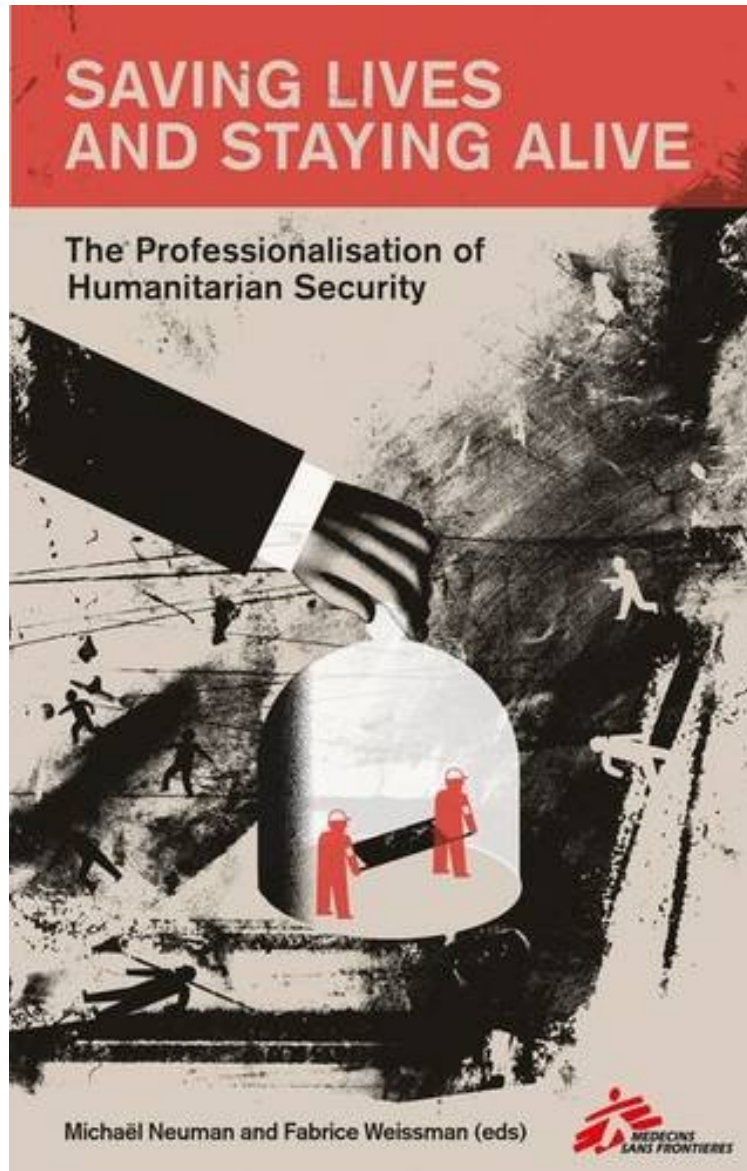


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Saving Lives and Staying Alive: The Professionalization of Humanitarian Security

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Alive: The Professionalization of Humanitarian Security:

Much like the large commercial companies, most humanitarian aid organizations now have departments specifically dedicated to protecting the security of their personnel and assets. The management of humanitarian security has gradually become the business of professionals who develop data collection systems, standardized procedures, norms, and training meant to prevent and manage risks. A large majority of aid agencies and security experts see these developments as inevitable - all the more so because of quantitative studies and media reports concluding that the dangers to which aid workers are today exposed are completely unprecedented. Yet, this trend towards professionalization is also raising questions within aid organizations, MSF included. Can insecurity be measured by scientific means and managed through norms and protocols? How does the professionalization of security affect the balance of power between field and headquarters, volunteers and the institution that employs them? What is its impact on the implementation of humanitarian organizations' social mission? Are there alternatives to the prevailing security model(s) derived from the corporate world? Building on MSF's experience and observations of the aid world by academics and practitioners, the authors of this book look at the drivers of the professionalization of humanitarian security and its impact on humanitarian practices, with a specific focus on Syria, CAR and kidnapping in the Caucasus.

"Humanitarian work has always been dangerous, though cultures and perceptions of risk have changed -- ranging from the heroic spirit of chivalry to the mundanity of actuarial calculus. In this comprehensive and critical -- and rivetingly frank -- collection, MSF once again shows its capacity for thoughtful engagement with the toughest humanitarian dilemmas." -- Alex de Waal, Executive Director, the World Peace Foundation, Tufts University

"Is it worth risking lives to save lives? Is the humanitarian spirit of sacrifice a delusion, requiring harsh security restraints, or is risk management a contradiction in terms? This book questions the validity of a remotely controlled, apolitical and technical approach to staff security, and argues that, in a climate of operational uncertainty, nothing trumps trust in the judgment of seasoned staff on the ground." -- Dirk Salomons, Professor of International Affairs, Columbia University

"Dealing with one of the most pressing security issues in our present age of conflict -- the safety of those who save others -- this book directly confronts some of the painful tensions between the desire to increase the safety of volunteer medical workers and the frustrations of that process. This is essential reading not only for risk management and voluntary organisation experts, but also for a wider audience as a testimony of our times." -- Michael Power, Professor of Accounting, London School of Economics, former Director of the Centre for the Analysis of Risk and Regulation, and author of *Organized Uncertainty: Designing a World of Risk Management*

"At a time when gaining humanitarian access is increasing difficult and dangerous for international aid workers, MSF's *Saving Lives and Staying Alive* is essential reading for anyone wanting a candid first-hand account of the fraught policy, practical and political issues that accompany the attempt to help others in a polarised world." -- Mark Duffield, Emeritus Professor, Global Insecurities Centre, University of Bristol

"A timely and important contribution to debates about humanitarian security and the security management sector. Drawing upon decades of operational experience, MSF challenges accepted wisdom and offers a thoughtful critique of the evolution and professionalization of the sector. The book is a must-read for humanitarians everywhere." -- Larissa Fast, author of *Aid in Danger: The Perils and Promise of Humanitarianism*

About the Author: Michal Neuman is director of studies at MSF-Crash. He joined MSF in 1999, alternating between missions in the field and positions at MSF headquarters. From 2008- 2010, Neuman served on the board of directors of the French and US sections of MSF. He is co-editor of *Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience* (2012). Fabrice Weissman is Coordinator and a Director of Studies at MSF-Crash. Specialized in Sub-Saharan Africa, he has been working with MSF since 1995, and spent many years in the field. He is the editor of *In the Shadow of 'Just Wars': Violence, Politics and Humanitarian Action* (2004), and co-editor of *Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience* (2012).