Webinar: Technological innovation & principled humanitarian action

The last thematic event of the ICRC’s First Research & Debate Cycle addresses the challenges posed by the increasing use of new technologies by humanitarian actors and their potential impact on the principles governing humanitarian action.

Description

After looking at the legal challenges posed by the increasing development and use of new technologies in warfare, the Cycle now addresses the impact of such new technologies on humanitarian action, in particular in situations of armed conflict and other situations of violence.

The introduction of new technologies in humanitarian action indeed presents opportunities to improve an array of functions and services, such as information gathering, analysis, coordination, training, communication, needs assessment or fundraising. In some instances, new technologies have made it possible for af-
fected communities to become the active participants in humanitarian action and delivery, rather than bystanders.

Several organizations have indeed introduced new technologies to improve their humanitarian work, whether in the realms of assistance (e.g. mobile cash transfers, GIS mapping), protection (e.g. collecting information on affected populations and on violations), and communication (e.g. social media). Although such introduction of new technologies stems from a commitment to improve the quality and the extent of humanitarian activities, actors in this field need to be aware of, understand, and prevent, the potential negative impacts.

The webinar discussed the opportunities and risks linked to the use of such new technologies, including the impact on the principles that govern humanitarian action in situations of armed conflict and other situations of violence.

Panelists

- **Lars Bromley**, Principal Analyst and Senior Advisor, Human Rights and Security, UN Operational Satellite Applications Program (UNOSAT)

- **David Odhiambo**, Acting Head, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Department, Kenya Red Cross

- **Kristin Bergtora Sandvik**, Director, Norwegian Centre for Humanitarian Studies, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)

- **Balthasar Staehelin**, Deputy Director-General, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

- **Moderated by: Vincent Bernard**, Editor-in-Chief, International Review of the Red Cross
Click here to listen to the PANEL DISCUSSION: Technological Innovation and Principled Humanitarian Action

See all podcasts of the First Research & Debate Cycle: past events, interviews, reference publications and more on New Technologies and the Modern Battlespace

See also

- New technologies and warfare – International Review of the Red Cross, issue No. 886
- New technologies and IHL – Thematic page
- Cyber warfare – Thematic page
- Law and Policy Platform – ICRC’s platform for training, research and debate on humanitarian law and action
- Humanitarium – The international forum for exchange and debate on humanitarian law, policy and action
- IHL and the challenges of contemporary armed conflicts – Report