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Yannick Dissart

comment

DISASTERS OFTEN bring out the best in people, with some performing heroic actions, particularly to help the most vulnerable, such as the elderly and young children.



Yet as this column discussed in June 2006, disasters also can present fertile pickings for criminal opportunism, especially the sickening trafficking of human beings – including children – for illegal adoption, sexual abuse or other forms of exploitation.

Within that issue (*CRJ* 2:3) we reported on Interpol's crisis services and resources in the aftermath of a disaster, aimed at ensuring survivors do not suffer further at the hands of criminals – individuals who take advantage of suffering and chaos to commit fraud, exploitation and other serious crimes.

Now one organisation has revealed another horrific truth, one largely hidden behind closed doors – that of children in areas experiencing extreme fragility being abused by those who are purportedly there to help them.

Turn to page 10 of this issue for an article by Corinna Csaky, author of the Save the Children report into child sexual exploitation and abuse by aid workers and peacekeepers.

Her research revealed that a small minority of abusers are likely to populate every organisation – civil or military – across the entire spectrum of humanitarian, peace and security services.

The report is, hopefully, a positive step towards identifying and eradicating this type of crime. *CRJ* can only echo her call – for all those involved in emergency and humanitarian response to champion transparency in their organisations, for public donors to pledge support to international organisations that are committed to battling this problem, and for sector professionals to be vigilant and speak out about abuse happening on their watch.

Emily Hough
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Editorial Director

