



Aequilibrium In Crisis

Crisis Response — Risk Steering

An Introduction

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Aequilibrium In Crisis works with organisations on crisis response and risk steering.

The organisations AIC works with are at different stages. Some have procedures, designated teams, escalation protocols in place. Others are building their capacity from the ground up.

Structure and procedures are not a constraint to circumvent, nor a framework to inhabit passively. Well designed and well carried, they are what makes an informed and conscious decision possible — people who know what they know, what they do not know, and why they choose what they choose, even when the pressure is high.

This quality is not achieved through the rigour of procedures alone, nor through the talent of individuals alone. It is built in the relationship between the two. That is what the work of AIC seeks to develop.

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The starting point

The central question is not: "What structure do we have?" It is: "How will those responsible need to reason and decide when the situation exceeds what was anticipated?"

That is where the quality of a response is determined — in the system's capacity to decide at the right level, in an informed and conscious manner, when information is incomplete, timelines compressed, and consequences real.

AIC starts from that decision process. Procedures and structures are built or strengthened from there, based on what people actually need to be able to do. The objective is always the same: an informed and conscious decision, carried at the right level.

This framing holds beyond security crises. A reputational situation, a financial threat, a governance failure — the nature of the problem changes. The difficulty for those responsible does not. Decisions must be made under uncertainty, with time compressing, and with consequences that are not easily undone.

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Three areas of work

Building crisis management capacity

The work begins with people's capacity to reason and decide well under pressure. Structures and tools are built or adapted from that foundation — not the other way around.

Two dimensions. The first is cognitive: how each person processes information and decides when the picture is incomplete — then how the group works together on this same dimension, because decisions in crisis are rarely solitary. Both can be developed, but not in the same way. The second is organisational: whether the structure around people supports or undermines their capacity to reason and decide.

For crisis management teams: programmes of two to five days, built around the organisation's own context and scenarios. The focus is the reasoning process — what coherent crisis management looks like when the situation is moving.

For decision-makers: focused modules on the specific demands of carrying final responsibility — the cognitive and relational weight of authority in an acute situation, and the structures that protect the quality of judgement at that level.

For field or operational teams: programmes calibrated to role and responsibility. Observing accurately, reporting with rigour, acting coherently within the broader response structure.

For organisations that want to step back first: workshops on decision mechanisms and the realistic margins for improvement. An honest conversation about where reasoning tends to hold and where it tends to break — and what that implies for preparation.

Advisory support in active crisis

For organisations navigating a situation that is already serious and moving. The role is advisory — alongside the response.

In practice: reviewing the picture as it develops, stress-testing the analysis before decisions are taken, identifying where reasoning may be compressing or where important information is not reaching the right level. The decisions remain with the organisation. What the advisory role offers is someone whose only task is to support the quality of the thinking when the pressure to act is at its highest.

Risk steering

How an organisation responds to a crisis is shaped long before the crisis begins — in its governance structures, in its day-to-day relationship with risk, in the coherence — or the gap — between what it says about risk and how it actually functions.

This work examines that relationship. It can take the form of a diagnostic, a review of existing frameworks against the organisation's actual context, or the development of internal capacity to maintain a coherent approach to risk over time. The starting point is always what already exists — or what is missing.

Every engagement begins with a conversation. Scope, format, and duration are defined together, based on what is actually needed. All engagements are handled with strict confidentiality.

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Background

Pierre Kernén spent fourteen years at MSF, moving from field coordination in conflict contexts to security advisory work, and from 2017 heading the Security and Risk Management Unit at headquarters — directing a global team, supervising risk management across field operations, and leading or advising on major crisis activations. Before founding AIC, he served as Emergency and Security Manager at Wallenius Wilhelmsen, a global maritime corporation. He has worked as an independent consultant since 2022.

He has trained and supported crisis management teams across several continents — at headquarters and at the operational level — and has been part of crisis cells for periods ranging from a few days to several months, as team leader or adviser, depending on what each situation required.

The approach is built from practice. Every element included in the training has been developed and tested against real situations before being used in delivery. That remains the condition for including anything: it must have held in practice, not just in theory.

He taught decision-making at master's level at Sciences Po Toulouse, within a geopolitical programme on international relations and the emergence of new crises.

Aequilibrium In Crisis AS is registered in Norway and works with humanitarian, corporate, and public-sector organisations.

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