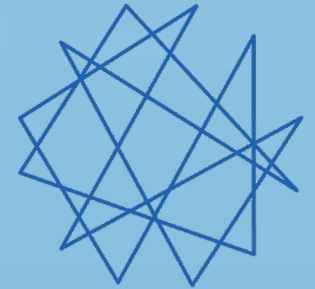




gisl



At What Cost?

The true cost and value of security risk management

Global Security Risk and Policy Conference



GISF: Global Security Risk and Policy Conference

Welcome



Jon Novakovic
(Executive Director, GISSF)

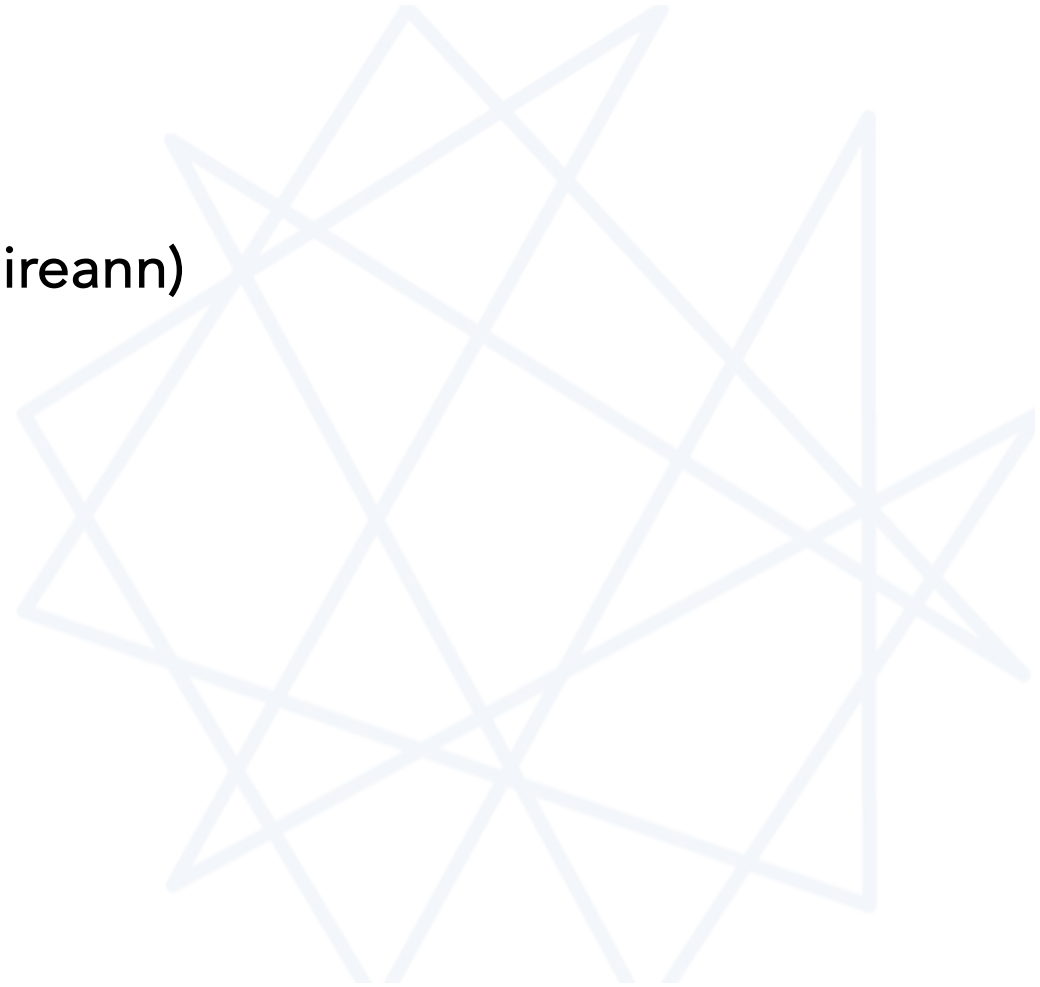
- Facilities
- Emergency exits
- Sessions will be livestreamed & recorded
- Photos will be taken during the event
- Chatham House rule does not apply this afternoon
- Exhibitors & support
- Some minor changes to agenda from printed brochure
- Please introduce yourself before speaking
- Registration for Thursday breakout

GISF: Global Security Risk and Policy Conference

Keynote Address



Senator Tom Clonan
(Independent Senator, Seanad Éireann)



Aid Under Fire:

Reflections on the deadliest year for aid workers



Jane-Ann McKenna
(Chief Executive Officer, Dóchas)



Alsanosi Adam
(External Communications Coordinator, Localisation
Coordination Council, Sudan Emergency Response Rooms)

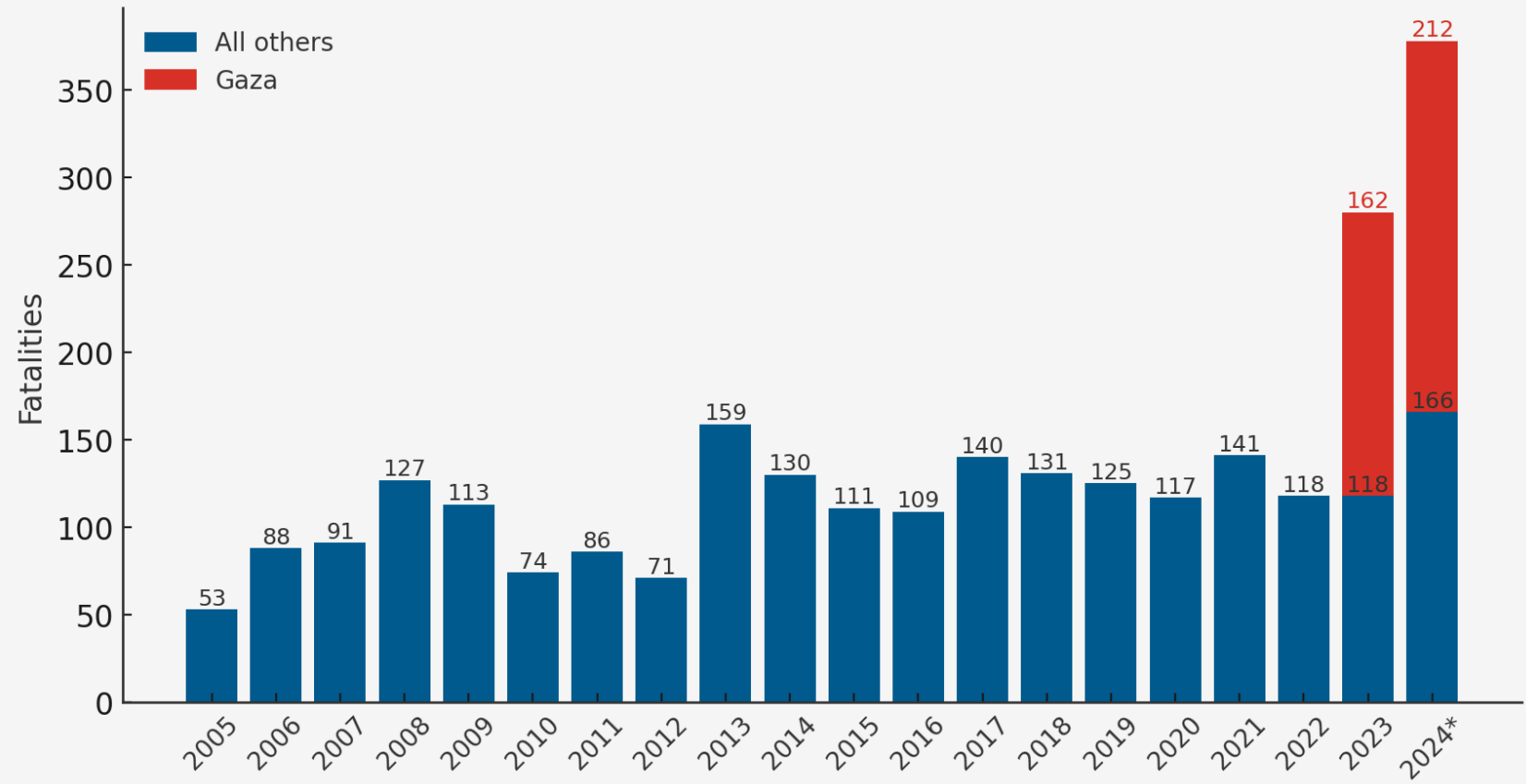


David Kaatrud
(Security Director, WFP)



Abby Stoddard
(Partner, Humanitarian Outcomes)

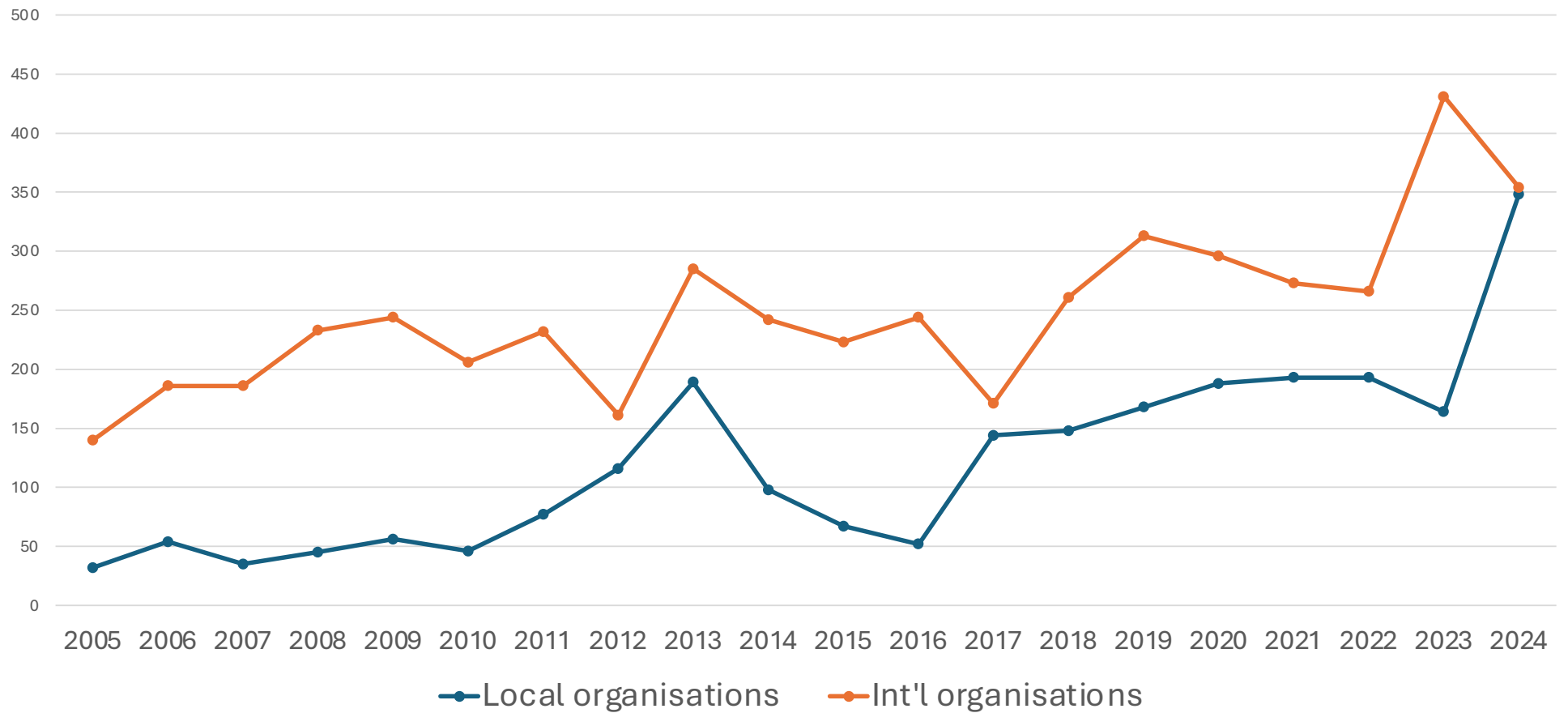
Aid Worker Fatalities



Source: Aid Worker Security Database

*Provisional

Casualties by organisation type



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Break

30 minutes



The Cost of Security

The state of funding and resourcing for security risk management



Colm Byrne

(Gender and Humanitarian Advocacy Advisor, Trócaire)



Elise Baudot

(Head of Humanitarian Financing, ICVA)



Sebastian Drutschmann

(Global Security Advisor, Evangelisches Werk für Diakonie und Entwicklung e.V.)



Neil Elliot

(Global Head of Security, Oxfam International)



Mike Pearson

(Research Fellow, ODI)



Sudhanshu S. Singh

(Founder and CEO, HAI)

HPG

Humanitarian
Policy Group



ODI

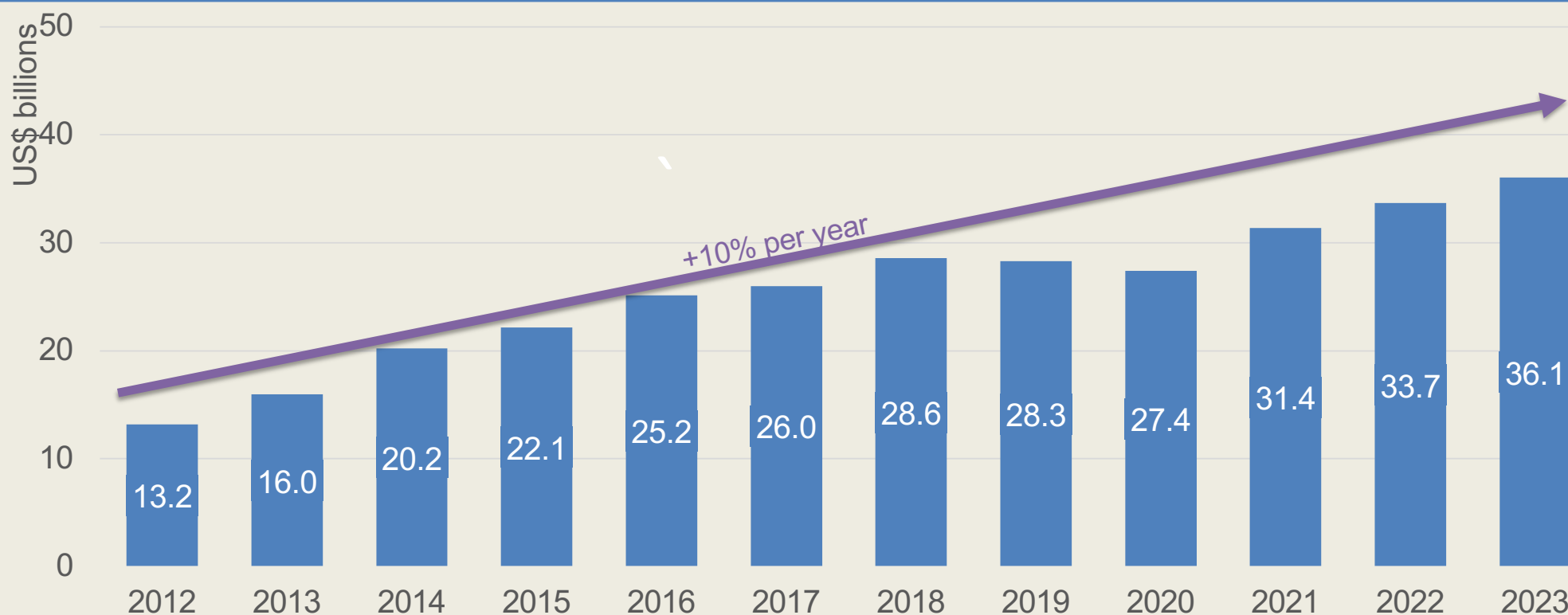


Global Humanitarian Funding Trends

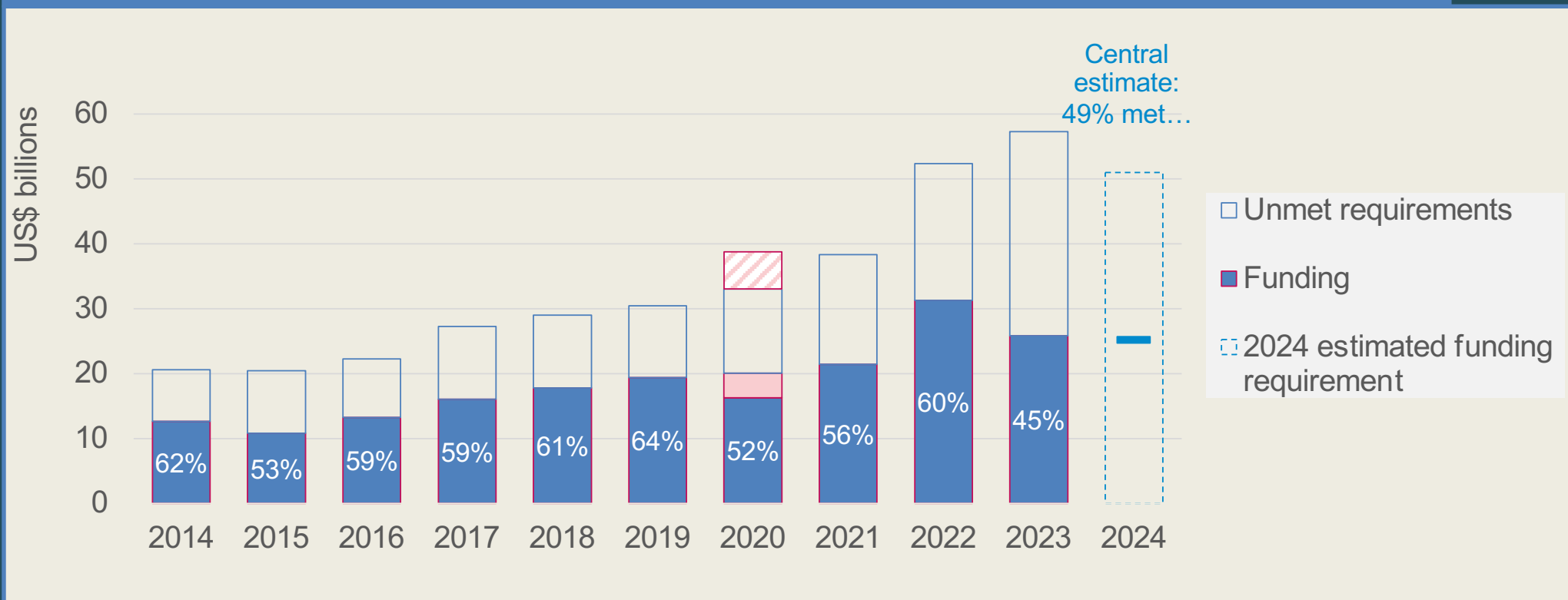
26th February 2025, Mike Pearson

odi.org/hpg

Humanitarian funding from governments has grown by over 170% in just over a decade



The funding gap was the widest it's ever been in 2023 (\$31bn, or 55% of what was needed)



Finland is set to cut ODA by about a quarter between 2024 and 2027.

The Guardian – 23-01-25

The cabinet-approved budget plan includes a 53% cut in German humanitarian aid, reducing the total to just over €1 billion. This would bring the humanitarian budget to a 10-year low

CHA – 28-09-24

France is planning to reduce public development aid by up to 40 percent as part of its €32 billion budget cuts for 2025

RFI – 05-02-25

Trump pauses US foreign development aid for 90 days pending review

Reuters – 21-01-25

On September 17, 2024, Sweden announced a reduction in its ODA budget ... marking a shift in the country's long-standing commitment to international development assistance.

Donor Tracker – 17-09-24

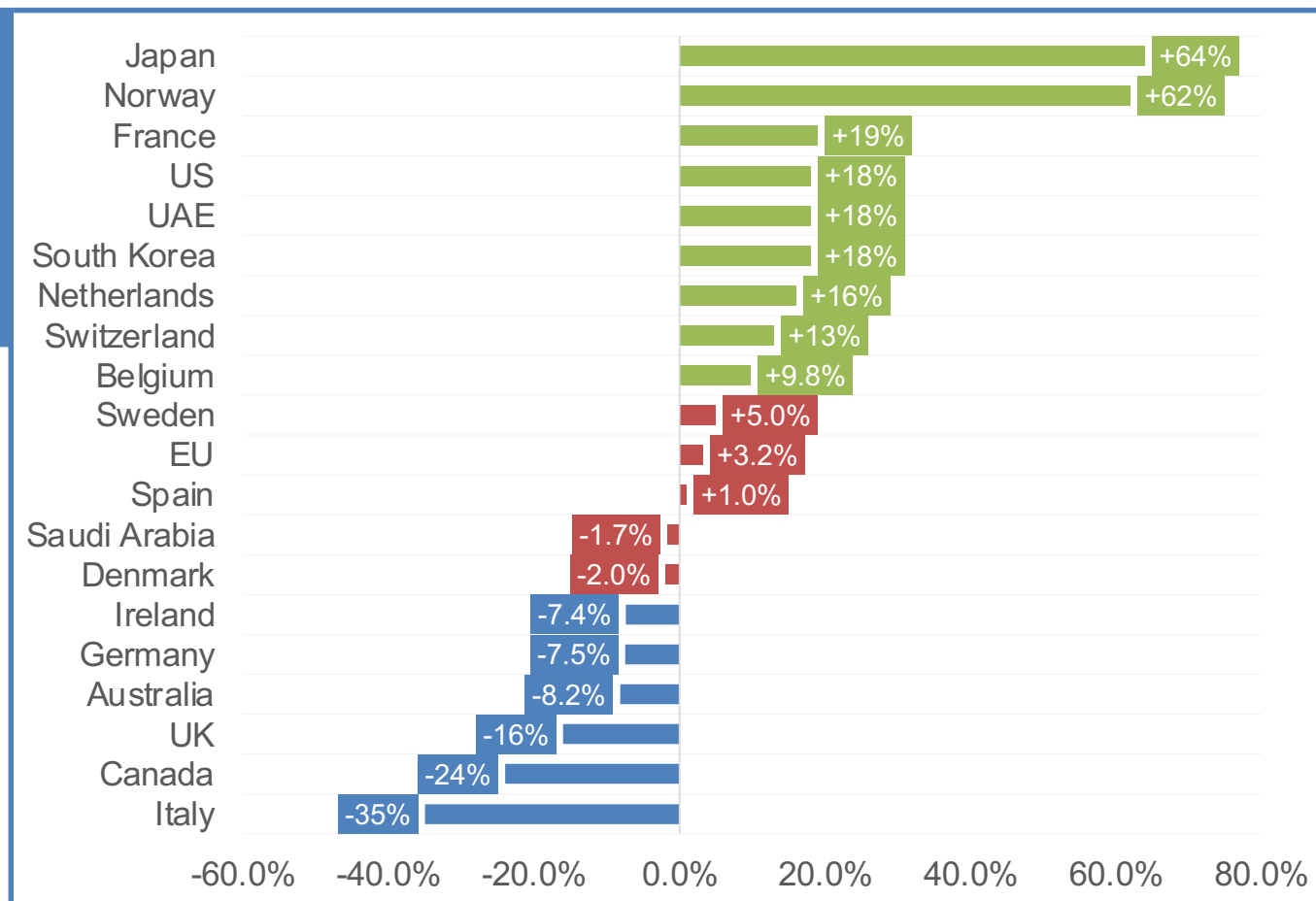
The [Netherlands] government has agreed it will impose structural spending cuts of € 2.4 billion on development aid from 2027

Dutch Government – 20-02-25

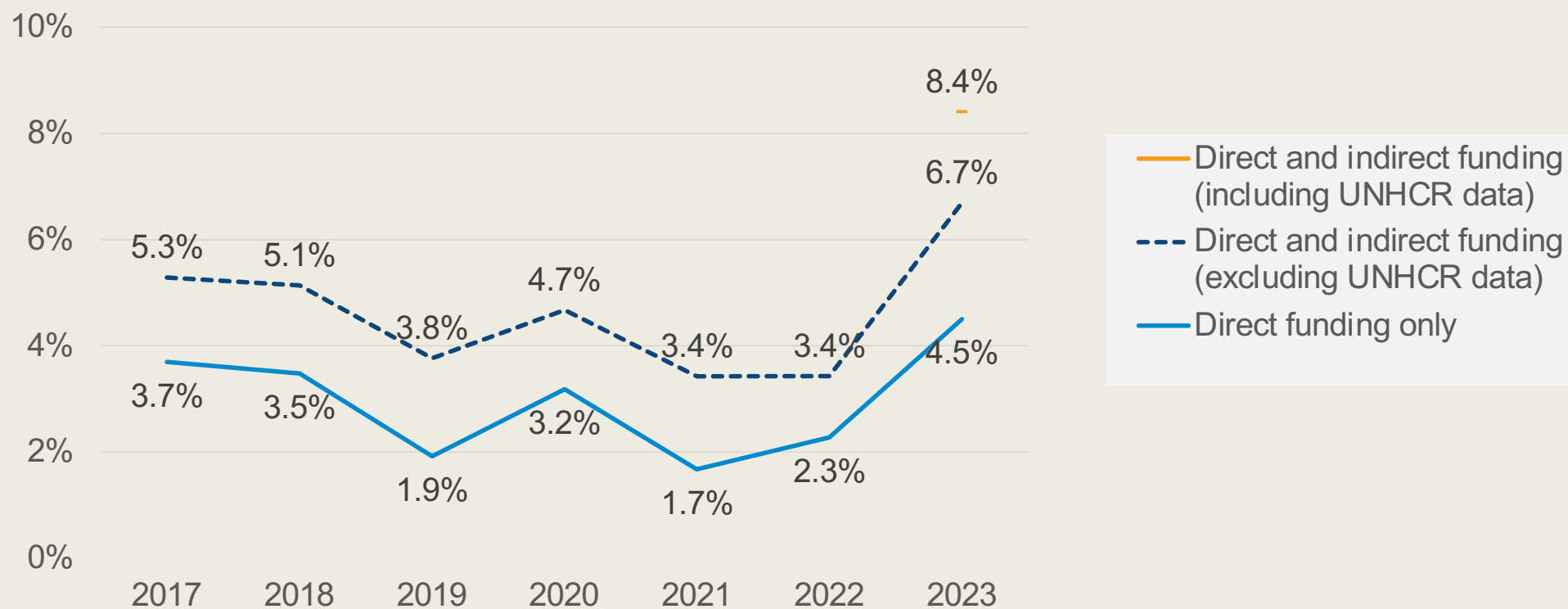
Belgium will cut its foreign aid budget by 25% over five years

Devex – 10-02-25

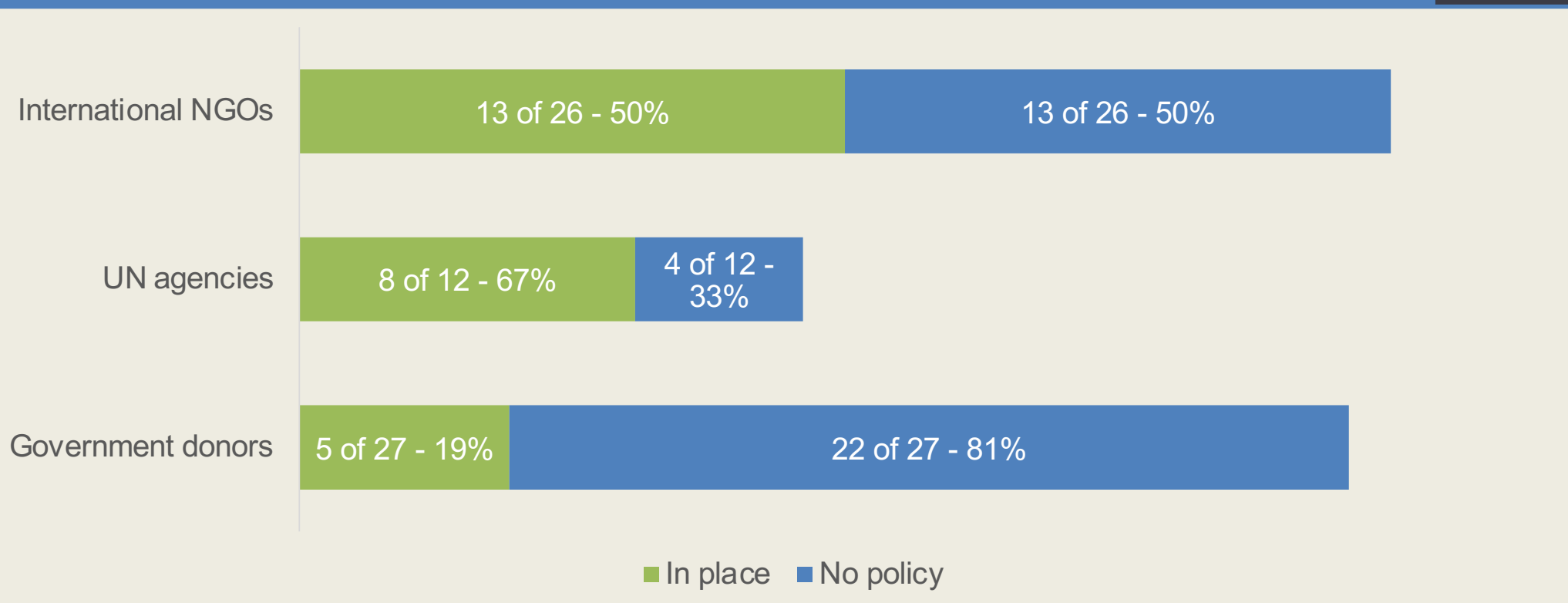
Only 9 of the top 20 donors increased their contributions substantially in 2023



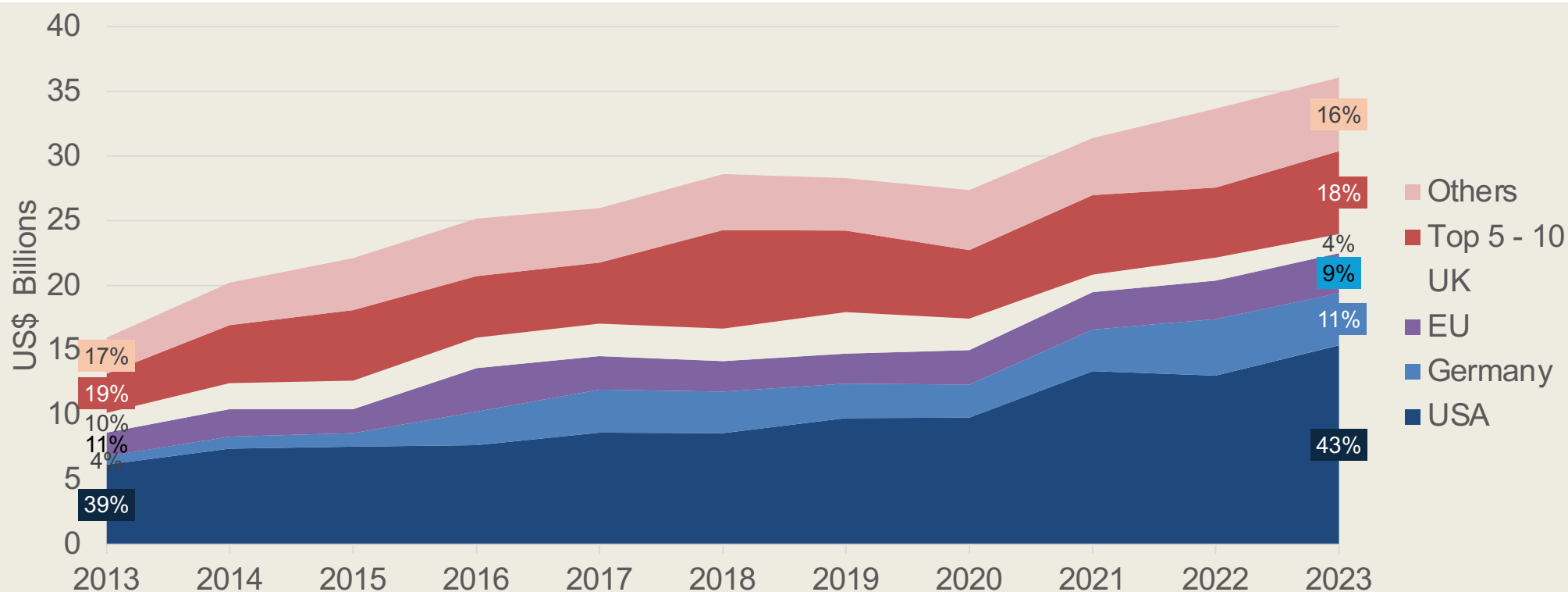
Seven years after the Grand Bargain, and still nowhere near 25% going to LNHAAs



Some progress made for local and national actors on overheads, but there's more to do



The funding mix has remained stable over the past decade



GISF: Global Security Risk and Policy Conference

Break

15 minutes



Security Funding:

Donor's policies and practice



Jon Novakovic
(Executive Director, GISF)



Alyssa Thurston
(Policy and Advocacy Adviser, GISF)



Marieke van Weerden
(Senior Director of Health, Safety & Security, CRS)



Katrine Thomsen
(Security Policy Officer, DG ECHO)



Addressing Gaps in Institutional Donor Policies on Safety and Security

NGO Perspectives on Meaningful Reform

Key findings from a GISF original study - February 2025



Study context: rising risks, slow reforms

- Despite commitments by member states, the risks faced by aid workers continue to rise.
- Support for NGOs to manage these risks has not kept pace.
- 2019: GISF's 'At What Cost?' campaign highlighted outdated safety & security funding structures.
- Backed by 188 stakeholders across 38 countries, the campaign led to a policy shift: UK's DFID (now FCDO) introduced an SRM budget line in its Rapid Response Facility template.
- Five years on, **reforms for funding SRM remain isolated** and scaling across donors and contexts is difficult.

About the study

- **Objective:** understand NGO experiences with institutional government donors' policies regarding safety and security; and identify actionable recommendations.
- **Responses collected** between 11 December 2024 - 17 January 2025.
- **Participants: 68 respondents from GISF members**, including safety and security staff, grant/business development staff, and programme managers.

Key challenges and barriers

1. Inconsistent and restrictive donor guidance and budgeting guidelines

Funding for SRM remains **highly inconsistent** across government donors. Most lack any guidance or specific reference of security:

- Only 18% reported that safety and security measures are consistently included in donor requirements.
- 43% said they are occasionally referenced, and 27% noted they are rarely or never mentioned.
- **Over half (54%)** stated that donors do not provide clear instructions on presenting safety and security in grant budgets.

The lack of clarity leaves NGOs to navigate a patchwork of **inconsistent guidance, varying donor expectations, and unclear budgeting requirements**. When security is referenced, NGOs note challenges with providing the required justification.



“

Donors are very demanding on risk analysis but don't provide guidance about the means to finance it.

Some [donors] ask for justifications or breakdowns of costs that are hard to provide in the design phase of a project.

Specific SRM budget and expense justifications are usually demanded [by donors] later, at the audit stage, rather than supported during the proposal phase.

”

Key challenges and barriers

1. Inconsistent and restrictive donor guidance and budgeting guidelines

Security costs are often subject to **restrictive conditions which limits NGOs' ability to allocate adequate funding for SRM.**

Common challenges include:

- Budget ceilings that cap allowable security expenses irrespective of the operational context.
- Restrictions on categorising SRM as a direct cost.
- Vague cost categories that make it difficult to allocate SRM funding transparently

Frustrations with limitations that **obscure the true cost of delivering aid safely** and fail to reflect the realities of high-risk environments. Fixed budget percentages fail to account for varying contexts, programmes, and organisational models.



“

Budget ceilings make it difficult to allocate sufficient resources for safety and security, especially in high-risk environments where costs are inherently higher.

We are often requested [by donors] to share security plans and reassurances that we can remotely manage any security challenges. But no costs can be budgeted for security without creating a burden on already challenging ceilings for management costs and without reducing the budget available for activities.

”

Key challenges and barriers

2. Partner inclusion

- Local and national partners face heightened security risks
- Often lack the resources or capacity to implement robust SRM measures.
- INGOs often act as intermediaries in transferring funds to partners yet not always straight forward.

60%

of INGO respondents **face challenges in allocating security resources** to their local and national partners due to donor restrictions or conditions.

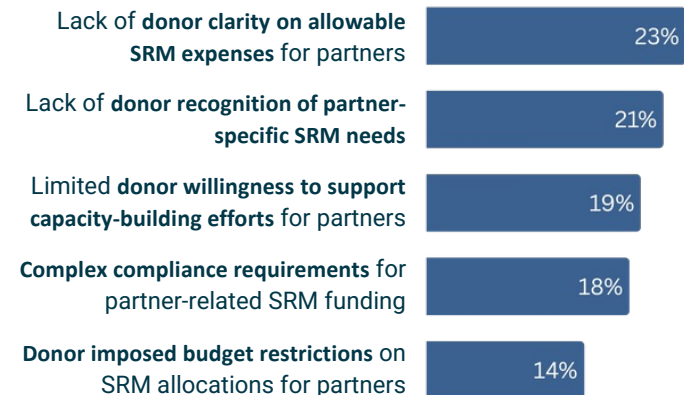


“

Donors should understand that partner organisations face unique risks that cannot be addressed with a one-size-fits-all approach.

”

Barriers to allocating SRM resources to local and national partners



Key challenges and barriers

3. Donor expertise on safety and security

Many INGO respondents perceive donors' limited SRM expertise as a key factor leading to restrictive funding structures and a "tick-box" approach that prioritises compliance over practical security improvements.

Challenges:

- Limited operational insight
- Disconnect between donors' security teams & grant desks
- Lack of local partner engagement
- Inconsistent levels of engagement within and across donor agencies



“

Those in charge often have little or no experience in such environments and come with very technocratic solutions—at times it's even dangerous.

There is no universal standard even within donor organisations. I have worked with some donor teams who were helpful, engaged and focused on the issue for a specific project, but that same organisation then showing no interest or meaningful engagement on another.

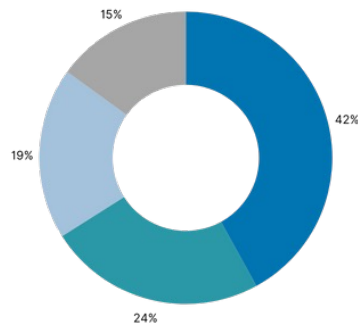
”

Key challenges and barriers

4. Impact on funding and implementation

70%

said they encountered situations where their organisation had to **start implementing a project with insufficient SRM** due to donor restrictions limiting adequate funding.



- Donor-imposed budget ceilings (42%)
- Restrictions on SRM as direct cost (24%)
- Unclear donor guidelines on allowable SRM expenses (19%)
- Other (15%)

Critical gaps in SRM resourcing:

- Undermines staff safety, programme continuity, and humanitarian response in high-risk areas.
- Forces NGOs into difficult trade-offs: prioritising delivery over safety, reallocating unrestricted funds, or relying on ad hoc security funding.

Disproportionate impact on partners:*

- More than a third of frontline staff face **security threats on a daily or weekly basis**.
- Fewer than **50% of staff in local/national NGOs have access to security plans**, infrastructure, or risk monitoring.

*Analysis from a survey of over 700 frontline workers.
Greenway, L. Joshi, N., Jha, R., Ahimbisibwe, L., & Tanner, L. (2024). [Research study: The status of frontline humanitarian workers](#). Humanitarian Aid International.



Key recommendations to improving donor support to safety & security

1. Flexibility and clarity in guidelines and budgeting

- Classify SRM as a direct programmatic cost.
- Enable flexible budgeting for evolving risks.
- Adapt SRM to diverse risks and contexts.
- Establish clear, standardised guidelines.
- Define SRM cost requirements in funding calls.

2. Improve supportive funding practices for local and national partners

- Streamline compliance requirements to make SRM funding more accessible to partners.
- Allow flexibility in channelling funds directly to local partners or through INGOs to cover security costs.
- Invest in capacity-building for local and national partners to strengthen their ability to manage unique security risks.

3. Strengthen donor expertise and engagement on safety and security

- Develop internal donor capacity on SRM and integrate security expertise in grant-making.
- Increase collaboration with NGOs, security professionals, and security networks.
- Engage with implementing organisations to improve funding models and address practical SRM needs.

4. Adopt and scale successful models

- Expand proven models like the UK's Rapid Response Facility budget template across donor funding.
- Embed SRM in programme planning with security plans and dedicated budgets.
- Standardise SRM practices across donors for consistency and equity.

Security Funding:

Donor's policies and practice



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Questions for Groupwork

- 1. What key areas should donors prioritise to enhance the agility of implementing partners to manage security and safety risk?**
- 2. How can donors better align and enhance the availability and effectiveness of resources for security risk management?**

Global Security Risk and Policy Conference

Canapé Reception sponsored by Sigma 7 Charlemont Bistro

