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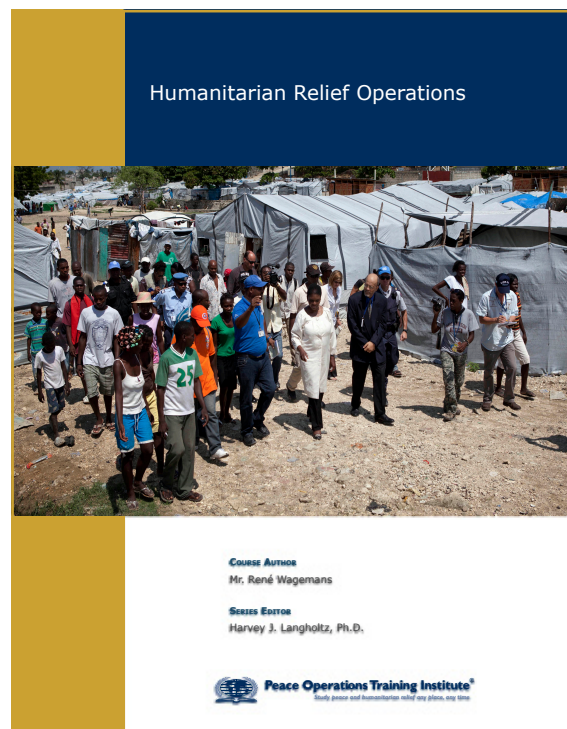
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Newest course highlights developments in humanitarian relief operations

The Peace Operations Training Institute released its newest course, *Humanitarian Relief Operations*, on 1 December 2017. The course, which was written by Lt. Col. René Wagemans of the Belgian Army, covers methods for planning and implementing humanitarian relief operations, from responses to natural disasters to humanitarian crises caused by war. The new course also examines the history of humanitarian relief and recent developments in the field.

Each disaster or emergency is different, and so is each humanitarian relief operation (HRO). Understanding the dynamics of a disaster and all the actors involved is essential to provide adequate assistance to the affected population and government. Over the years, some have criticized the humanitarian community for the conduct of certain humanitarian actions. Practitioners have not always applied the lessons previously learned from humanitarian relief operations. Numerous documents and manuals have recorded best practices leading to a better response when applied. Unfortunately, humanitarian action is not an exact science and will depend on the ability and adaptability of the humanitarian worker to the situation on the ground. Major disasters often lead to the creation of an additional layer of rules and directives making the situation increasingly complex for "outsiders".

This course attempts to simplify these concepts as much as possible by focusing on the most important aspects to demystify this complex environment. At the same time, this course provides practical information on the different types of disasters and how to interact with some entities and structures often deployed in the field. The 2017 edition of the course includes definitions and principles, new doctrine on humanitarian relief activities, and recent examples of humanitarian relief operations.



Lt. Col. Wagemans. Photo credit: David Plas Photography/Security & Defence Agenda. Available from: <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/securitydefenceagenda/5221572595/>>.

Meet the Author: Lt. Col. René Wagemans

Wagemans brings more than 20 years of HRO experience to course

René Wagemans began his career in the Belgian Army in 1977 where he served as head of the Humanitarian Crisis Response Branch (OF-4) at the General Staff. He retired in 2014 but still serves as reservist within the same staff position.

In his career, Wagemans participated in several peacekeeping/peace enforcement missions in staff and command functions. As a representative of the Belgian Army and member of the Belgian First Aid and Support Team,

he participated in several humanitarian relief operations, most recently after Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. He has been an UNDAC member since 2005 and deployed as a team member and team leader to several disasters.

Since 2011, Wagemans has been a lecturer, facilitator, and coach for different courses for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as well as courses related to the European Civil Protection Mechanism.



Photo 1: Group photo of all participants during the first day of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC) on 11 September. Photo 2: Dr. Langholtz and Lt. Col. Matthew Nash, Commandant of the Australian Defence Force Peace Operations Training Centre at the Ideas Bazaar during IAPTC. Photo 3: Mrs. Anderson and Ms. Whitney Grespin, Senior Peacekeeping Operations Analyst at the US Army War College's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) during the last session of IAPTC. Ms. Grespin is also a student with the Institute and has completed three POST Certificates in police studies, military studies and gender awareness in 2017. Photo 4: Capt. Marco Villegas, Director of the Chilean Joint Peacekeeping Operations Centre (CECOPAC), Professor Ximena Jimenez, course author, and Dr. Langholtz at the Ideas Bazaar during IAPTC.



Dr. Langholtz

From the desk of the Executive Director, Dr. Harvey Langholtz

It is always our pleasure at the Institute to attend the annual meeting of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC), and this year was no exception. Egypt's Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) hosted IAPTC 2017, and nearly 250 military trainers, police, and civilians representing every area of peacekeeping training were in attendance.

Attendance at IAPTC provides the Institute with the opportunity to hear directly from peacekeeping trainers how they use our

e-learning and how they integrate the Institute's self-paced courses into their curriculums provided at their national peacekeeping training centres. Most of those in attendance make use of the National Training Centre E-Learning Platform (NTCELP), which provides peacekeeping training centres with a website where their students enrol in the Institute's e-learning and earn Certificates of Completion bearing an emblem and a signature from their own national peacekeeping training centre.

Also in attendance at the conference were training officers from several United Nations peacekeeping missions, which access the Institute's e-learning through E-Learning for Mission Staff (ELMS). ELMS provides each UN and African

Union mission with a website where mission personnel may enrol and participate.

At the Institute, we value the feedback and encouragement we receive from all our institutional partners. IAPTC provides us with an annual opportunity for one-on-one discussions to hear what our partners appreciate most about POTI e-learning and also to hear their thoughts on potential additional courses and where we can continue to improve. It is our honour to partner with peacekeeping institutions and individual peacekeepers worldwide. We look forward to IAPTC 2018 in New Zealand. Until then, we are glad to remain in close contact through social media, individual student classrooms, and e-mails.

Coming soon: three new Spanish courses

The Institute will introduce three new Spanish translations to its course curriculum by the end of December 2017. *Presentación del sistema de Naciones Unidas: Orientación para actuar en una Misión de Campo de ONU* is the translated version of the Institute's course *Introduction to the UN System: Orientation for Serving on a UN Field Mission* by Mr. Julian Harston, Assistant Secretary-General to the United Nations (Retired).

Métodos y técnicas para prestar servicio en una misión de mantenimiento de la paz como Observador Militar de Naciones Unidas is the Spanish version of the course *Methods and Techniques for Serving on a Peacekeeping Mission as a UN Military Observer* by Lt. Col. Egil Nordli of the Norwegian Army.

The third addition to the curriculum is *Desarme, desmovilización y reintegración (DDR): Descripción general práctica*, the Spanish translation of *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR): A Practical Overview* by Mr. Cornelis Steenken.

The Institute is pleased to offer these courses for its Spanish-speaking students.



Front, left to right: Ramona Taheri, Chief of Content; Harvey Langholtz, Executive Director; Vanessa Anderson, Registrar and Chief of Institutional Relations. Back, left to right: Ian Brickey, Copy Editor/Multimedia Specialist; Susan Terrien, Treasurer; Lorrie Noggle, Copy Editor; Marianne Wrightson, Chief of Programme Services; Christopher Leber, Chief of Technology.

Thank you for your work each day in the interest of peace. We at the Institute wish you a joyful holiday season and health, happiness, and peace in the new year.