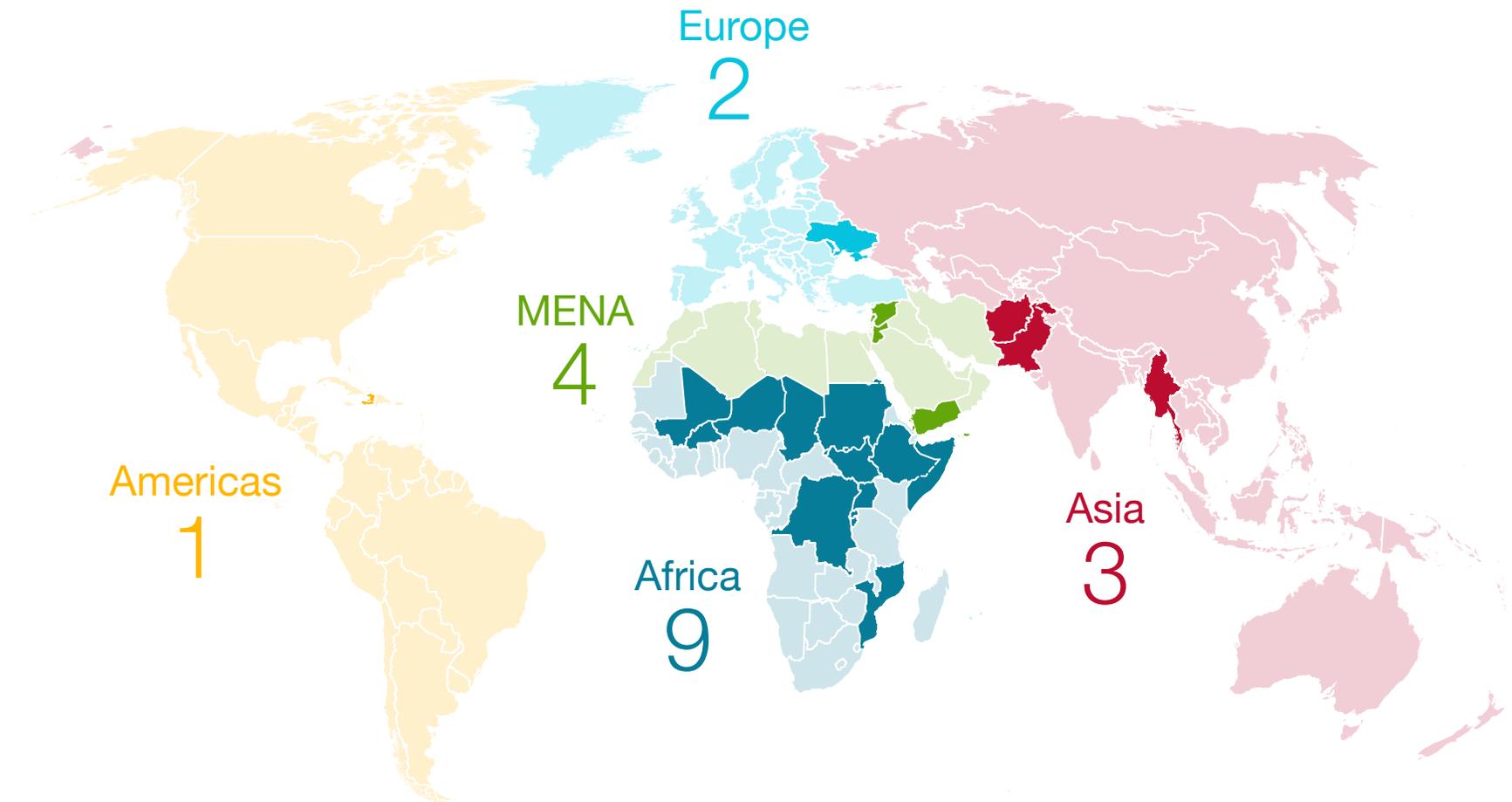
Alerting FCDO to humanitarian risks

HSOT provides humanitarian risk assessments which give FCDO an in-house, objective, and independent assessment of potential humanitarian needs across all geographies. The humanitarian early-warning product is published monthly and is a key tool to help FCDO identify risk and stay abreast of humanitarian emergencies.

DELIVERING IMPACT

HSOT enhanced FCDO's ability to anticipate emerging crises through early warning.

Global coverage of humanitarian risk assessments



A total of 19 countries and territories were flagged in 22 risk assessment briefs.

We are HSOT

We are a team of humanitarian and stabilisation specialists supporting the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, providing operational expertise to the UK Government with world-class response capabilities.

Under the Humanitarian Emergency Response Operations and Stabilisation (HEROS) programme, our team offers preparedness planning and response to sudden-onset disasters, protracted crises and complex emergencies to meet humanitarian needs and restore stability.

We provide analysis and advice to inform and enable FCDO's work in humanitarian response. Through our work, we strive to maintain FCDO's position as an important global partner in international development, stabilisation and response to humanitarian crises. We are known for our 'can-do' attitude and agility and can be relied upon to deliver at pace and at scale during times of crisis. Our diverse UK-based team maintains a high readiness to respond and can deploy a team eight hours from the onset of a crisis. We manage rosters, with

humanitarian and stabilisation experts, that we deploy to support FCDO strategic priorities, UK Overseas Missions and United Nations agencies.

HSOT has been a trusted partner of the UK Government since 2017 and has responded to over 90 major humanitarian emergencies.

HSOT is implemented by Palladium, a global company that supports clients to tackle the world's most complex issues. HSOT has been part of the UK aid-funded Humanitarian Emergency Response Operations and Stabilisation (HEROS) programme since 2017.



We deliver HEROS

WE DELIVER IMPACT

We strengthen FCDO's humanitarian planning and capacity to respond to humanitarian events by providing a ready-to-go set of capabilities.

We enable the FCDO to anticipate humanitarian events by providing horizon scanning and info management, supporting preparedness and rapid response.

We provide surge teams to FCDO to support delivery of humanitarian crisis management.

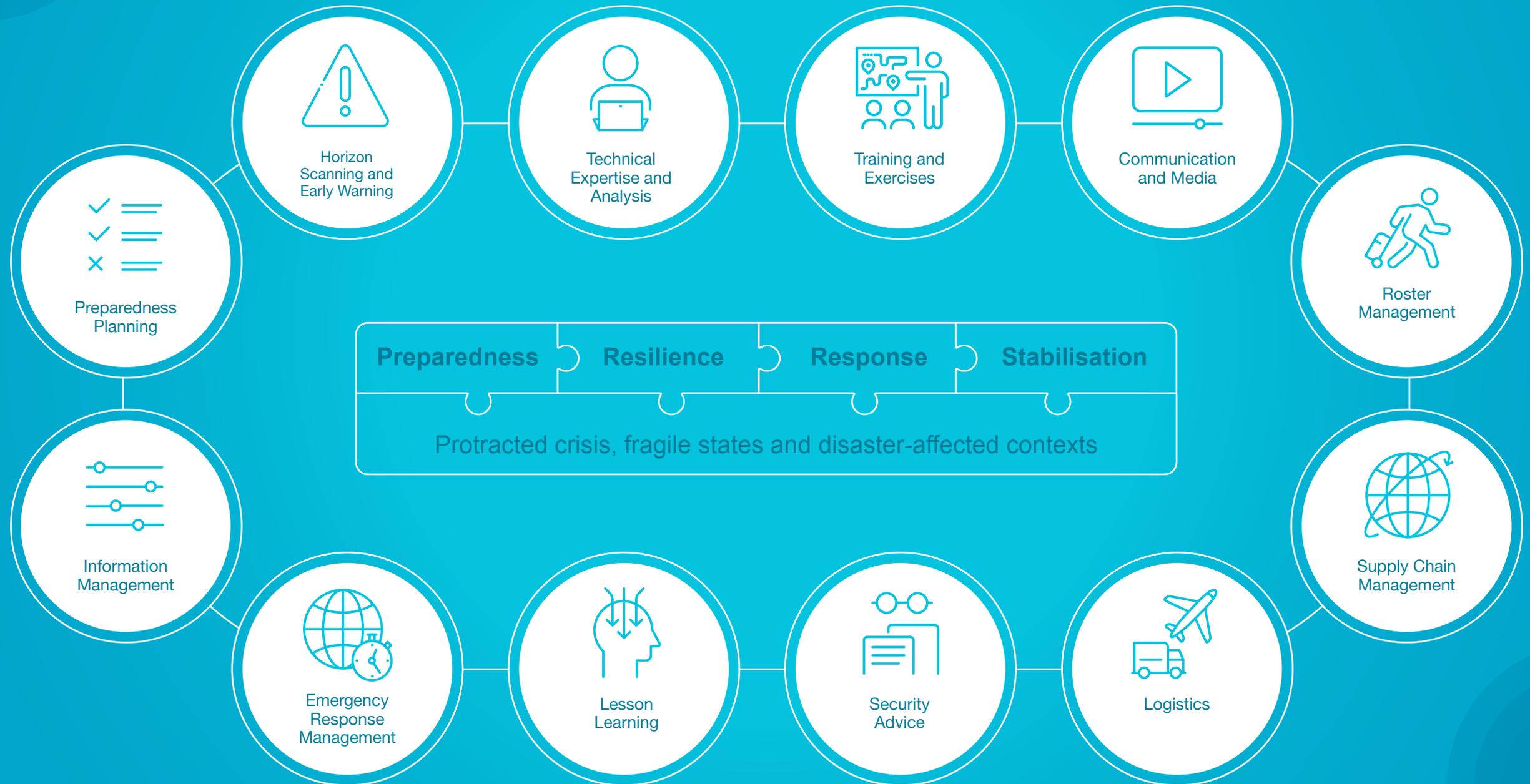
We deliver end-to-end supply chain

management, operational capability and advice to and on behalf of FCDO, HMG, partners and affected communities.

We deploy suitably qualified humanitarian and stabilisation experts on behalf of FCDO.

We deliver fast, efficient support that avoids delays and reduces costs, ensuring public funds achieve the greatest possible impact.

HSOT capabilities





Spotlight intervention: Myanmar



Responding to a catastrophic earthquake in Myanmar

In Myanmar, HSOT's readiness was put to the test when a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck near Mandalay on 28 March 2025, the most powerful seismic event in the region since 1912.

The earthquake caused extensive damage and was followed by multiple aftershocks. There were more than 4,400 fatalities, 11,000 individuals injured, and over 200,000 people displaced. People were in immediate need of safe shelter, clean water and sanitation and the means to meet their basic needs.

4,400 fatalities,
11,000 individuals injured and
over 200,000 people displaced.

A conflict complicating aid access

Delivering rapid relief to those impacted by the earthquake was complicated by the ongoing armed conflicts across Myanmar. Before the earthquake, over 3.5 million people remained displaced from their homes due to the fighting, while 19.9 million people needed humanitarian assistance.

Myanmar has seen a healthcare collapse, disease outbreaks, and crackdowns on political dissent and the media since a military coup ousted the democratically elected Aung San Suu Kyi's government in 2021. The earthquake impacted multiple areas administered by different groups, making it extremely difficult to deliver aid, and the military regime routinely restricts aid to opposition-held areas.

Providing speedy humanitarian response support

HSOT issued the first alert 16 minutes after the first earthquake and immediately started providing information on the situation to FCDO. At the same time, a humanitarian response team was stood up and ready to deploy. Humanitarian expertise from HSOT's standing team surged into FCDO's Crisis Centre, providing response options, supply chain plans, and lessons learned from previous earthquake responses.



Insert: © LIFT

DELIVERING IMPACT

Given the constraints of getting people into Myanmar, a quick decision was taken to deploy people to the regional humanitarian hub in Bangkok. The team was made up of HSOT staff along with personnel from FCDO's Humanitarian Crisis Response Department. By moving quickly, the team was able to be in the right time zone while coordinating with other team members working from the FCDO Crisis Centre in London.

“You are delivering exactly what surge support is all about, hitting the ground running, providing expertise, showing commitment and drive and doing all of it at pace.”

During the four-week surge, the deployed team boosted the British Embassy Yangon's humanitarian capacity, enabling the UK to interpret a complex needs assessment landscape, rapidly disburse funding, and support partners in improving access to the hardest hit areas. By delivering technical reviews of UN proposals and

supporting project delivery, HSOT helped ensure UK Official Development Assistance was used effectively in a challenging context.

The team also provided specialised expertise in humanitarian access, conflict sensitivity, and targeted analysis for FCDO. Their geospatial work gave the Embassy a clearer picture of damage and likely loss of life, while their monitoring of assessments, dashboards, and analysis helped FCDO make timely, evidence-based decisions for affected communities.

The benefit of using the HSOT core team is having a standing capability, that is well versed in working with FCDO posts at a time of crisis, and hence can pick up relationships and complex issues quickly and effectively. In the words of a senior British Embassy Yangon colleague, “[...] – you are delivering exactly what surge support is all about, hitting the ground running, providing expertise, showing commitment and drive, and doing all of it at pace.”

The background features a blurred image of an IV drip with a clear chamber and tubing, set against a blue gradient. Overlaid on the left side are several concentric, semi-transparent circles of varying sizes, creating a ripple effect.

Spotlight: health emergencies

Responding to health emergencies in humanitarian contexts

Disease outbreaks move fast. The UK's ability to keep pace depends on specialist health expertise and analysis that can turn uncertainty into decisions — often within hours.

HSOT supports the UK Government to prepare for and respond to health emergencies. Humanitarian crises impact people's health status immediately, with injuries and increased risk of outbreaks. The destruction of health facilities and health workers being forced to flee their homes means that health services break down and almost every aspect of health is affected: mental health, nutritional status, sexual and reproductive health, and non-communicable diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. To respond to these issues, HSOT has dedicated humanitarian health expertise in the core team and on the roster.

Supporting the UK's response to the Marburg outbreak in Rwanda

On 27 September 2024, Rwanda's Ministry of Health first reported cases of Marburg virus disease. By 20 November, Rwandan authorities had recorded 66 cases of Marburg and 15 deaths caused by the virus, mainly in and around the capital city, Kigali. Most of the initial infections were among health workers (over 70%). Marburg is a rare and extremely dangerous haemorrhagic fever, similar to Ebola, that causes serious illness and high risk of death. Symptoms appear suddenly and can include fever, a rash and severe internal bleeding, and severe symptoms include liver failure, shock and multi-organ dysfunction. An outbreak of this nature carries a broad range of secondary impacts on health and other social services.

On 1 October, HSOT was requested to support FCDO's response. HSOT surged a team providing health expertise, humanitarian information management capacity, and supply chain advice to FCDO. In Kigali, HSOT supported FCDO to coordinate HMG's response. HSOT's analysis was used in risk assessments on the impact of the outbreak in Rwanda and the wider region. HSOT's health

adviser's expertise was used to put the epidemiological data into context and make better decisions on the primary and secondary impacts of the outbreak.

The UK's Emergency Medical Team (EMT) and the UK Public Health Rapid Support Team (UK-PHRST) were deployed to Rwanda. HSOT's health adviser worked with both teams to provide briefings on arrival for the UK-PHRST and provide briefings on arrival for the UK-EMT on their strategic approach and in unblocking any operational

DELIVERING IMPACT

By delivering cross-contract humanitarian support, HSOT strengthened FCDO's response to a disease outbreak and helped prevent the health crisis from further escalating.

impediments. With FCDO and HMG teams, HSOT collated research needs and helped to provide a research offer to the Rwandan Ministry of Health.



HSOT's health expert joins British High Commissioner Alison Thorpe meeting with Rwanda's Minister of Health, Dr. Sabin Nsanzimana to discuss ongoing collaboration including Marburg response and emergency medical services.

Cholera outbreak in Angola – WHO declares an acute crisis

In late December 2024, a cholera outbreak rapidly spread across Angola. Angola had not experienced a cholera outbreak in many years, and despite having a well-established health system, medical staff were not well prepared to manage it. Within a couple of months, the outbreak had become one of the most acute outbreaks worldwide, with nearly 20,000 cases and 600 deaths by April 2025.

The outbreak spread rapidly across 18 of Angola's 21 provinces, affecting individuals of all ages in 152 municipalities.

Given the rainy season, and Angola's proximity to cholera-affected countries (Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia), there was a high risk of further spread within Angola and to neighbouring countries.

HSOT supplied a humanitarian health expert to provide epidemiological analysis, and assessment of the government and partner capacity to respond. This enabled FCDO to design additional support beyond ongoing partnerships with WHO and

UNICEF. The focus was to reduce transmission and help bring down the number of deaths. FCDO was able to increase their intervention, through the UK's Emergency Medical Team (UK-EMT) who were brought onboard to provide technical training to the Ministry of Health staff in Huila Province. HSOT's health expert helped develop a set of key advocacy points for the UK and other governments to take to the Angolan authorities with recommendations for future cholera prevention and control measures, which will contribute to the prevention of further outbreaks. Finally, HSOT's health expert provided a situation update to the UK's cross-government meeting on outbreaks, which convenes to assess epidemic threats.



People were collecting unsafe drinking water from the Casesse River in Angola.

Preparing for health emergencies is key

HSOT's humanitarian roster includes consultants with health expertise, and this year the team completed an extensive recruitment round to bolster this capability. All those added to the roster have deep-level knowledge of humanitarian response with additional health or nutrition expertise. In July 2025, a roster induction event was held for new starters to ensure that new roster members are ready to deploy.

In preparation for moving medical equipment during a health emergency, HSOT undertakes critical work behind the scenes. This year, the team completed an audit confirming the team meets the high standards of medical device management covering all the stages of the supply chain: warehousing, procurement and transportation. Medical devices cover a wide spectrum of equipment, from bandages to dialysis machines, that may be needed in a UK response to a health crisis.

DELIVERING IMPACT

HSOT strengthened FCDO's crisis response by deploying a Humanitarian Health Adviser with disease outbreak expertise, enabling rapid, well-informed action and supporting more efficient and effective decision making through the HEROS contract.

DELIVERING IMPACT

Targeted recruitment of health and supply chain experts strengthened the roster, while ensuring readiness for deploying medical equipment.

Supporting humanitarian readiness through WASH

Providing people with safe water, adequate sanitation and basic hygiene (WASH) in a crisis is critical to preventing the spread of waterborne and infectious diseases. In most emergencies, health teams focus on treating cases and monitoring outbreaks, while WASH interventions prevent further transmission.



What often begins as a health response quickly becomes a WASH priority: safe water, sanitation facilities and hygiene promotion are what bring infection rates down and protect communities over the long term.

This year, HSOT reviewed the UK's emergency hygiene-kit stockpile to ensure it meets global standards and remains fit for purpose in future crises. The review analysed international NGO and donor hygiene kits and the latest humanitarian guidance, leading to a redesigned kit that is more inclusive, environmentally aware and aligned with current humanitarian standards. The new design, which combines hygiene, dignity and incontinence items, has

undergone a comprehensive peer review with humanitarian partners. This has the added benefit of building trust and understanding of the UK's stockpile with those who may be the partners for last-mile delivery in crisis-affected areas. A review and update of this nature is essential to ensure that the UK's stockpile has items that are adapted to the needs of communities and also contribute to thought leadership and best practice for water, sanitation, and hygiene in humanitarian contexts.

As part of FCDO's risk-informed preparedness work HSOT provided WASH advice to the British Embassy in Kinshasa, DRC, reviewing and consolidating infrastructure projects funded through a £9 million FCDO programme. Working with other FCDO partners, the team helped ensure that essential water systems continued to operate as conflict intensified in Kivu. When fighting in North and South Kivu displaced hundreds of people and exacerbated the cholera outbreak, the restored infrastructure supplied safe water to displaced people and supported disease-prevention efforts.

DELIVERING IMPACT

Helping develop best practice in humanitarian water and sanitation management, enables FCDO to respond swiftly and effectively to public health emergencies, while ensuring resources reach those who need them most.



Training for health emergencies

HSOT supports the UK's preparedness for health emergencies by ensuring that teams and systems are ready to respond when global health crises strike. Through planning, simulation, and technical expertise, HSOT helps strengthen FCDO's ability to save lives, protect public health, and operate effectively under pressure.

In 2025, HSOT contributed to Exercise Pegasus – the UK's largest-ever national pandemic response exercise. Delivered by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), Pegasus tested the systems that would activate in a major global outbreak, examining cooperation between departments, the protection of vulnerable groups and the pace of

health-sector decision making. HSOT helped design as well as run the humanitarian aspects of the Pegasus exercise. The team also actively participated in the simulation exercise testing the department's response to the training scenario. HSOT's support helped align humanitarian and health preparedness, drawing on the team's

operational experience and expertise in crisis coordination and logistics. These simulation exercises help keep the UK at peak readiness, strengthening collaboration across departments and partners before a real emergency unfolds.

Earlier in the year, HSOT staff also supported the UK's annual humanitarian simulation exercise (SIMEX) run by the UK Emergency Medical Team and the UK's International Search and Rescue Team (UK-ISAR). The 2025 scenario

The team also actively participated in the simulation exercise testing the department's response to the training scenario.

centred on a major earthquake, highlighting how even in a disaster requiring search and rescue, responding to health needs is central to saving lives. The SIMEX focused on training and testing the readiness of the two UK deployable teams in sudden-onset emergencies and to rapidly changing conditions. During the exercise, HSOT lent support by playing the roles of

DELIVERING IMPACT

Large-scale simulation exercises deliver cost-effective preparedness. By supporting exercises and stress testing communication and leadership, HSOT is reinforcing UK capacity for rapid decision-making during health emergencies.

HSOT manages the UK's UNDAC roster – the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination team that deploys during a rapid-onset crisis to undertake initial needs assessment and provide leadership to the UN's operational response. During the SIMEX, HSOT arranged for UNDAC roster members to play the roles of UNDAC staff to strengthen the training and give them a chance to see how UK-ISAR and UK-EMT respond.



Supporting WHO via the UN Standby Partnership – UK strategic support to combat cholera outbreak in South Sudan

A cholera outbreak, which started in 2024, quickly spread across South Sudan, causing a public health disaster. The first cholera case was detected in September; by mid-December the outbreak had spread rapidly, and more than 5,000 cases had been reported in 22 counties. The situation was quickly getting worse because of poor water, hygiene, and sanitation, and shortages of skilled health staff, medicines, and supplies. Large-scale population movements due to flooding and conflict made the outbreak hard to control.



More than 5,000 cases had been reported in 22 counties.

UK-funded team of experts

HSOT supported the FCDO in the selection and deployment of five experts via the UN Standby Partnership (SBP) to assist WHO's emergency response to the cholera crisis. Their task was to support WHO's international health response to contain the outbreak. A multi-pronged approach is required to effectively combat a cholera outbreak. The cholera experts deployed advised WHO on cholera vaccine campaigns, establishment of treatment centres, cholera case management and required water, sanitation and hygiene interventions. Front-loading support to the cholera response and deploying experts quickly was vital to control and contain the spread, and the SBP mechanism provides exactly this kind of immediate surge support.

Delivering strategic and agile support

A key success of the UK-funded team was linking up surveillance systems to provide data to inform and drive the cholera response. Ensuring that the necessary surveillance was in place

enabled WHO and the South Sudanese Ministry of Health to plan and deliver a large vaccination campaign in 34 counties with around 90% coverage. The UK-funded Standby Partnership deployed team of cholera experts has also supported WHO to deliver strategic and agile support to the Ministry of Health, strengthening South Sudan's ability to respond to future emergencies and outbreaks.

DELIVERING IMPACT

Enabling the FCDO to support UN emergency response operations by deploying experts at speed strengthened the effectiveness and efficiency of the WHO-led cholera response in South Sudan.

This year, HSOT has supported FCDO to manage 543 Standby Partnership requests, of which FCDO funded 73.





How
deployed
experts
deliver
impact

Managing rosters of deployable experts is a key pillar of HEROS

The strength of the UK's response often comes down to people having the right expertise, and ready to deploy without delay. Roster management is how that readiness is made real. HSOT maintains the responsiveness of FCDO rosters holding over 900 deployable humanitarian and stabilisation experts. These experts provide the UK Government with the critical technical skills needed for timely and effective crisis response and help protect UK interests in the face of a rising number of global conflicts.

This year, the feedback on personnel deployed from FCDO's rosters was excellent, with around three quarters of those deployed scoring an approval rating of 90% or above on work delivered. HSOT designed and embedded improved governance structures throughout the year, strengthening systems and improving speed to mobilisation in FCDO's roster deployments.

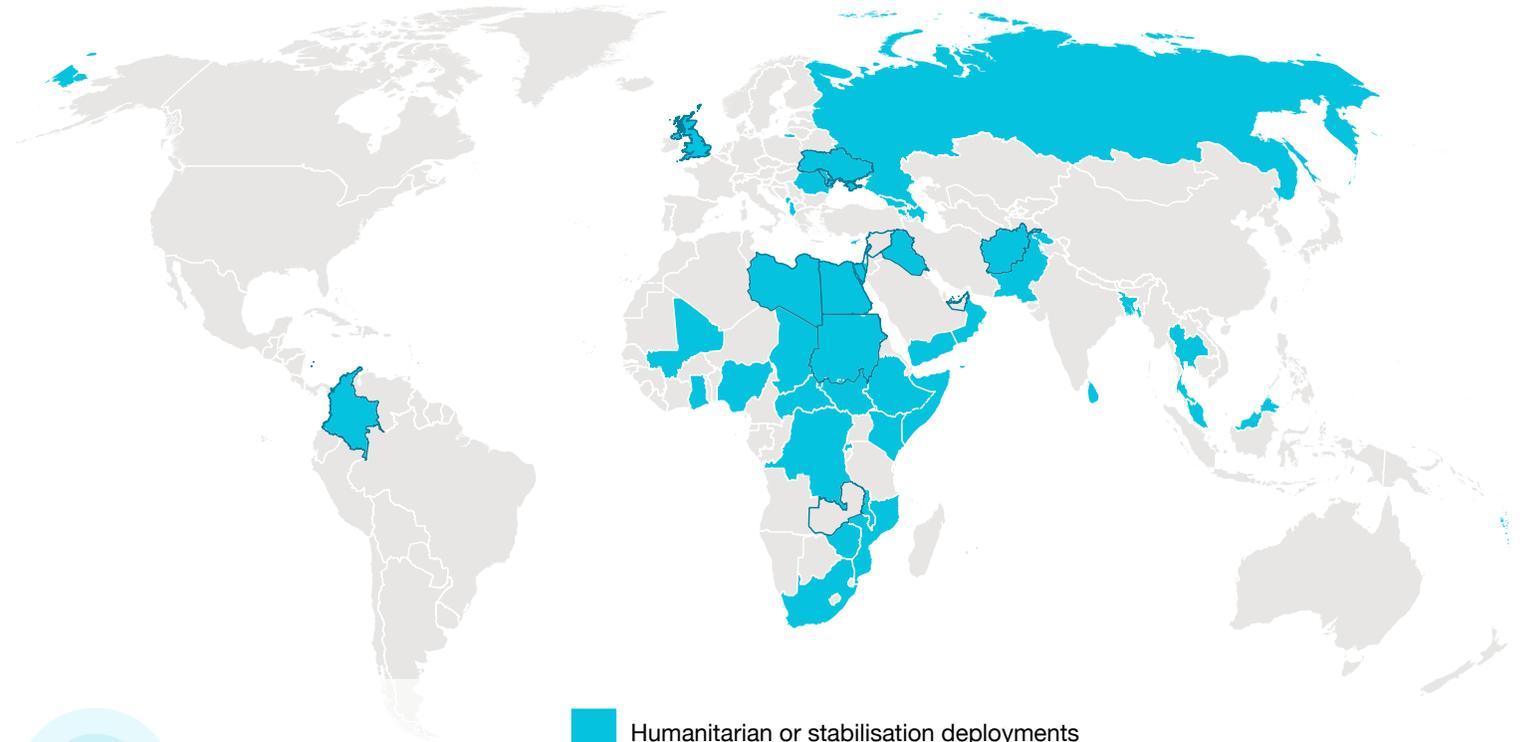
HSOT also assumes responsibility for the risk management of the personnel it deploys. In 2025, around 300 deployment risk assessments were conducted with 99% approved on first submission. This ensured that experts could be deployed to high-risk environments, where their expertise is often needed, subject to the necessary due diligence without causing delays.

HSOT managed
277
new deployments of
stabilisation and humanitarian
experts working remotely and
in FCDO priority countries

74.2%
of deployed consultants
scored 18/20 in feedback

DELIVERING IMPACT

HSOT ensured the timely provision of qualified expertise, boosting the UK's ability to respond to humanitarian crises, whilst allowing FCDO staff to focus on strategic priorities through effective roster and deployment management.



Humanitarian Adviser



Helping the UK reach over a million people after Pakistan's 2024 floods

BIO

A senior humanitarian adviser specialising in humanitarian policy, protection, conflict analysis, and large-scale programme design. Recently deployed to the British High Commission in Islamabad to support the Climate, Resilience and Humanitarian Group.

Context

From September until November 2024, a senior humanitarian adviser deployed under FCDO's HEROS programme to the British High Commission in Islamabad to provide surge support to the UK's response to the climate-driven monsoon floods in Pakistan. While the 2024 Pakistan monsoon floods were less severe than the 2022 floods, they are now considered part of a 'normal'

year due to evolving climate patterns. The disaster resulted in 368 deaths, 668 injuries, and the displacement of 600,000 people, with extensive damage to infrastructure, homes, and livelihoods.* Despite lessons from the 2022 floods, gaps remain in disaster preparedness, climate adaptation, and the capacity of disaster management authorities to respond effectively.

What was their role?

The adviser worked with the British High Commission's Climate, Resilience and Humanitarian Group, where they provided technical advisory support during a period of heightened humanitarian need. Their role was to strengthen the UK's response, ensure timely and proportionate assistance and align efforts with both local needs and the FCDO's humanitarian framework.

They advised on humanitarian response delivery, supported coordination with partners, and contributed to real-time lessons learning and crisis

communications, working with agencies including Concern Worldwide, IOM, WFP, and Pakistan's NDMA. Their work contributed to the Building Resilience and Addressing Vulnerability to Emergencies (BRAVE) programme, which provided £12.5 million in assistance to more than 168,000 households – over 1.2 million people – across 16 flood-affected districts. They also supported the refinement of the UK's response strategy, oversaw £3 million in pre-positioned relief supplies, and contributed to briefings and public communications.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT AND ADDED VALUE OF THIS DEPLOYMENT?

This deployment directly supported the objectives of the FCDO's HEROS contract to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain dignity in areas affected by disaster. The UK's response reached more than 1.2 million people and was well-coordinated with national and international actors.

Colleagues from BHCI's Climate Resilience and Humanitarian Group valued the adviser's ability to provide strategic insight, facilitate coordination, and support effective humanitarian response delivery under pressure. The team also highlighted how their work helped improve access to affected populations, particularly in less secure areas. Their humanitarian advice also enabled more effective programming decisions and stronger engagement with local stakeholders.

As a colleague from BHCI's Climate Resilience and Humanitarian Group said, the adviser "designed and operationalised access strategies that would not have happened at scale without them."

The adviser's work supported the UK's ability to respond effectively to the 2024 monsoon floods, and future climate shocks. They supported the team in further strengthening and streamlining the consortium approach and a staged, trigger-based delivery model. This work not only laid the foundation for smoother activation of crisis mechanisms in early 2025, and enabled FCDO to distribute funding rapidly through existing consortia, but also helped other country networks to learn and adapt from this successful humanitarian delivery model.

*Numbers of people affected as of November 2024.

Humanitarian Affairs Officer

Supporting the UK's humanitarian response in Gaza through evidence and analysis

BIO

A humanitarian analyst with experience in data, reporting, and coordination across complex crises. Deployed to the British Consulate General Jerusalem to provide analytical and reporting support during the UK's humanitarian response to the Gaza crisis.



Context

Between November 2024 and July 2025, the analyst was deployed to the British Consulate General Jerusalem to support the UK's humanitarian response in the Gaza Strip and across Palestine. After a year of devastating conflict, Gaza's people were facing extreme levels of violence and severe

shortages of basic items such as food, medicine, and water. Multiple UN agencies and INGOs were involved in delivering assistance in exceptionally difficult conditions, where access was restricted and the situation changed from day to day.

What was their role?

The analyst gathered and analysed data to provide colleagues in the region and in London with a clear understanding of developments on the ground. They worked closely with UN and INGO partners in Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank, ensuring their experiences in delivering aid to Palestinians were reflected in the UK's understanding and response.

Additionally, the analyst helped strengthen the Consulate's data and analysis systems, reviewing what information was most needed and setting up new ways to collect and interpret it. They led a scenario-planning exercise to anticipate how the humanitarian situation might evolve and provided targeted analysis to inform policy and response priorities at critical moments.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT AND ADDED VALUE OF THIS DEPLOYMENT?

The Consulate and wider FCDO were better able to anticipate risks, understand needs, and make evidence-based decisions in a rapidly changing environment, thanks to the analyst translating complex technical information into clear, actionable insights that informed the UK's humanitarian response.

In an environment where reliable data was limited and frequently contested, their briefings helped demystify numbers and communicate them clearly. This included explaining why the UN and the Government of Israel reported differing figures on the number of aid trucks entering Gaza, information that proved critical for contextualising the crisis.

FCDO colleagues described the deployed expert as a reliable and trusted source of analysis, able to take on a range of reporting and coordination tasks effectively and to support both humanitarian and policy work across the team.

An FCDO colleague who worked closely with them during their deployment commented:

"We could task them with any analysis or reporting and they would complete it effectively. They supported across the programme team, managed relationships with other parts of the Consulate, and with external partners."

Technical Programme Adviser

Strengthening governance and regional partnerships through flexible funding mechanisms in Yemen

BIO

A governance and programme design specialist with extensive experience in fragile and conflict-affected states, supporting the British Embassy to Yemen through the Integrated Security Fund (ISF).

Context

The Government of Yemen continues to face ongoing aggression from the Houthis, posing a direct threat to the security and stability of Yemen and standing as the primary obstacle to sustainable peace. Despite these challenges, the Government has advanced an ambitious reform vision aimed at improving prospects for all Yemenis.

The UK mobilised a team through its Yemen office network to design and deliver support mechanisms, including the Yemen Support Fund (YSF), a flexible mechanism investing in opportunities to protect civilians, promote political de-escalation and strengthen the foundations for stability.



What was their role?

Since the beginning of the adviser's deployment in March 2024 to the Yemen ISF team, they have helped scope, design and establish a new Technical Assistance Facility for Yemen (TAFFY). Their early objectives included defining the rationale and approach for TAFFY, supporting procurement processes with the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) team, and advising during the inception phase of both TAFFY and YSF.

The role quickly expanded beyond programme design to include strategic leadership and diplomatic engagement. Working with the Ambassador and political teams, the adviser led a communications shift that rebranded TAFFY as a 'facility' and referred to donors as 'international partners,' aligning language with multilateral norms.

To improve transparency and engagement, the adviser launched the TAFFY Watchers and YSF Watchers monthly updates – concise, blind-copied briefings highlighting delivery progress and partner contributions. Initially created for internal use, they evolved into a valued diplomatic tool reaching nearly 500 recipients, including ambassadors and ministers, and became a catalyst for bilateral engagement.

Within the Embassy, the adviser contributed to embedding the Integrated Security Fund (ISF) programme across political, economic, defence, and MOD teams by aligning project aims with departmental priorities and fostering shared ownership. Inclusion in internal communications and regular engagement with cross-team meetings reflected growing trust and recognition of ISF's relevance.

Coordination efforts helped reduce siloed working, particularly across the Amman–Riyadh divide, through regular cross-team meetings and information sharing. A bi-weekly approvals process was introduced with the Ambassador, replacing slower feedback loops, accelerating decisions, and strengthening political ownership.

Recognising that the original YSF project no longer reflected Yemen's political realities, the adviser led a redesign shifting its focus from a stalled peace process to promoting government unity. Drawing on research from the TAFFY Research Unit and expert input from governance, women and peace and security (WPS), and climate advisers, TAFFY and YSF evolved into politically agile, multi-donor platforms capable of adapting to changing conflict dynamics.

WHAT WAS THE IMPACT AND ADDED VALUE OF THIS DEPLOYMENT?

The technical adviser's initiatives restored collaboration with multilateral partners, strengthened donor confidence and positioned the UK as a credible convener in Yemen's recovery efforts. International partners, including Saudi Arabia, made financial contributions to UK-led mechanisms, while Embassy teams began challenging politically sensitive programming through ISF.

The Watchers updates became a practical diplomatic tool, improving transparency and prompting high-level engagement. Embassy teams worked more coherently, decision-making accelerated, and politically attuned expertise was shared across departments at no additional cost. The deployment demonstrated how strategic communication, cross-government collaboration and

flexible funding can achieve results in a politically complex environment, informing approaches to recovery programming and reinforcing the UK's reputation as a trusted partner in Yemen's recovery.

"Having an expert consultant focused solely on this area meant we were actually able to bring it about. It involved a lot of heavy lifting from the political team, the Ambassador, and others, but that's the point of it being a real force multiplier – you delegate it to someone who can concentrate fully and be accountable for that one task. Much of the consultant's impact stemmed from his ability to build and maintain relationships – the ability to connect with people, build trust and bring partners together." Head of Integrated Security Fund (ISF), British Embassy Yemen.

"Much of the consultant's impact stemmed from his ability to build and maintain relationships – the ability to connect with people, build trust and bring partners together."



Beyond responses

The HEROS programme delivers rapid response capabilities. These, in turn, are strengthened by the policies, partnerships, and safeguards that HSOT builds behind the scenes.

Safeguarding

Protecting people from sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH) is a core part of the UK Government's duty of care and a central expectation for all delivery partners. As set out in the FCDO's guidance on preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the international aid sector, effective safeguarding underpins trust, accountability, and the safe delivery of aid. For HSOT, this means building a culture where everyone – from deployees to suppliers globally – understands their responsibility to prevent harm and act when concerns arise.

Between June and August 2025, HSOT's Safeguarding Focal Points rolled out a new *Safeguarding in Practice* course for core staff – across all offices. The training created was an interactive, scenario-based programme rooted in the realities of humanitarian response. It was developed in collaboration between Palladium's Safeguarding Manager, the FCDO Safeguarding Unit and HSOT.

The sessions brought safeguarding alive and showed how it applies to staff roles day to day, in the office and on deployment. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with one colleague noting: "The scenarios really helped put the learning into context and underlined that safeguarding can be challenging but it is everyone's responsibility." The training is helping to embed safeguarding more consistently across teams, strengthening HSOT's wider culture of accountability and care.

Extending safeguarding through our partnerships

Safeguarding is also being strengthened across HSOT's supply chain. HSOT has worked closely with its freight-forwarders and suppliers to help them develop stronger sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (PSEAH) policies and training. HSOT designed and delivered three information sessions for 28 representatives from ten key suppliers. Each session outlined

definitions, expectations and practical steps, using Palladium's safeguarding training materials and case studies. As one supplier reflected:

"It was a great session – we'll be following up internally to make sure everyone understands what's expected."

HSOT and Palladium will continue to follow up with suppliers to track progress and share lessons. Together, these initiatives show safeguarding in practice – a shared commitment to learning, accountability and protecting people wherever HSOT and its partners work.



DELIVERING IMPACT

Advanced safeguarding and Accountability to Affected Populations through supplier training and partnership, ensuring aid is delivered responsibly and people are protected.

HSOT humanitarian advice and policy support

HSOT's wider advisory role strengthens FCDO's capacity and expertise to respond effectively to humanitarian crises. HSOT experts remain on standby to provide timely advice and analysis, supporting UK decisions on policy, advocacy, and programme delivery. Through its core team and humanitarian roster consultants, HSOT offers surge support and technical expertise to FCDO's central and in-country teams in specialist areas such as humanitarian access, protection, needs analysis, supply chain management, health, and monitoring and evaluation.

Supporting the UK's leadership on protection and inclusion

HSOT's advisory support was used to reinforce FCDO's leadership on protection, gender equality, and inclusive humanitarian action through targeted technical inputs across priority areas, including gender-based violence (GBV) in emergencies, support for women-led organisations (WLOs), and policy integration.

HSOT advanced the UK's global leadership on GBV by driving strategic engagement in the multi-stakeholder *Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies* – a global partnership bringing together governments, UN agencies, and NGOs to improve protection in crises. HSOT helped ensure a coordinated UK

engagement in high-level dialogues, contributed to global policy discussions, and supported delivery of the UK's annual report to the partnership.

Technical inputs from HSOT informed FCDO's strategic dialogues with multilateral partners and shaped new business cases, strengthening accountability and financing for GBV in humanitarian responses. HSOT's support helped embed protection and inclusion across humanitarian policy and partnerships, reinforcing UK leadership and ensuring that humanitarian responses are more inclusive, equitable and effective.

DELIVERING IMPACT

Reinforced FCDO's global leadership on GBV and gender equality, by leveraging HSOT technical expertise to strengthen and support GBV interventions and ensure humanitarian action is more inclusive, equitable and effective.



Sudan's protection crisis

HSOT's policy support is strengthened by targeted, country-level analysis where it is most needed. Sudan is currently experiencing a protection crisis of unprecedented scale. Protection violations, including sexual violence, forced recruitment, ethnically targeted killings, and the use of starvation as a method of warfare are

widespread and are fuelling the humanitarian crisis. In March 2025, the British Office Sudan commissioned HSOT to conduct a humanitarian protection and inclusion analysis. The objective was to contribute to programmatic decision-making and planning by consolidating evidence on needs, challenges, and opportunities.

The analysis also examined the specific needs and capacities of marginalised groups, including women, children, older people, persons with disabilities, and ethnic and religious minorities. The findings were synthesised into a 25-page report and a spotlight paper on locally led protection.

The analysis highlighted the intractable nature of the conflict and the high levels of violence against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including widespread sexual violence.

The report called for urgent efforts to expand survivors' access to specialised protection services, support for frontline responders, particularly women-led organisations, and align programming, policy, and diplomacy to reinforce local-to-global prevention. It recognises the UK's influential role in shaping and supporting the protection response and makes recommendations for sustaining this leadership.

The analysis highlighted the intractable nature of the conflict and the high levels of violence against civilians and civilian infrastructure, including widespread sexual violence.

DELIVERING IMPACT

Built up FCDO capacity to operate in complex environments and upheld protection standards, by consolidating evidence on urgent needs, informing recommendations and ultimately strengthening UK leadership in the sector.

This work was conducted alongside two other technical support missions on locally-led responses and health. Recognising overlaps, HSOT humanitarian consultants were requested to deliver integrated recommendations to strengthen cross-sector impact. The humanitarian protection analysis informed business case development for FCDO's Sudan humanitarian programming and contributed to triggering strategic discussions.



© FCDO

Humanitarian supply chain advice



HSOT provided critical analysis and advisory support to assess emerging supply chain risks during a period of escalating global tensions. The team evaluated potential disruptions to humanitarian logistics, including constraints on key shipping routes in the Red Sea and the implications for the timely delivery of humanitarian relief items. HSOT delivered updated risk assessments and strategic advice to inform planning and ensure continuity of humanitarian operations.

To prepare for potential future displacement in Ethiopia, HSOT scoped options for prepositioned stocks of humanitarian relief items. HSOT conducted a comprehensive review of local, regional, and global suppliers. This analysis compared specifications, costs, and coverage options to identify the most effective procurement strategies within the funding envelope available. By providing evidence-based recommendations, HSOT enabled decision-makers to optimise stockpiling plans and achieve improved value for money.

DELIVERING IMPACT

Delivering integrated early warning and specialist supply chain advice to anticipate disruptions impacting the UK's ability to respond to humanitarian emergencies. This resulted in the continuity of relief operations and delivery of improved value for money.

Protecting aid workers at work

Armoured vehicles offer humanitarian workers the ability to operate more safely in conflict settings. This year, HSOT arranged the donation of five armoured vehicles to UNICEF to be pooled between UNICEF, UN OCHA and WHO to support their operations in Gaza. These were in addition to three vehicles donated the previous year.

The vehicles offer a high level of protection, enabling rescue crews to operate more safely in frontline areas under constant shelling.

The vehicles were shipped to Ashdod in February, and due to access restrictions, were only delivered into Gaza in August 2025. HSOT worked closely with UNICEF to manage the vehicles in this period, reducing the risks of diversion and minimising storage costs. Two of the vehicles provided were refurbished by HSOT using in-house expertise and the vehicle workshop at the FCDO Disaster Response Centre in Kemble.



DELIVERING IMPACT

Innovative refurbishment and supply chain management of armoured vehicles delivered strong value for money and operational resilience to the Gaza response.





Contact us

www.thepalladiumgroup.com

For more information contact:

Rebecca Pankhurst-Lapiña, HSOT Director
Rebecca.PankhurstLapina@fcdo.gov.uk



We are all accountable. Report corruption, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

FCDO's Whistleblowing Helpline:

+44 (0)1355 84 3747
reportingconcerns@fcdo.gov.uk

Palladium Integrity Hotline:

+44 (0) 8081 96 5748
palladium.ethicspoint.com

HSOT Humanitarian
and Stabilisation
Operations Team

 **Palladium**
MAKE IT POSSIBLE