

by a Catholic background and characterized by what Espinosa calls “a native spiritual intelligence” and curiosity about God and the next life.

“Some people may view this shift in population as a time to reprioritize outreach to Latinos,” he said. “But that would be a mistake. It’s an enormous population to overlook.” ☩

#### RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

## Aiding Vs. Abetting?

### Counterterrorism laws hamper humanitarian aid. By Ruth Moon

**S**ome humanitarian groups are afraid to give school supplies to children in Gaza—not because of Hamas, but because of the United Nations and the United States.

Under counterterrorism laws introduced after the September 11 terrorist attacks, humanitarian groups cannot provide aid that supports or gives resources to terrorists. But in places like Gaza, where the United States has classified local leaders as terrorists, most forms of aid will benefit these leaders. Thus humanitarian NGOs working in such places face the possibility of losing funding or even being labeled as criminals.

Today’s counterterrorism policies also mean more paperwork and reporting requirements for NGOs. These have increased their operating costs, slowed them down, cut their funding, and undermined partnerships, according to a recent study by the Humanitarian Policy Group of the Overseas Development Institute.

“Counterterrorism has been a policy bulldozer,” said Jeremy Konyndyk, director of policy and advocacy for Mercy Corps. “If a counterterrorism argument is made, the government treats it as a trump card, regardless of what the downside might be.”

The new policies make it

particularly difficult to work in Sudan, Afghanistan, North Korea, and Syria, he said. But the poster child for complications is Somalia.

No matter what NGOs do to keep aid flowing to the neediest people, there’s always a risk some will be diverted, experts agree. This makes it especially difficult to work in a place such as southern Somalia, where much of the area is controlled by al-Shabaab, which Western nations link to al Qaeda. The U.S. government only this summer loosened some counterterrorism restrictions so aid groups could work more freely in the famine-stricken nation.

While new reporting requirements do mean some programs take longer to get off the ground, such policies also make relationships and funding structures clearer to donors and partners—which is not a bad thing, said Chris Sheach, deputy director of disaster response for World Concern.

“It’s something everybody should have been doing a little bit more of anyway,” he said.

One draft U.S. law would have required humanitarian agencies to provide personal information on staff, partners, and supplier staff, but did not explain how the information would be used, Sheach said.

That kind of reporting requirement makes humanitarian groups wary. “[We] need to avoid being perceived as the tools of government intelligence agencies, which could compromise [our] work and endanger staff,” said Kent Hill, senior vice president of international programs for World Vision and former acting administrator of USAID.

The hope is for a legislative compromise that balances the importance of preventing aid to terrorists with allowing aid to the starving and poor.

“This is really a moral message and a values message,” Konyndyk said. “It’s saying, ‘Yes, we need our security, but in the process we shouldn’t forget our values.’” ☩

#### PASSAGES



#### **Died** **George Gallup Jr.**

A pioneer in using polling research to study religion, on November 21 in New Jersey. He was 81.



#### **Named** **Tami Helm**

As president and CEO of the Christian Leadership Alliance on November 14. She is a past executive of Borders and Thomas Nelson.



#### **Retired** **Terry Schlossberg**

As renewal adviser of the Presbyterian Coalition on November 18. She was previously executive director of the renewal group.

#### LIFE ETHICS EUROPE

## Life in Europe

### Continent’s top courts are on a pro-life roll.

By Sarah Eekhoff Zylstra

**A** string of pro-life rulings by Europe’s two highest courts has surprised experts.

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) upheld Austria’s ban on in-vitro fertilization in November. Weeks earlier, the European Court of Justice ruled against destroying human embryos for scientific research. In December 2010, the ECHR upheld Ireland’s abortion ban.

“It’s definitely a trend,” said Roger Kiska of the Alliance Defense Fund in Slovakia. “Two or three years ago, you never would have thought that within a year you would have three pro-life [victories] in the courts.”

The cases coming from the ECHR—Europe’s equivalent of the U.S. Supreme Court—show judicial restraint, deciding simply that abortion is not a right and leaving its legality up to each of the Council of Europe’s 47 member states, Kiska said. But the Court of Justice’s ruling went a step further, ruling that embryos are human beings.

This stand was both strong and surprising, he said. “It’s the first international court decision to say that life begins at conception.”

“The very Western, liberalized way of thinking is losing its monopoly over the ECHR,” said Gregór Puppink, director of the European Centre for Law and Justice. As more conservative Eastern countries join the council, they have felt that the founding states—such as France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom—are trying to impose their own vision of human rights, he said. “The non-Western countries are now trying to balance the ideology of the court.”

The religious composition of many European nations has also

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