

HSOT Humanitarian
and Stabilisation
Operations Team

ANNUAL REPORT

1 October 2020 – 30 September 2021

 **Palladium**
MAKE IT POSSIBLE

 **UKaid**
from the British people

WHAT IS HSOT?

In 2020 and 2021, the world confronted many crises that the UK Government was at the forefront of addressing. The Humanitarian and Stabilisation Operations Team (HSOT) has been a trusted partner, providing the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and, to a lesser extent, other Government departments with capacity and specialist expertise to effectively respond to 26 of these.

From Mozambique to Afghanistan, Haiti to Ukraine, Yemen to Bangladesh, we responded to sudden-onset disasters, protracted crises and complex emergencies, to meet populations' humanitarian needs and restore stability in fragile and conflict-affected states.

Our core staff of over 70 operating from London and from our warehouse in Kemble, Gloucestershire, was at the heart of our work across 63 countries, providing high-calibre humanitarian, procurement and logistics, stabilisation, security and operations expertise. HSOT also includes 900+ humanitarian and stabilisation consultants on our rosters that we can deploy to UK Overseas Missions.

HSOT services covered the whole spectrum. Before crises struck, we undertook humanitarian early warning, analysis and monitoring of risks. We then supported the emergency responses, including

through the provision of expertise to FCDO teams in the UK and overseas and the delivery of essential relief items to affected populations.

HSOT also provided policy advice on longer-term strategic priorities in areas such as localisation of humanitarian response and prevention of violence against women and girls. We generated lessons from each operation and developed innovative approaches to help the UK in its efforts to support reforms to the international humanitarian system.

Our commitment is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain dignity.

HSOT is implemented by positive impact firm [Palladium](#) and is part of the UK aid-funded Humanitarian Emergency Response Operations and Stabilisation (HEROS) programme, running between 2017 and 2022.

CONTENTS



FOREWORD FROM THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

For four years, Palladium has helped the UK Government respond to 62 crises across the world, providing relief for affected populations and saving lives. This year was no different, with further challenges posed by Covid-19, the need to work flexibly to support the vision of the newly created FCDO and a backdrop of revisions to the UK aid budget.

We are proud to have delivered 696 interventions that provided FCDO teams with technical expertise and field experience, bringing together policy objectives and priorities into tangible advice. We have assisted more than 133,000 crises-affected people

worldwide, providing them with over 157,000 essential items such as emergency shelters, hygiene and kitchen kits, and solar lights.

Over the past year, the world has also faced an aggravation of protracted crises and conflicts, that HSOT has helped the UK to mitigate. In Mozambique we assisted at least around 70,000 people affected by the impact of cyclone Eloise and an Islamist insurgency. In Afghanistan, we strengthened the UK's ability to swiftly set up a humanitarian response and contributed to the strategy of UN agencies and partners on key issues such as upholding the rights of women and girls.

Our high-quality service and ever-improving capabilities are enabled by the team's agility and the integration of our services across the board, to ensure that our offering is greater than the sum of its parts. An example has been the integrated approach to identifying, sharing and applying lessons learnt,

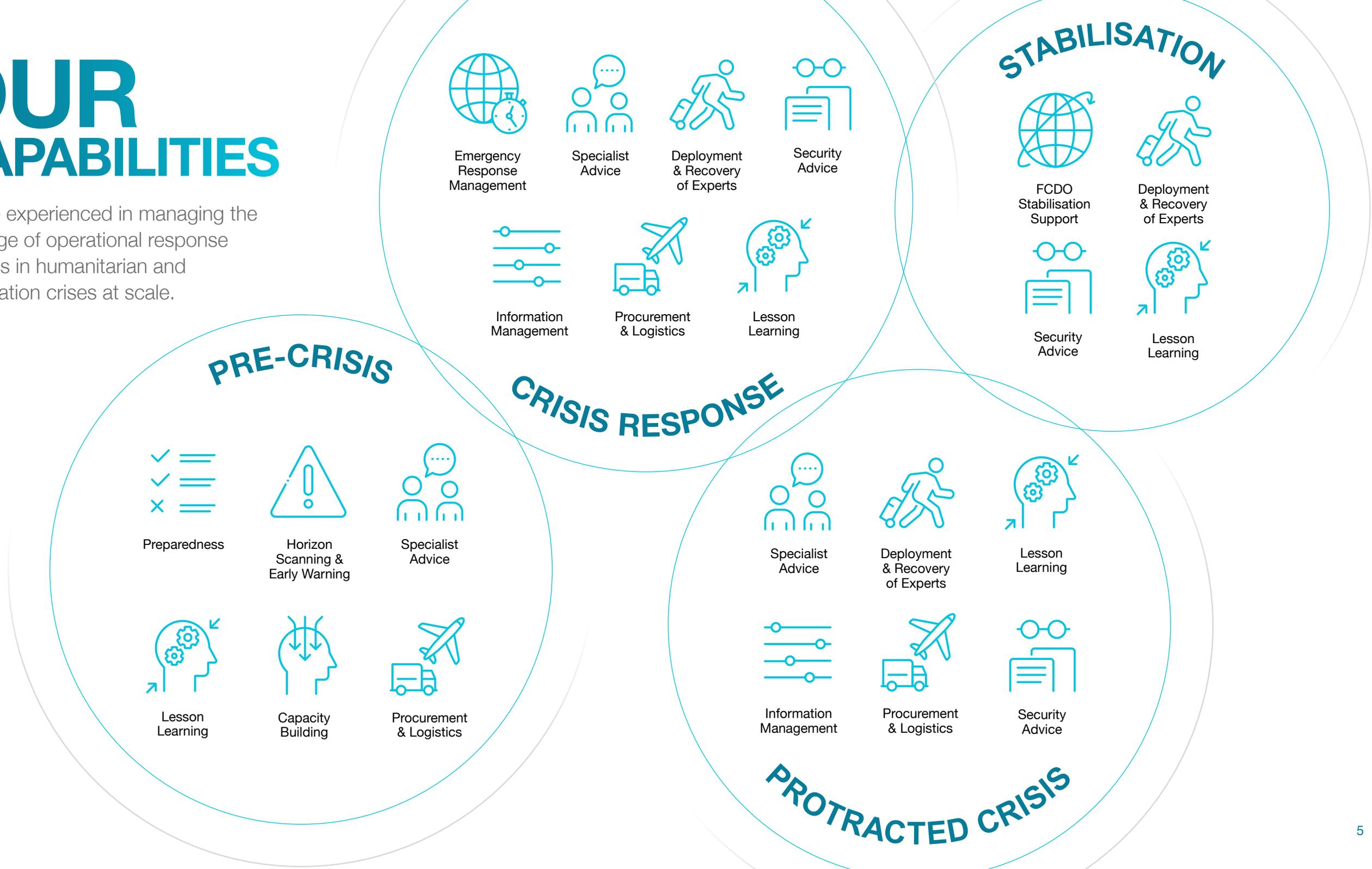
which has not only allowed us to continuously improve our operations, but also support the learning initiatives of the FCDO. Harnessing cross-team synergies has also helped us create a Palladium-managed platform in Mali's capital Bamako to ensure the safety of specialists deployed to the country. This model could be exported to other regions where the UK Government's presence is limited, strengthening its ability to provide humanitarian and stabilisation aid.

Against a backdrop of challenges and uncertainty, HSOT's drive to constantly adapt, innovate and improve our work (and the wider sector) has allowed us to maximise the value of UK taxpayers' money and the positive impact on the lives of the world's most vulnerable people.



OUR CAPABILITIES

We are experienced in managing the full range of operational response services in humanitarian and stabilisation crises at scale.



FROM READINESS TO RESPONSE

HSOT helps the FCDO to deliver a better informed and more efficient humanitarian response. Through a range of technical capabilities and coordination, we provide an agile and reliable end-to-end service, supporting crisis response that is aligned to UK policy priorities and guided by humanitarian principles.

Through HSOT core standing team and roster experts, this year we have supported FCDO's response to 26 rapid onset and protracted crises, as well as Covid-19 efforts at the global and country level. Our contribution has drawn across the full spectrum of activities to deliver consistently high-quality assistance that is appropriate to the needs of communities and demonstrates innovation and thought leadership. We have also facilitated collaboration across the UK Government and international partners while strengthening FCDO's preparedness and response capacity.

HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE OFFER



- 1 Deliver early warning analysis and preparedness support for FCDO central and country-based teams.
- 2 Conduct 24/7 global crisis monitoring and horizon scanning to provide targeted analysis to inform FCDO decision making.
- 3 Generate rapid response analysis and strategy development to support alignment with policy on humanitarian issues such as protection and localisation.
- 4 Mobilise humanitarian experts, often within hours, to deliver elements of FCDO responses.
- 5 Maintain prepositioned non-food items stocks and enabling equipment in a ready state, with the ability to scale up capacity as required.
- 6 Deploy experts into the FCDO from a diverse roster and facilitate deployments into the UN via the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and Standby Partnership Programme (SBP) mechanisms.
- 7 Promote options for monitoring UK aid contribution to responses and use monitoring for learning and evidence purposes.
- 8 Lead internal operational learning to inform training and exercises and strengthen FCDO's response capability.

HSOT IN NUMBERS

YEAR 4



63

countries supported



26

crises responded to



696

support interventions, including deployments and remote advisory



157K+

of relief items delivered

**SINCE
2017**

62

crises responded to



with a value of

£86.3M



SPOTLIGHT INTERVENTIONS

AFGHANISTAN: A RETURN TO TALIBAN CONTROL

In August, the collapse of the Afghan Government and subsequent Taliban takeover displaced over half a million people and killed 5,138 civilians. This increased the vulnerability of the population, half of which already needed humanitarian assistance.

A multidisciplinary HSOT team provided remote support to the FCDO in the UK and Afghanistan to increase its bandwidth and remain abreast of the rapidly evolving situation and increasing risks. The information management system that we established provided the FCDO with up-to-date knowledge on the crisis, informing notes to senior staff, including the Foreign Secretary. It also enabled timely responses to questions from London and the international community. The daily and bi-weekly situation reports, operational updates and expertise on procurement, logistics, stabilisation and security provided helped the UK Government progress within a fluid context and remain prepared for change.

Within 24 hours of request, three HSOT experts were ready to equip the FCDO with protection, civil-military issues and

information management expertise. We advised the UK Government on how to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) and ensure the protection and inclusion of women and girls, whose rights gained over the last two decades were threatened. We also provided timely expertise to the UN through facilitating the deployment of two FCDO-funded consultants to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs under the SBP mechanism.

HSOT support strengthened understanding and cooperation with partners and foreign governments. Our advice supported FCDO analysis and decision making and increased our ability to influence UN agencies and partners on priority issues, including humanitarian access and human rights. Ultimately, HSOT contributed to the UK

Government's humanitarian response to provide urgent life-saving aid to millions of people suffering from conflict, drought and Covid-19.

within

24 hours

3 HSOT experts were ready

**to advise
the FCDO**

MOZAMBIQUE'S MULTIFACETED CRISIS

On 23 January 2021, Tropical Cyclone Eloise made landfall as a category 1 storm 20 kilometres south of Beira City, central Mozambique. It destroyed farmland, vital infrastructure and thousands of homes and dealt a further blow to areas which were still recovering from the 2019 Cyclones Idai and Kenneth. Meanwhile, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, fighting between Islamist militants and Mozambican security forces has displaced over 670,000 people since 2017.

Between late March and early April 2021, the insurgents attacked the strategic port town of Palma in Cabo Delgado, killing civilians before being expelled and forcing the population to flee.

In the immediate aftermath of Cyclone Eloise, HSOT deployed a small field team jointly with the FCDO to provide humanitarian advice, information, analysis and response recommendations to FCDO Mozambique. This rapid response deployment took place amidst challenging global travel restrictions due to Covid-19. Once in country, HSOT and FCDO Mozambique partnered with UN agencies, NGOs and other donors to ensure a rapid response to the Cabo Delgado crisis, to resettle the population, and assist regions affected by cyclone and drought.

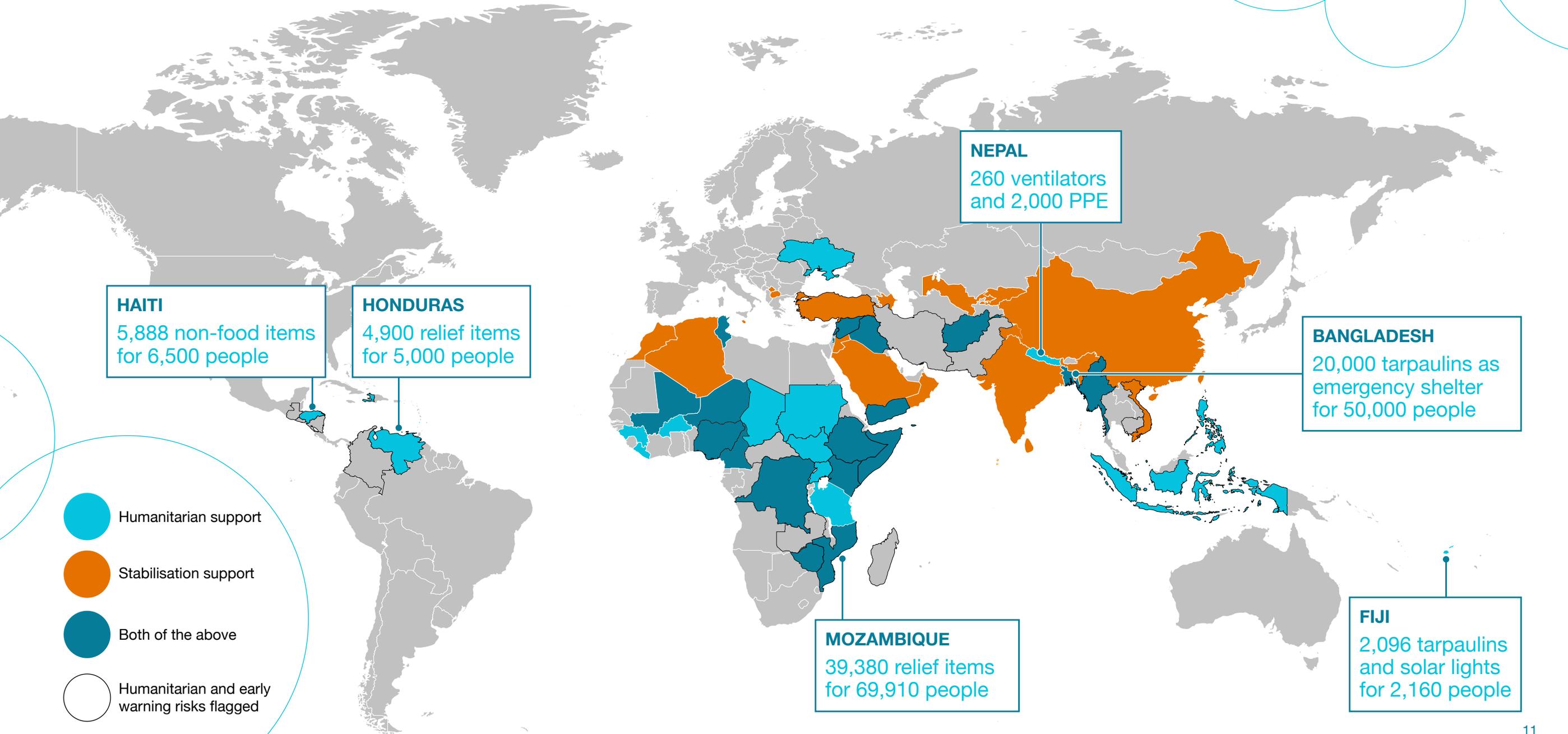
Moreover, we worked with the FCDO to influence the international community and the Mozambique Government to make sure that available funds were allocated strategically. HSOT also helped the FCDO

team in-country by mobilising emergency supplies from both Kenya and Palladium's warehouse facility in Jebel Ali in the United Arab Emirates.

Overall, 18 containers were delivered across Beira and Pemba ports carrying 235 metric tonnes of items, including tarpaulins, shelter coverage kits, kitchen sets, hygiene kits, solar lights and jerrycans, providing relief to at least 69,910 people. These supplies allowed the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Mozambique National Disaster Management Agency (INGD) to resettle the population and be prepared for future responses.

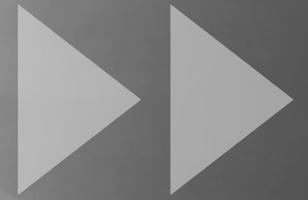
235 tonnes
of items provided relief to
69,910 people

OUR GLOBAL REACH



An aerial photograph of a river with white water rapids, overlaid with a white grid of concentric circles and radial lines. The text 'EMERGENCY RESPONSES' is centered in the lower-left quadrant.

EMERGENCY RESPONSES



**OCT
2020**

**NOV
2020**

**DEC
2020**

Philippines: Monitoring for early action

Formed on 26 October, Typhoon Goni, which reached Category 5 strength, made landfall in the Philippines six days later, bringing torrential rains, violent winds, mudslides and storm surges to the country's largest and most populous island of Luzon. It affected at least 2 million people, displacing over 500,000 and causing extensive damage. HSOT monitored the typhoon trajectory and intensity and provided continuous updates and information management support. We also developed seven monitoring information notes, which were shared across the FCDO in the UK and at post to improve their understanding of the crisis and inform their decision making, enabling an appropriate response.

Honduras: Providing relief items

On 3 November, Hurricane Eta affected Nicaragua and Honduras, causing widespread damage to the eastern areas of the latter. In response, the FCDO engaged HSOT to provide 1,000 Honduran families with relief items. The team sourced and purchased 33.6 tonnes of supplies, including plastic sheets, shelter toolkits, kitchen sets and cleaning kits. In discussion with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the British Red Cross, HSOT used three trucks to transport the items over 1,506 kilometres from Panama to the Honduras capital Tegucigalpa. Once there, they were handed over to the Honduras Red Cross for distribution to the population on 30 November.

Fiji: Collaborating to deliver shelter

Cyclone Yasa hit Fiji in December as the second Category 5 severe tropical cyclone in 2020 after Harold. To deliver relief items, we leveraged our and FCDO's partnership with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through Palladium's Humanitarian Logistics Capability Team in Brisbane. Sourcing supplies from the DFAT's stockpile, instead of FCDO's, allowed us to provide emergency shelter and solar lights for 432 families in just five days, despite Covid-19 disruptions to supply chains. As FCDO supported the shelter needs identified by national actors, other humanitarian agencies could concentrate on food and health, enabling a comprehensive assistance package.

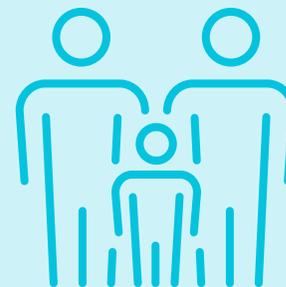
HSOT monitored the typhoon trajectory

and intensity and provided continuous updates and information management support

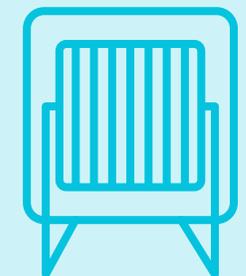


The FCDO engaged HSOT to provide relief items for

1,000 families



Sourcing supplies from the DFAT's stockpile, instead of FCDO's, allowed us to provide **emergency shelter and solar lights for 432 families**



JAN
2021

Mozambique: Advising on a response strategy

On 23 January, Cyclone Eloise made landfall in central Mozambique, causing extensive damage and affecting over 300,000 people. Within 48 hours, HSOT deployed a field team jointly with the FCDO to gather information, coordinate with humanitarian actors and advise on the response. After three days spent in the worst-affected areas, HSOT developed a response strategy while providing daily situational updates and reporting. As a result, over 20,000 people received a 30-day food ration. Additional interventions ensured access to water, sanitation and shelter, supported agriculture, and improved the provision of mental health and protection services. We also regionally procured, transported and delivered 13,565 tarpaulins to provide emergency shelter for 33,910 people.



Credit: International Organisation for Migration

FEB
2021

Guinea: Early action to counter an Ebola outbreak

In February, an Ebola virus outbreak in Guinea killed 12 people with a high risk of regional spread. Within three days, HSOT was on it. Our information management and coordination experts drew on lessons learnt from responding to previous outbreaks to assess UK Government capabilities and develop scenarios and response options. The specialist we then deployed was critical to coordination between FCDO and other actors. Our support strengthened early response and regional preparedness and provided information vital to collaboration between the FCDO and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). This enhanced the response across the region and mitigated risks to the UK.



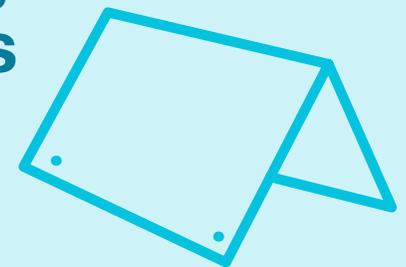
MAR
2021

Bangladesh: Delivering fire-retardant shelter

On 22 March, a fire in Kutupalong, the world's largest refugee camp, in Cox's Bazar, killed over a dozen people and re-displaced tens of thousands. Not only was the impact alarming, but also that the humanitarian community had not adequately addressed the issue of fires, to which camps are prone. HSOT partnered with multidisciplinary experts to test plastic sheeting varieties in laboratory and identify those that can slow down the spread of fires most effectively and meet sector-specific international standards. As a result, half of the 20,000 tarpaulins that we delivered to Kutupalong as emergency shelter were fire-retardant, the first ever delivered in this context. It is expected that lessons learnt will help improve global humanitarian practice and reduce fire risk in informal settlements worldwide.

Half of the 20,000
tarpaulins

that we delivered to
Kutupalong as
emergency shelter
were fire-retardant

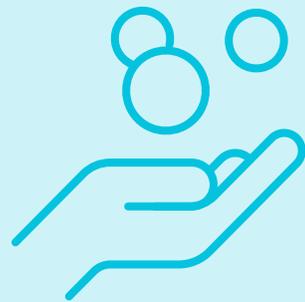


APR
2021

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: Humanitarian strategy advice

On 9 April, La Soufrière volcano in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines erupted. This displaced about 20,000 people, damaged property and impacted on livelihoods, already hit by Covid-19. HSOT monitored and collected information on the situation on the ground, developed products to share the knowledge with the FCDO and prepared supply chain plans. The advice we provided to FCDO Caribbean and our close engagement with other regional actors strengthened coordination and understanding of the crisis and enabled the development of a well-informed humanitarian response strategy based on country's needs and partner's capacities. This included providing cash assistance to around 13,200 vulnerable people who had been evacuated, to meet their immediate needs.

Cash assistance was provided to around
13,200
vulnerable people who had been evacuated, to meet their immediate needs

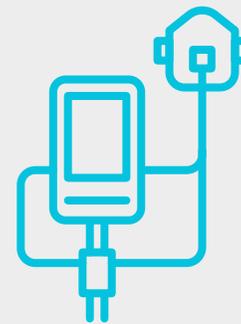


MAY
2021

Nepal: Delivering medical equipment to fight Covid-19

Nepal's capacity to provide adequate care for Covid-19 cases is limited. In response to a global call for assistance from the Nepalese Government, on behalf of the FCDO, HSOT coordinated the delivery of 260 ventilators and 2,000 pieces of personal protective equipment from the UK surplus stock, along with medical experts, to Nepal. Working closely with DHSC and the Ministry of Defence (MoD), we arranged for an MoD chartered passenger plane to transport 3 tonnes of medical items to the capital Kathmandu on 27-28 May. These were distributed to overwhelmed hospitals across the country, helping them cope with the Covid-19 spike and save lives.

HSOT coordinated delivery of
260
ventilators
2,000
pieces of PPE



JUN
2021

Ethiopia: Providing information management and humanitarian advice

Since late 2020, fighting in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray has intensified, affecting over 5.2 million people and putting more than 400,000 at risk of famine. Access to healthcare is also limited. In response to the crisis deterioration in June, HSOT experts advised the FCDO team in-country on how to address protection and civil-military concerns. We also provided information management support, collecting and analysing information on the situation on the ground. Our work strengthened the advisory capabilities of FCDO Ethiopia, helped them to better understand needs and develop an appropriate response to the crisis.

HSOT experts advised the FCDO team in-country on how to address protection and civil-military concerns



JUL
2021

Mozambique: Effective solutions to deliver aid safely

An Islamist insurgency in Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado has displaced over 670,000 people. To support IOM's efforts to resettle the population, HSOT shipped essential items on behalf of the FCDO, mostly sourced from the Palladium-managed stockpile in the United Arab Emirates, to northern Mozambique. This solution allowed us to deliver quality assured products, reduce transport times and minimise risks as the goods didn't have to pass through the country's insecure regions. Since July, we delivered 167 metric tonnes of items, including hygiene kits, kitchen sets, solar lights, jerry cans and shelter coverage kits, that provided relief to 36,000 people.

AUG
2021

Haiti: Managing information and aid delivery

On 14 August, a 7.2 magnitude earthquake hit Haiti, killing around 2,200 people and injuring about 12,000. HSOT early warning systems alerted the FCDO and a cross-cutting team of experts helped assess the earthquake's potential humanitarian impact. Within two hours of the alert, we collected and analysed information on the situation on the ground, assessed the needs of those affected and provided the FCDO with recommendations for action. On 24 August, we delivered on behalf of the UK around 27 metric tonnes of essential relief items, including hygiene kits, solar lanterns and plastic sheeting as temporary shelter, to support up to 6,500 displaced people as part of a large multinational response.

Since July, we delivered
167 tonnes
that provided relief to
**36,000
people**



Credit: International Organisation for Migration



Credit: FCDO/UK Government

We delivered
27 tonnes
of essential relief items
to support up to
**6,500
people**



Support to tackle protracted crises

Protracted crises account for over 80% of humanitarian needs. HSOT plays a critical role in supporting the UK Government to respond to such crises across the world.

We have assessed various approaches taken by the FCDO to increase the resilience of Nigeria's and Somalia's crisis-affected populations, societies and economies to climatic and conflict-related shocks and identified the most effective ones. Our recommendations and learning are informing the design of new FCDO-funded humanitarian, livelihoods and social assistance programmes in these countries. HSOT work has also strengthened FCDO's overall approach, ensuring that it considers not only households resilience to shocks but also systemic barriers in the society, economy and institutions and how development programmes can help overcome them.

In north-eastern Nigeria, the team supported the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Regional Stabilisation Facility. The civil-military coordination that HSOT provided improved the security of vulnerable people who had been internally displaced by the Boko Haram insurgency and whose livelihoods had been disrupted. HSOT also helped formulate a new role for Nigerian security agencies in upholding human rights and preventing sexual and gender-based violence within communities and trained them. Having tested this new model in one community, we have brought it to five others and the UNDP will embed it in its efforts across the region.

In Syria, HSOT helped evaluate an infrastructure project that supplied water to a million people, and trained the FCDO team in-country on best practice in remote programme management. We made recommendations to inform and improve the next phase of this project and future FCDO-funded water utility initiatives. This included the need to ensure more equitable water distribution, enhance systems to monitor impact, and ways to increase value for money.

HSOT continued to support the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) on behalf of the UK through overseeing monitoring and inspection services of commercial vessels that sail from Djibouti to Yemen. This resulted in the provision of essential supplies, such as food and fuel, which helped to keep the Yemeni economy running and provided much-needed relief to the population.

HSOT support to UNVIM resulted in the **delivery of essential supplies**, providing much-needed relief to the Yemeni population.



The background features a gradient from orange at the top to teal at the bottom. A faint map of Africa is visible in the center. On the left, a large white speech bubble contains the text. On the right, several overlapping white circles are arranged in a pattern.

HEARING FROM OUR EXPERTS

SUPPORTING THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Annette Rolfe, Humanitarian Advisor

What was your role?

I advised the FCDO on the humanitarian implications of the Covid-19 pandemic. I monitored the impact of FCDO's contribution of unearmarked funding to humanitarian actors, including through the inter-agency Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP). This mechanism allowed humanitarian agencies to rapidly scale up a coordinated global response to stop transmission of the virus in fragile contexts and address its secondary impacts. I then engaged with teams across the UK Government, the United Nations and the IFRC to advocate for access to vaccines in humanitarian contexts.

What made your assignment complex?

The pandemic itself was complex. There were – and still are – so many unknowns. It is a predominantly health crisis, which has a myriad of implications in areas such as food security and social protection, that risk being overlooked.

Finding comparable evidence of success across responses in no less than 63 countries was also hard. This required a change of perspective, as we needed to consider humanitarian needs as part of a broader health emergency.

Finally, the ever-evolving nature of Covid-19 meant we had to deal with the unknown when allocating funding to responses. Trust and collaboration with local, national and international actors helped us navigate this intricate situation.

What was the impact of your work?

The fast-tracking of UK funds helped to avert an even higher death toll that humanitarians were fearing. We helped to ensure that humanitarian objectives remained visible and high on the health agenda and in the development of the vaccine distribution architecture.

We also contributed to milestone UN Security Council discussions, which led to the unanimous approval of resolution 2565 in February 2021. This opened the door for equitable and affordable access to Covid-19 vaccines in fragile contexts.

Finally, the Covid-19 response was a successful test case for the FCDO. The newly established department used its full weight, bringing together a wealth of cross-sectoral expertise and harnessing collaboration across its different teams worldwide.

What are the advantages of the HSOT roster?

The roster provides the UK Government with access to a variety of skills and extensive field experience. I have worked on humanitarian issues with the UN for over twenty years, including during the 2014 Ebola crisis, so I could contribute the knowledge of how the international system works and the humanitarian implications of health-related crises.

Being able to support and make a difference on the ground is what all humanitarians look for. This role provided me with the opportunity to do just that.

“We helped to ensure that humanitarian objectives remained visible and high on the health agenda and in the development of the vaccine distribution architecture.”

ADVISING ON THE HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN MYANMAR

Simon Little, Humanitarian Adviser

What was your role?

I advised the UK Government on what their humanitarian response should look like in Myanmar, with a focus on Chin and Rakhine states. As one of the poorest areas, Rakhine has witnessed human rights violations over the past decade, culminating in the mass displacement of the Rohingya community to neighbouring Bangladesh. Covid-19 and February's coup have exacerbated the humanitarian situation across the country and deepened pre-existing needs in Rakhine and Chin.

What made your assignment complex?

In 10 years advising the FCDO, Myanmar is one of the most complex humanitarian emergencies I have encountered.

February's military coup spawned a civil disobedience movement and the emergence of the People's Defence Forces that are challenging the military authority.

Insecurity is compounded by limitations on movement and access, with the army introducing ever tighter restrictions that

inhibit the ability of humanitarian partners to assess and respond to need. International non-governmental organisations and UN agencies have to complete detailed paperwork in advance of any planned visit to affected areas and, more often than not, permission is not granted.

Meanwhile, national, regional and international reactions to the coup have precipitated a collapse in the banking system. With insufficient funds available, banks had to cap withdrawals, which negatively impacted humanitarian operations.

Finally, development initiatives, including social protection and welfare programmes, have been suspended for fear of inadvertently legitimising military authorities. This has heaped further pressure on a humanitarian community struggling to respond to ever-growing needs.

What was the impact of your work?

FCDO Myanmar responded promptly to the coup, providing additional humanitarian funding and repurposing development finance as appropriate.

This enabled the UK to maintain a multisectoral response at scale across the country.

With access compromised, the FCDO channelled a greater share of funding to community-based organisations already present in affected locations. In working with and through local and national responders, our humanitarian approach has been to invest in and strengthen the delivery capabilities of grassroots responders. Cultivating these partnerships has allowed the FCDO to provide assistance where other organisations were unable.

What are the advantages of the HSOT roster?

It enables the FCDO to fill staff gaps, especially in those countries where their presence is limited and is also a flexible mechanism. I've enjoyed working on the roster, as shown by the fact that this is my 20th assignment with HSOT over the last 15 years!

“...our humanitarian approach has been to invest in and strengthen the delivery capabilities of grassroots responders. Cultivating these partnerships has allowed the FCDO to provide assistance where other organisations were unable.”

PROVIDING ADVICE TO BRING STABILITY TO MALI

Richard Harrison, Sahel Stabilisation Network Coordinator

What was your role?

I helped the FCDO to scope the role that the UK can play to support international efforts to restabilise Mali. This responds to an emerging consensus among international partners that the collective approach to stabilisation in this country has not been as effective as expected.

There are signs of a collective willingness to change course away from a military-heavy approach towards a focus on deeper understanding of local politics and conflict drivers. This is part of a cross-government initiative which leans on the UK's stabilisation pedigree to play a catalytic and facilitative role.

What made your assignment complex?

Mali, and the wider Central Sahel, have become a global hotspot for humanitarian concern. The region is affected by conflict, fuelled by radicalisation, rapidly growing populations, climate change, corruption and reduced faith in state actors. I spoke with multiple partners, from both within the region and the wider

international community, and developed thinking around a new 'integrated stabilisation' approach which prioritises close collaboration between military and non-military UK personnel.

What is the intended impact of your work?

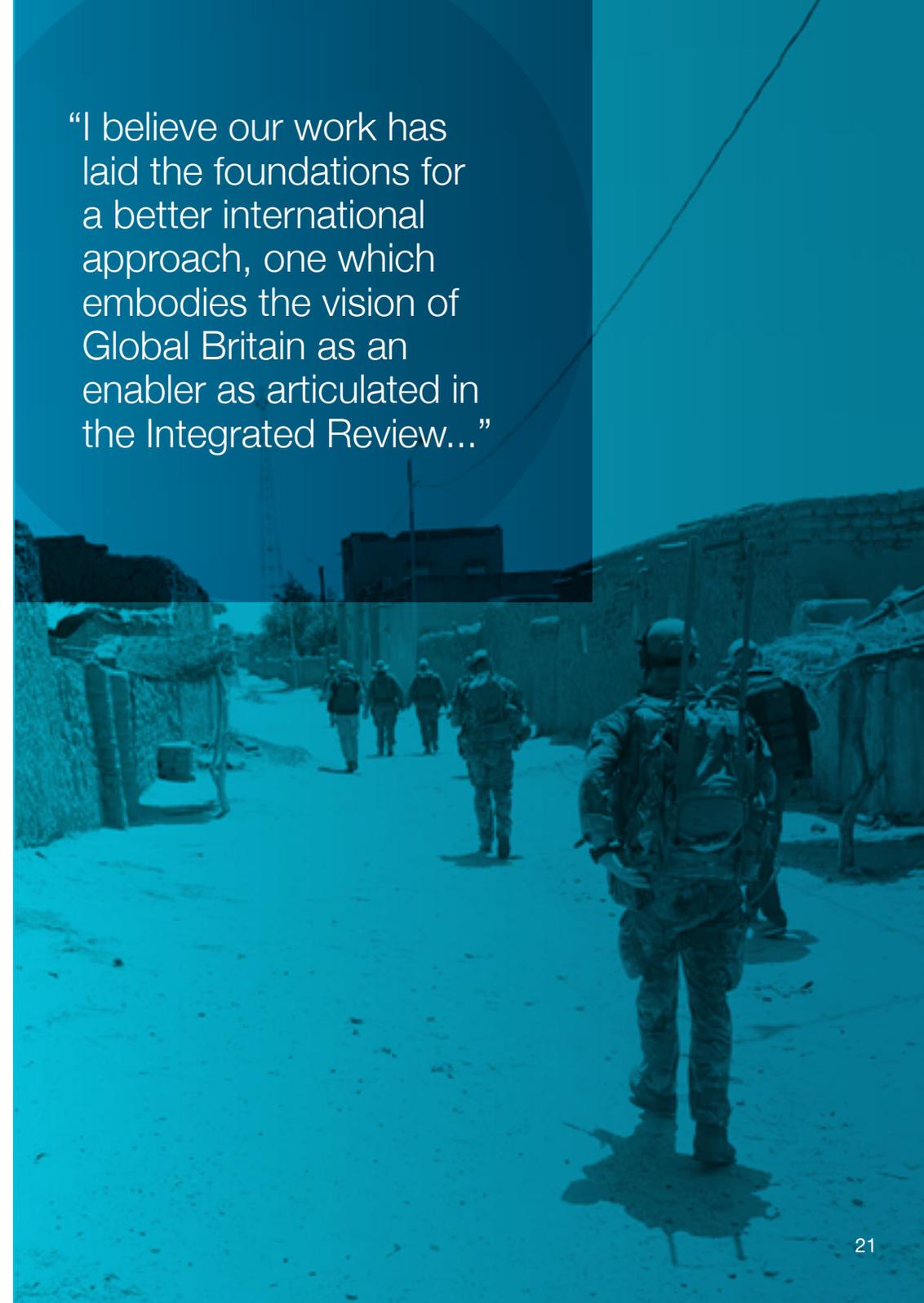
Our work aims to contribute to improved effectiveness of stabilisation efforts in Mali as part of international initiatives to reduce violence and facilitate conditions for longer-term stability. As we move from scoping to implementation, we hope to encourage more granular understanding of underlying conflict drivers and political reality.

Internally, we have increased alignment and understanding across UK Government's different departments of the role the United Kingdom should play in the Mali crisis. I believe our work has laid the foundations for a better international approach, one which embodies the vision of Global Britain as an enabler as articulated in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

What are the advantages of the HSOT roster?

First, I would say agility, as consultants can be deployed when needed and at short notice. In addition, the roster provides access to specialists with niche expertise who are able to be completely focused on their task. I feel very fortunate to have had the chance to use my experience of the Sahel, and to be involved in decision making and policy at this level.

“I believe our work has laid the foundations for a better international approach, one which embodies the vision of Global Britain as an enabler as articulated in the Integrated Review...”





BEYOND RESPONSES

COLLABORATION

HSOT recognises the importance of collaboration as the complex challenges we face require global coordination and action. This both improves outcomes for crises-affected populations and enhances the UK's role in defining humanitarian reform and priorities.

National partners

HSOT collaborated with FCDO's offices overseas, supporting response to rapid onset and chronic crises and strengthening their preparedness for future emergencies.

Partnering with the Home Office, we supported FCDO's international initiatives to counter Covid-19 without impacting the domestic response. We also delivered a joint training exercise with the Royal Air Force simulating a humanitarian response, to maximise effective interoperability.

HSOT supported the readiness and response capability of the UK's International Search and Rescue and Emergency Medical Teams.

In September, we demonstrated our revised Mobility of Deployable Capability to 70 individuals across various agencies to raise awareness and strengthen cooperation.

International partners

HSOT engaged with multiple UN agencies and NGOs. We collaborated in response and improved humanitarian guidance and standards whilst driving UK policy objectives on protection against GBV, localisation, coordination and management of shelter in camps, logistics, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). We also supported UK Missions to the UN in New York and Geneva, helping their diplomatic and policy staff better communicate FCDO's work.

Our collaboration with UN agencies enabled their acceptance of HSOT consultants' security in Ethiopia, Cameroon, Nigeria and Mali.

Through the UN SBP surge mechanism, HSOT coordinated 254 requests for experts, leading to the FCDO funding the secondment of 48 to UN agencies in 21 countries. For the UNDAC mechanism, on which HSOT acts as UK focal point, we supported six mission alerts and three deployments.

We also provided security advice to UK secondees supporting the ongoing Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)'s Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

In December, FCDO and Palladium's partnerships with Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade enabled the prompt delivery of emergency relief items to Fiji following Cyclone Yasa. In May, we worked with the UK's MoD and DHSC to supply medical devices to the Nepalese Ministry of Health and Population, gifted by the UK to manage Covid-19 spiking.

HSOT established framework agreements with 19 reputable suppliers to enable rapid access to critical items at fair prices, considering environmental impact, resilience and safeguarding to mitigate any negative impact of our supply chain. Our continued partnership with an air charter broker ensures HSOT operational readiness and full compliance with international regulations to avoid delays in the delivery of relief supplies.

Crown Copyright, credit: SAC Kim Waterson.
Photographic Section RAF Wittering



INNOVATION

We have innovated our service offering to mitigate direct and indirect adverse effects of our work on the populations we assist and our staff, supply chains and the environment, and advance best practice in the humanitarian space.



Safeguarding against sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH)

HSOT strengthened the foundations of our systems to prevent risks of SEAH by our staff, representatives and suppliers against the populations that we assist as well as our own people and partners.

We worked to instil a no tolerance culture, develop a conducive environment for reporting and reinforce procedures for response to incidents. We ran training for our staff, consultants and the FCDO, and

Fire risk reduction

To mitigate fire risk in displaced people settlements, HSOT spearheaded a movement of experts from academia, construction, forensic investigation, firefighting and humanitarian agencies. Together, we pushed research and development into fire risk reduction and contributed towards new guidelines and advocacy for their global application.

We analysed standards for fire-retardant plastic sheeting and used laboratory testing to identify the most effective ones. HSOT delivered these following the March fire in Cox's Bazar mega-camp in Bangladesh - the first time for any agency in this context.

To increase action on this issue, HSOT spoke at key global humanitarian fora and co-drafted a chapter for the Global Shelter Cluster's biennial publication. We have also been tasked with quality assurance of a project funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and the FCDO. It will produce a baseline report on the state of fire safety in humanitarian shelter and settlements and will develop fire safety guidance, including a decision support tool for use in the field. It is anticipated that these outputs will contribute towards improved global humanitarian standards of practice and drive wider systemic change.

integrated safeguarding into our Hostile Environment Security Training (HEST). We increased awareness of HSOT and FCDO reporting mechanisms and, in crisis responses, maintained the ability to deploy SEAH protection experts.

To embed safeguarding in humanitarian supply chains, HSOT reviewed over 40 relevant resources and consulted with the World Food Programme and Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) in the UK, among others. We then developed detailed criteria and an innovative assessment for suppliers to evaluate how they fare on safeguarding and help them improve.

“...this subject is not one that I have seen as a subject CILT members discuss in the fora or on the CILT Community platform... In fact your work may well be the first of its kind that is being undertaken that I have seen.”

– CILT representative



ADVISORY AND POLICY SUPPORT

Covid-19 response advisory support

HSOT helped the FCDO adapt the Rapid Response Facility (RRF) mechanism, that funds pre-registered NGOs to respond immediately to new and typically large rapid onset crises. Our work allowed the RRF to be used to support humanitarian programmes that countered Covid-19 internationally. We also identified lessons and good practice to further improve this tool for future use.

Moreover, we contributed to the design of the COVAX Humanitarian Buffer, which aims to ensure access to Covid-19 vaccines to people in conflict zones and other humanitarian settings that otherwise wouldn't receive them. In addition, our policy advice supported the development of the UN Security Council Resolution 2565 on equitable access to vaccines in fragile contexts.

Policy highlights

HSOT progressed the UK's humanitarian reform agenda, in line with commitments made in the Grand Bargain agreement. We led the revision of FCDO humanitarian funding guidelines to increase resources allocated to local responders. After launching them, we trained over 100 staff from 30 agencies, leading other donors to express their intention to incorporate some elements in their processes.

The review of effective methods to support livelihoods in conflict that we coordinated informed, among others, FCDO policy positions for the G7 and UN Food Systems Summit. Moreover, we helped integrate gender and inclusion into FCDO's policies and approaches to humanitarian protection and led on the development of new UK commitments on GBV in conflicts and crises. Our work also led to the inclusion of gender and GBV in G7 commitments.

Improving practices

In cooperation with the FCDO's Research and Evidence Division, HSOT assessed 39 FCDO-funded innovative WASH projects and identified not only barriers to scale but also ways in which collaboration could overcome them. We contributed to the development of the WASH Severity Classification (WSC), which captures the severity of need rather than just the number of people affected. This has improved the understanding of WASH needs in 20 countries. HSOT advice to the Global WASH Cluster has resulted in the inclusion of FCDO policy objectives into global technical guidance and the development of a knowledge hub that will improve the quality of complex technical sanitation projects.

We helped develop the Minimum Standards in Camp Management to improve the living conditions of refugees and internally displaced people. The standards increase the focus on their participation in camps administration. They are designed to ensure the consistency and high quality of camps management and drive accountability to their inhabitants.

WORKING IN FRAGILE ENVIRONMENTS



Mali

The UK is committed to the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law in Mali, a country ridden by chronic poverty, political crisis, Islamist insurgency and the effects of climate change.



HSOT deployed two international humanitarian law advisers to the Malian Peacekeeping School in Bamako, to strengthen the training provided to armed forces and police officers and, ultimately, respect for human rights. As the FCDO has a limited presence in the country, it was unable to accept responsibility for their safety and security. In response, we established a Palladium platform that included accommodation, transport, communications, safety and security

management, medical and insurance. The platform, which hosted three consultants so far, is a model that can be exported to other countries to strengthen the UK Government's capacity to provide humanitarian and stabilisation support.

HSOT also reinforced the UK contribution to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We deployed two civilian advisers to strengthen the MINUSMA Civilian Pillar of operations. By training the UK Long Range Reconnaissance Group on stabilisation principles, we worked to ensure that population's security remains a key consideration in military interventions.

Ethiopia

Since late 2020, fighting in Ethiopia's northern region of Tigray has intensified, aggravating the humanitarian crisis.

HSOT expertise, provided promptly by our team in-country and remotely, helped shape what the UK mediation and humanitarian efforts would look like. We strengthened FCDO information management and humanitarian analysis, improving their understanding of the crisis and needs. Our technical advice shaped

official messages and internal policy positions. It also allowed the UK Government to engage on critical debates on how to improve the protection of the conflict-affected population and respond to high levels of conflict-related sexual violence.

Ukraine

Since April 2014, violence in eastern Ukraine between Russian-backed separatist forces and the military has killed over 10,300 people.

The FCDO-funded Ukraine Humanitarian Programme was launched to meet the needs of conflict-affected communities and enable early recovery. In the absence of an in-country advisor, the humanitarian advice that HSOT provided to the FCDO in 2020-2021 enabled robust oversight of the programme implementation and continued delivery. The team also successfully advocated for cross-government funds to be allocated to implementing partners after the programme termination, which ensured that the population continued to receive much-needed aid.



OPERATIONS

Over the year, HSOT has continued to improve the sustainability of its operations.



Risk mitigation

At the programme level, we maintained an emphasis on collaborative risk management through the development of a register where all teams flag risks in a dynamic way. This consolidated approach has allowed us to monitor operational, strategic, fiduciary and reputational risk across the different areas of activity on a more regular basis, which helped us identify and mitigate them promptly and reduce them compared to last year.

To minimise risks for our people, in April 2021 we have redesigned and rolled out a new HEST course, that aims to ensure staff and consultants are equipped to handle challenging situations once deployed. This is in line with HSOT's approach geared towards continuous improvement and strong commitment to duty of care. The new HEST also replaces two different courses that humanitarian and stabilisation consultants had to take previously, bringing them closer together and enabling efficiencies.

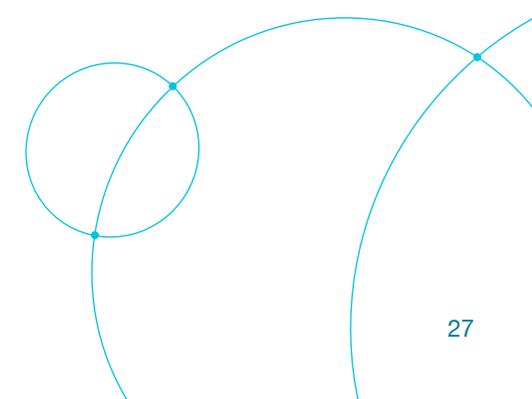
The new HEST was designed with inputs from across HSOT and FCDO clients. In addition to the existing modules on first aid, planning and risk mitigation strategies, it equips participants with knowledge and experience of how security situations may be pre-empted, avoided, and how to deal with range of threats as they occur, in a highly immersive context.

Eighty-nine per cent of the 77 HEST attendees so far have stated that the course improved their ability to respond to threats appropriately.

Compliance and performance management

In June 2021, the team established a Learning Management System (LMS), an online platform where HSOT core standing team and consultants take their mandatory training, in areas ranging from child protection to diversity and inclusion, through to SEAH prevention and safeguarding. The ability to check who has completed the training ensures compliance and clear communication. It also improves the new hire experience and sets expectations about the behaviours required to maintain a diverse and inclusive workplace. Given Covid-19 and related travel restrictions, the LMS enabled a smooth shift to remote onboarding of HSOT consultants.

Moreover, this year we have piloted a new Contractor Management Framework, which has increased the number of 'touchpoints' between roster consultants and HSOT HR throughout the contractor deployment. This enhanced feedback loops and enabled better performance management.



CONTACT US

www.thepalladiumgroup.com

For more information contact:

Julian Neale, Interim Director, HSOT:

Julian.Neale@thepalladiumgroup.com

Palladium has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. If you know or suspect that an incident has occurred, you can seek confidential advice and/or report this incident using the following hotlines:

FCDO's Whistleblowing helpline +44 (0) 1355 84 3747 or **reportingconcerns@fcdo.gov.uk**

Palladium's compliance hotline: +44 (0) 20 3318 5468 or **tellus@thepalladiumgroup.com**