

Towards a Comprehensive Approach?

Civil Society and
Security Sector Perspectives
on Dutch Missions

GLOBAL
PARTNERSHIP
FOR THE
PREVENTION
OF ARMED
CONFLICT



BUILDING FLOURISHING COMMUNITIES



On 24 February 2015, GPPAC, Cordaid and PAX convened a discussion in The Hague, focussing on Dutch and international interventions in fragile and conflict-affected areas. The event brought together officials from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security & Justice, as well as civil society, academia and think tank participants. The participants contrasted the different perspectives, identified areas of common understanding and opportunities, and reviewed the contextual and institutional dynamics framing the civil-military roles and relationships.

This report summarises the main discussion points from the presentations, plenary and break-out sessions, as well as the follow up suggestions and recommendations that emerged from the event.

While drawing on the various perspectives present, the conclusions presented here are those of the organisers.

Authors: Jenny Aulin, Gabriella Vogelaar

Layout: Haagsblauw

Printed in The Netherlands

Published by Cordaid, in collaboration with GPPAC and PAX

Copyright 2015

Table of Content

1. Introduction	4
2. Conceptual dilemmas	5
2.1 Varying modalities of ‘comprehensiveness’	5
2.2 Different theories of change	6
2.3 Not a straightforward distinction?	6
3. Challenges for international missions	8
3.1 Mandates and end goal	8
3.2 Needs and expectations	8
3.3 Capacities and means	9
4. Working with civil society	11
4.1 Added value and risks	11
4.2 Power dynamics	12
5. Finding common ground: recommendations	13
6. Towards a Comprehensive Approach in The Netherlands and beyond	14
 Annex 1: Case studies	 15
Annex 2: List of participants	23

1. Introduction

With an increasing range of actors operating in (post-)conflict areas, the call for more strategic, operational and tactical collaboration amongst governmental, intergovernmental and civil society actors is growing stronger from all sides. The push for civil-military cooperation and a “comprehensive approach” to security interventions seeks to improve the overall coherence and coordination of civilian and military efforts.

In The Netherlands, a policy momentum has been building around this, as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security & Justice presented its strategy known as the ‘Leidraad Geïntegreerde Benadering’ (LGB) in July 2014. Whether this policy can contribute to enhancing peace and security in areas of Dutch operations is a question of practical implementation as well as political dynamics at different levels. And while the potential for improved multi-actor coordination is great, there are also significant challenges and risks linked to this approach.

The translation of policy into practice has much to gain from the input and involvement of the broader set of actors that form part of the peace and security arena. Beyond the Dutch policy context, a Comprehensive Approach developed in collaboration with civil society and other key actors can set an important example also within the international community, notably at the European Union, the United Nations and NATO.

In addition to reflecting on findings from a global consultation¹ on this topic, the meeting “Towards a Comprehensive Approach?” was structured around case studies of Dutch missions in Afghanistan, Mali and South Sudan, as seen from civil society and security sector perspectives respectively. By exploring the key issues and operational realities through the lens of lived experiences, the discussions aimed to:

- compare and contrast military/police and civil society approaches to identify potential areas of collaboration as well as challenges and risks.
- formulate practical approaches to coordination and cooperation between civilian and military actors.

Participants’ motivations

“There are few opportunities for joint learning. We should have more meetings like these where we can delve deeper into the understanding of our work and collaboration. We are trying to find the most effective way to promote security.”

“[The Ministry of Defence] is currently working on doctrine and on the Comprehensive Approach. It would be a success if we can figure out what the comprehensive approach can really mean for Dutch interventions (...) It is a first step towards creating some kind of model.”

“[At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] we would like to hear what people around the table think at the moment on this topic. We have been working on the Comprehensive Approach for a few years. I have experience in Congo, Afghanistan and Mali. We see the Comprehensive Approach in different shapes and forms.”

“[As a think tank] we look at it from a humanitarian perspective - but there is a whole military side to it, and I would like to have more insight to that perspective, to get to know more different types of actors in civil society, as there are so many.”

“I want to learn more about possibilities for police and the Ministry of Security & Justice to work more with NGOs. We haven’t done enough on the Comprehensive Approach yet. I also saw that the discussion seems to be around two categories (civilian or military), but perhaps at end of the day there can be three categories?”

¹ As part of the “Civil Society and Security Sector Engagement for Human Security” headed by Dr. Lisa Schirch.

2. Conceptual dilemmas

International missions take place in complex environments, where there are many types of civilian and military actors. To name but a few on the civilian end, local civil society groups range from informal community groups to highly organised interest groups, whereas international NGOs can be multi-mandate or service-driven, political (advocacy groups) or explicitly neutral (humanitarian agencies). Alongside host government agencies, international state presence is seen in UN or other international peacekeeping or training missions which are both military and civilian in nature. All these different groups find themselves working in the same environment. The need to improve coordination between them is ultimately underpinned by the understanding that no single group can bring about peace and security on their own. Different actors can each contribute a piece of the solution.

The stated goal of the Dutch guidelines for coherent action for security and stability in fragile states and conflict areas is *“to find the most effective combination of instruments and actors to promote security and stability in fragile states and conflict areas.”*

Leidraad Geïntegreerde Benadering, July 2014

2.1 Varying modalities of ‘comprehensiveness’

The challenge of having a meaningful discussion on ‘the comprehensive approach’ is that in practice it applies at many different levels, each with their own specific circumstances. The idea of a comprehensive approach also means different things to different actors and institutional cultures.

- Some state actors are striving towards a **‘whole of government’** approach, where different state agencies and instruments interact in a more coordinated way. The challenge is not only to get ‘the 3 Ds’ - Diplomacy, Defence, and Development - to work in tandem, but also intra-agency coordination must be considered. While this entails a more unified approach vis-à-vis an external environment, it does not necessarily make room for coordination with that environment.
- International missions face the challenge of coordinating their operations through **‘whole of mission’** or interagency coherence. For instance, UN missions relate to a number of different UN agencies as well as contributing member states. International missions are composed of different national forces of varying backgrounds, cultures and capacities, expected to work together under one banner.
- At the national level, peacebuilding organisations in some contexts speak of the **whole of society** approach to conflict, more as a principle than a specific institutional framework. Their emphasis is on various local stakeholders playing complementary roles that can be engaged through locally owned coordination mechanisms, for example conflict early warning and early response systems.

There are also various ways and levels of ambition as regards the realisation of multi-actor coordination, for example structural integration (e.g. integrated civilian and military UN missions), communication mechanisms (liaison functions, forums), or coordination bodies such as national councils or local peace committees².

The all-encompassing nature of what the Comprehensive Approach might entail, and the widely diverging interpretations and definitions, are in many ways a barrier to advancing its implementation in practical terms. It may be more productive to speak of components or processes contributing to such an approach in different configurations; there is a need for more targeted discussions with a focus on specific situations and contexts.

² Schirch, L. (2013) Conflict Assessment & Peacebuilding Planning – Toward a Participatory Approach to Human Security. Kumarian Press, p.27

2.2 Different theories of change

Civilian and military actors work on different premises and with distinctive goals. For instance, the Dutch international security strategy is geared around the defence of territory, the international legal order and economic security. Civil society peacebuilding organisations focus on the protection of civilians, on safety and security as defined by local communities, through a human security approach.

Although means of pursuing interests can sometimes be found, a key distinction in goals is that governments are primarily guided by national security and economic interests, whereas civil society organisations are pursuing normative goals such as human dignity and solidarity.

Each organisational culture has a theory of change with assumptions about how a strategy is expected to make an impact. For instance, state and military strategies to counter insurgency seek to isolate insurgency groups, whereas peacebuilding organisations see engagement as the way to address the same problem. ‘Train and Equip’ efforts identify the problem as being the state’s lack of monopoly of force, where weapons and training to national forces are meant to bring about stability and security. Governance-oriented security sector reform looks at the same problem through a legitimacy analysis, where the proposed solution is civilian oversight and a more accountable state.

Carrot and stick?

[From a Foreign Affairs perspective] *“It is about connecting the engagement and military force strategies. In Afghanistan, the Dutch armed forces were going out there talking with all sorts of tribal leaders and to some extent engaging militants - it was effective because they had ‘a strong arm’ behind them. Only drinking tea without having a strong military force behind you does not work.”*

[From a civil society perspective] *“..but from a local perspective, that same argument goes for NGOs, and it’s the same for all of us. If local actors are not convinced of the value of drinking tea with us internationals, they would not be sitting with us. We have to earn their trust.”*

These conceptual differences complicate coordination efforts and pose real barriers to joint action. Some even question the notion of a ‘theory of change’, on the assertion that military mandates are steered by doctrines, political mandates and ‘strategic narratives’. For others, the link between roles, mandates and the end goal has not been considered sufficiently.

“The idea of addressing conflict drivers in a context is not necessarily the objective of international missions; it only goes as far as stabilisation. Conflict transformation theories don’t seem to feature in the analysis.”

“Ultimately, the success of a comprehensive approach should be evidenced in actual changes to security as experienced by people in the given context.”

2.3 Not a straightforward distinction?

The differences that set civilian and military actors apart range from the scientific and analytical approach, to background and value base. Barriers to working together across this spectrum include the lack of knowledge of each other, causing stereotypes and false assumptions, as well as the few opportunities for joint learning. On the other hand, the civilian/military labels can obscure the fact that people and teams don’t always fit neatly into one or the other category. For example, there are civilians working inside military missions, and police forces with the mandate of working on civilian engagements such as community policing and gender aspects.

"I would put myself in the Defence box. But I also live in the civilian world."

"The Ministry for Foreign Affairs sort of falls in-between civil and military – in a sense, we are where the 3 Ds come together."

In the field, coordination is complicated by increasingly **blurred distinctions** in the respective roles and tasks. Military forces are taking on civilian tasks whilst still working towards military goals. Conversely, civilian organisations may look for support from military assets in terms of logistical capacities, while not being fully aware of the implications of military operational principles and mandates. This can at best lead to misguided expectations and unproductive engagements or, at worst put civilian staff and beneficiaries at risk. In this situation, military forces may interact with an array of civil society organisations, like for example the development agencies and peacebuilding organisations, yet guidelines on civil-military interaction focus mainly on humanitarian agencies.

In Afghanistan, the "Quick Impact Projects" carried out by international forces included infrastructure projects such as the construction of roads, bridges and schools. The QIPs were part of a military strategy to 'win hearts and minds' in the rural areas that were affected by the Taliban insurgency. As such, they were not part of a long-term development strategy and were not informed by local needs or planning processes. According to many civil society groups, this resulted in structures that were not maintained or sustainable in the long run.

Afghanistan case study

3. Challenges for International Missions

The implementation of a comprehensive approach at field level must be informed by a thorough understanding of the operational realities and limitations of international missions. These are both of a practical and political nature, and while some aspects may be considered ‘internal’ to the missions themselves, they directly affect the engagement with other actors in the field.

3.1 Mandates and end goal

International missions are to contribute to peace and stability in fragile and complex contexts. However, from the outset they tend to be fraught by tensions between the broader vision of the mission mandate and the varying expectations on what the desired end-state would look like in practice, in a context itself beset by uncertainties. The **lack of clarity about the end-state** complicates the collaboration of mission staff with other stakeholders, who may not only have different expectations of the mission, but who also work towards their own goals under different assumptions and theories of change.

In Mali, the military mandate of MINUSMA is to stabilise the country and protect civilians from immediate threat. This very broad scope of the mandate is challenging in itself, as it is not clear who should determine what constitutes an imminent threat or how. The main activities are stabilisation and deterrence. The military branch of the mission has a strong presence in the conflict-affected rural North, whereas the civilian branch is stronger in Bamako. Local people in the north are suspicious of the government and hence of MINUSMA, and yet there is no visible communication strategy or feedback mechanism about the mandate or its effect on people’s security in those areas.

Mali case study

This tension is exacerbated in a number of ways. The frequent **changing of mandates and ‘mission creep’** increases the lack of clarity about the envisaged end-state. At the same time, the practicalities and politics surrounding missions often imply a short-term commitment by serving forces and mission mandates for what are essentially long term goals. This **lack of continuity** undermines the efforts to establish productive working relationships in the local context, which are key to a comprehensive and context-specific approach.

3.2 Needs and expectations

A major challenge for international missions is the issue of trust and **management of expectations**. This applies most importantly to the expectations of the population in the intervention country, but also to the international community and contributing member states. If a mission does not meet the population’s expectations it will be difficult for it to be seen as successful or to make a sustainable impact on security. Ultimately, and beyond the issue of expectations, the relevance of the mission cannot be detached from the actual **security needs** of the population.

The collaboration between different actors can contribute to a better understanding of these needs and the diverse perceptions of mission performance. Both military and civilian missions routinely make use of **context or needs assessments** to inform their tasks. However, whether these assessments can relate to the security needs as perceived by the local population depends on their purpose and analytical lens. The questions of who is involved in determining the needs and at what stage of the process are crucial in this respect.

Reflecting on needs assessments

“Every group will have its own perspective, and view needs assessments differently.”

“Military planning processes are like an oil tanker; when Foreign Affairs or NGOs want to contribute to military planning it is very hard to move the direction of the oil tanker in a short time frame; military start planning early on and it is hard to influence this process”.

“It is important to triangulate the information because everyone has a different agenda.”

“The methodology of needs assessments must be adjusted to take into account diverse local perceptions.”

“Different types of needs assessments could be put together to identify what can feasibly done together in this process.”

A key dilemma here is that the mandate and circumstances of a mission is first and foremost the result of, and embedded in, a **political process**, beyond reach of needs assessments or any practical measures that can be taken towards a comprehensive approach. The negotiation around the mission mandate takes place at the international level and is also informed by the political priorities of the contributing countries.

“Non-state and local government actors are marginalised in the political process it is the international governance system that determine the mandate. This is especially an issue where the government doesn’t have broad support or legitimacy in its country. This is a problem where the government doesn’t acknowledge the role of other stakeholders as partners in fulfilling the mandate.”

“We [The Netherlands] also do things because there is a political decision at home – we are not just there because of the needs of the population. We need to recognise the many political agendas that play into this process.”

Secondly, the complex relationship of the mission with the host government and the **local political dynamics** are directly linked to the **perceived legitimacy and impartiality** of the mission in the eyes of the population. The population may be suspicious of the intentions of the international community and of the government that invited the intervention.

In South Sudan, UNMISS is reputed to be misused by the government for political gain. It is said to deflect its own responsibility for safeguarding South Sudanese people and blaming UNMISS for security failures. There were rumours that UNMISS were bringing in arms to the IDP camps, and many believed this was the case even if factually incorrect.

South Sudan case study

3.3 Capacities and means

In spite of growing expectations on missions, their ability to deliver often remains limited. While the lack of sufficient or adequate human resources and equipment to deliver the core mandate is a frequently stated problem, there is also a distinct **lack of relevant skills and capacity** to work across the civilian-military divide. Specific skills required to enable a context-specific and meaningful security intervention require a combination of knowledge and skills, ranging from conflict analysis, to situational awareness and adaptive leadership. To many observers, the delivery, follow up and evaluation of mission preparation is uneven and detached from the broader, local context.

“The military life within MINUSMA has a life of its own, it is disconnected from the outside world.”

“Training tends to focus on the UN framework; gender relates to gender roles within the UN mission, intercultural communication directed towards cooperating amongst the nationalities within the mission, and so on. There is less attention on the country where the mission is based.”

“We should invest in adaptive leadership skills, critical thinking, because there will never be enough doctrine to help you through every situation”

“There are local trainers from universities, academies and civil society that could co-train on-site. There should be a capacity assessment and not only needs assessment in preparing for missions.”

This is all the more relevant where missions are mandated to train local security actors as part of security sector reform. Ultimately, such interventions expect a change in individual and group behaviour, where cultural differences and backgrounds also come into play. However, the political dynamics and diversity of mission forces, the varying educational background, cultures and languages of the different contributing nations make a coherent approach difficult. Whilst there are many standards and guidelines on relevant norms such as Protection of Civilians, human rights or gender awareness, the **selection process** and **compliance** of mission personnel are found wanting.

“Passing a test within the mission does not mean a change of behaviour of these soldiers, police officers or other staff. But sending people home is not an option as politically it would cause the contributing country and the mission to lose face. So political dynamics with and between troop contributing countries can interfere and disrupt mission planning and performance, and the UN does not really have a stick to threaten nations with – nations often threaten to withdraw their troops from the mission, as happened with Rwanda when criticised for their role in the DRC.”

“There is a need to strike a balance between personal skills and transformation processes on the one hand, and standards setting and accountability on the other.”

To enable interaction across different stakeholders, the **coordination** capacity is also crucial. However, this function is often absent or not sufficiently resourced. For instance, many missions rely on UN OCHA, which has a humanitarian mandate, or on a sole CIMIC liaison officer to oversee all civil-military relations. Crucially, such coordination functions also require an **institutional framework** or an organising space where safe, ongoing multi-stakeholder engagement is enabled. There are also calls for greater coordination of capacity and training efforts to the extent possible; for example consolidating research, lessons learned and training evaluations at regional level.

“Invest in expertise but also build bridges between different areas of expertise to avoid working in silos and to encourage that assumptions are challenged; what is key is to identify where the connections are needed.”

“The Comprehensive Approach is not about everybody cooperating with everybody, because then in the end nobody feels responsible.”

4. Working with civil society

Although local outreach and communication is generally understood as an important part of a mission, this task is not necessarily included in the mission mandate, and practically speaking remains a critical challenge. In this respect, civil society groups can form an important link to local communities, not only for information gathering and communication purposes, but also to inform to situational assessments, understanding population perceptions and ensuring a Do No Harm approach to mission operations.

4.1 Added value and risks

The human security-oriented objectives and engagement of peacebuilding organisations present an opportunity to **inform the monitoring and evaluation** of mission interventions from a people-centred perspective. This can ensure a level of **accountability** to the population. International and national peacebuilding NGOs that are collaborating with local civil society groups and communities on the security agenda are well placed to facilitate exchanges between international missions and local groups, and can share research findings or analytical insights from a different perspective.

The military strategy in Mali is limited and can't address the 'intangibles' of the conflict drivers. For example, it can't remedy the issue of revenge amongst different population groups following recent violence. These are dynamics that civil society groups can monitor and address through community level dialogue. ... There is scope for some shared analysis and information exchange – this is already happening with ECOWAS as part of the regional early warning early response system, ECOWARN.

Mali case study

At the same time, from a civil society perspective, the **risks** involved in relating to mission staff can be significant and may be greater than the value of engagement. In some contexts, the association with foreign forces can make civil society groups vulnerable to attacks by opposing groups. Politically, in contexts where there is suspicion amongst the population against the mission, such engagement can also jeopardise the trust built up with local communities. This is not only a perception problem, but NGOs are also wary of sharing information with actors operating under military operational goals.

"It's important to have a physical neutral space for civ-mil interaction, like [the Dutch had] in Uruzgan."

"Maybe civil society should sometimes also be more confidential about the information they share with the military, just like the military themselves do."

"[Civil-military engagement] only works when it is a two-way street. NGOs will participate when there is something in it for them."

"The focus of the engagement should be on security process rather than security outputs."

"Joint planning does not need to lead to joint activities."

An engagement with civil society groups 'on equal terms' requires increased **clarity on the mandate and roles** of the actors involved, and transparency about the purpose of the engagement. Civil society groups may lack an understanding of the operational aspects of both civilian and military missions, which in many ways determine opportunities and limitations of the interaction. For example, the timing and purpose of consultation meetings, the parameters and confidentiality agreements of such engagements are not always explicit.

4.2 Power dynamics

For mission representatives, grasping the **diversity** of groups operating in the local context is key to ensuring appropriate engagement. This involves working along the distinction between neutral humanitarian groups and other types of NGOs and civil society interest groups. A frequent challenge is the **fragmentation of civil society** in fragile settings, which often reflects political and conflict fault lines in the context. Choosing to engage with certain groups or not can directly affect delicate local political dynamics. Issues of power and influence amongst civil society groups and NGOs are often reflected in how civil-military relations are carried out.

“Even if we reach out [to civil society] there are many challenges, there are all sorts of legitimacy questions. Are they well positioned or not? Who are those local actors, and how can we organise their participation?”

“They [a large humanitarian agency] threatened the mission with bad publicity if they didn’t get their way. In this situation, it was the UN OCHA that had to mediate.”

“The international NGOs have links with local groups based on years of collaboration and can advise on that basis. This is not a formal selection or screening process.”

Because of these challenges, there is a perceived overreliance on international NGOs, which are influential amongst policymakers and which operate within the international community. The **lack of involvement of local CSOs** in the planning and execution of international missions increases the accountability gap and leads to lost opportunities in terms of community engagement.

“[In South Sudan] existing local networks and mechanisms are not detected, approached or supported by international actors, who keep circling around their own international networks. It is hard to convince UNMISS staff to be present at local meetings, and even if they do they often do not speak up or share anything with local actors, so these local actors remain confused about what UNMISS can or can’t do or what value their presence has. “

5. Finding common ground: Recommendations

As seen in the discussion points reflected above, it is necessary to untangle and distinguish the political and practical dimensions affected by a Comprehensive Approach. The structural, **political dimension** should be addressed more up-front to expose the limitations of measures proposed as part of the comprehensive approach. Alternatively, this can also inform different, political strategies that can address the structural challenges where possible.

The **operational issues** that can be influenced in practical ways by informing the planning and execution of tasks must be considered in relation to the context-specific realities, whether in the field or at policy level. While drawing on the various perspectives present, the following recommendations are those of the organisers.

Enhancing community engagement

- Improve the communication strategy of international missions to address the issues of mistrust and management of expectations of the population.
- Ensure local civil society groups are amongst NGOs consulted and engaged by missions.
- Shift the focus from security outputs to security processes that engage a wider section of the population in defining needs and monitoring progress, for more meaningful engagement.
- Address intra-mission coordination issues, between its civilian and military parts.
- Ensure that institutions and people with a long-term presence in the context are involved in international missions to prevent a focus on the short-term and to capitalise on their expertise and networks, such as embassies and UN country teams.

Improving civil-military guidelines

- Develop guidelines beyond humanitarian focus to cover engagement with other ‘multi-mandate’ civil actors;
- Identify and prevent unintended consequences harmful to civilian and/or military strategic interests resulting from civil-military cooperation;
- When planning and framing civilian-military engagement, take into account that in practice many people and teams do not fit neatly into one or the other category.

Improving information sharing and analysis

- Distinguish between practical and political problems, as well as different levels (tactical, operational) when analysing challenges around the comprehensive approach.
- Make needs- and capacity assessments of various actors the starting point for interventions; bringing them together can help identify potential areas of collaboration.
- Information exchange should happen at an earlier stage; and information should be triangulated for verification amongst diverse actors.

Strengthening skills and training

- Diversify training recipients beyond the usual (civil) liaisons and experts on specific topics.
- Use scenarios for different types of missions to move closer to field realities, include human security analysis, and involve more types of actors to make trainings more useful, practical and specific.
- Consider local capacities and joint training for mission preparation and capacity building missions.

Understanding and informing the political process

- Share information from local to global policymaking levels to connect the bottom-up with top-down.
- Increase the understanding of the political path of how mandates are shaped.
- Consider accountability and power issues at all levels.

6. Towards a Comprehensive Approach: in The Netherlands and beyond

The implementation of the Dutch Comprehensive Approach policy (LGB) will inevitably be affected and sometimes limited by the operational structures and cultures of the broader international community, particularly in joint missions (*“How can you attribute the Dutch contribution to UN mission within the large machinery that is the UN?”*). Politically, The Netherlands as a relatively small nation can only marginally influence this reality in the broader context.

Nevertheless, with its 3D approach and its established interaction with civil society in the Dutch context, there is also an opportunity to share experiences and lessons learned within global and regional governance mechanisms and alliances such as the UN, EU and NATO. Furthermore, much can be done by focussing on the areas of direct influence – namely the Dutch policy and practice context – and its intersections with field realities through mission preparations and engagement with partners and stakeholders from intervention countries.

In this spirit, the following suggestions for follow up build on the respective commitment, expertise, and institutions that can continue shaping the thinking and doing around a comprehensive approach as applied by the Dutch policymakers and their partners.

Interaction and exchange

- Acknowledge the need for an open engagement across different fields of expertise;
- Map the existing networks, platforms and institutional channels that can support a continued learning process. Some of those mentioned included the Dutch Knowledge Platform for Security and the Rule of Law and the policy framework around the LGB.
- Enable more regular and structural interaction, instead of ad hoc, while ensuring a balance between formalised structures for information sharing and engagement, and developing working relationships between individuals.

Deepening our knowledge

- Continue the exchange and recommendations in a more targeted way, by focusing on specific contexts, situations and operational arenas.
- When deliberating on field realities, involve civil society, governmental and military partners from the intervention countries to inform the analysis.

Learning and training

- Support more joint learning, scenario exercises and training, where civil society, military and governmental participate together or as part of each other’s programmes, and share training materials and lessons learned. Some examples given included the CCOE programmes, the Common Effort community of practice, and the curriculum being developed through GPPAC’s “Civil Society and Security Sector Engagement for Human Security” project.
- Start the preparation of mission staff at home, away from the pressures of the field, but ensure follow up and monitoring of results once in the field.
- Consider the capacities of organisations at local, national or regional levels in intervention countries for delivering and informing training and learning efforts.

Proactive approach

- Move beyond only focusing on current missions, and take an “early warning” approach through preventive analysis by discussing emerging crises and other conflicts, involving different actors.
- Build networks of knowledge and connections that can be mobilised quickly when required.
- Make use of entry points for influencing the political process to shape the mandate of international missions; for example, input to the UN Peacebuilding and peacekeeping reviews.

In conclusion, the organisers hope that these reflections can mark the start of an ongoing shared process. Together and through an open platform, government, military, police and civil society groups can continue to learn and feed into the next steps in the process of implementing a Comprehensive approach in The Netherlands and beyond.

ANNEX 1

Case studies

Three case studies were presented and discussed from the perspective of a military or police and civil society speaker respectively. While the presentations necessarily represented the personal reflections and experience of the speakers, they provoked a broader discussion with the group as a whole. The opinions and viewpoints conveyed in this section represent a snapshot of the diverse perspectives of the speakers and the meeting participants.

Case study 1: MINUSMA in Mali

Following the crisis that erupted in Mali in 2012, the United Nation's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali – MINUSMA – was established by Security Council resolution in April 2013. Its main task is stabilisation and Protection of Civilians (PoC). The mandate has since been extended to include security sector reform and support of the national political dialogue and reconciliation.

Lt-Colonel Dr. Robèrt Gooren, 1Civil-Military Interaction Command of the Dutch Ministry of Defence, served as a U9 CIMIC officer at the military headquarters of MINUSMA in Bamako from January 2014 to July 2014 in Mali. Gabriella Vogelaar from the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) has supported a human security project in Mali since 2013. Together with the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and the Human Security Collective, the project works to strengthen Malian civil society networks and facilitates local consultations on human security priorities.

The diversity within the mission

The challenge of working for and through the UN and MINUSMA is the myriad of agencies that are involved, with no noticeable coordination taking place amongst them. The 'UN way' towards a comprehensive approach is to establish a structurally integrated mission. The three components of the mission – military, police and civilian – each have their headquarters in the same building in Bamako. Yet, they are still very different and separate organisations. In addition, there are eleven other UN organisations – the World Food Programme, the UN Development Programme, the High Commission for Refugees to name but a few – with their own country plans and tasks.

With so many different countries and backgrounds involved – sometimes 45-50 different nations – working in a coordinated way becomes almost impossible. Another issue is that the personnel is not always selected specifically for their skills, but are seconded in various ways by the UN member states as part of their political commitment to the UN. Operational guidelines are much stricter under the UN compared to some other missions; this is also something that national forces have to get used to. The dilemma is that it can take some five years for a UN operation to get fully operational, whereas the mandate may not even be that long.

"Sometimes very basic skills like use of e-mail and a computer are lacking amongst these troops. But these are the ones we have to work with, under the expectation to work as one operation"

Restrictions in the mandate

The military mandate is to stabilise the country and protect civilians from imminent threat. This very broad scope makes it challenging in itself, as it is not clear who should determine what constitutes an imminent threat or how. The main military activities in the field include stabilisation and deterrence by presence in and around the main population centres, and (through an expanded mandate) in rural areas in the North; providing armed escorts for humanitarian convoys, and securing main roads and airfields.

The military focus is on ‘spoilers’ and power brokers, especially in the North. Within this mandate, local communications and contact with civil society are seen as relevant but not the main focus – this engagement is secondary to the main tasks. When the MINUSMA forces interact with communities it is mostly about collecting information for military purposes; for instance, military engagement in aid efforts also requires information collection. Hence, military engagement with local populations is always linked to the military mission and mandate.

CIMIC (Civil-military interaction and coordination of the military) within MINUSMA is limited to the coordination through the UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), thus it does not entail direct engagement with Malian or international partners. Any dealing with civil society is the responsibility of the civilian component of MINUSMA: Civil Affairs, Stabilisation & Recovery, Gender, Protection of Civilians, and so on. The complexity of the mission means that for many civil society groups it is not always clear which part of mission’s civilian mandate to engage with.

“There are UN guidelines on ‘humanitarian space’, but this concept is not compatible with what we call ‘areas of operations’ in the army. It simply doesn’t work like that.”

Local perceptions and roles of civil society

From a civil society perspective, it is the perceptions of the local population that are the main point of attention. In Mali, the issue with MINUSMA in this regard is that the mandate of the mission is not clear to people, and hence it is not meeting their expectations. Another issue is that MINUSMA is hosted by the government, which is in itself a party to the conflict. Some civil society groups are questioning if the government is legitimate, and where this is contested it is not clear if MINUSMA is there for them. This creates suspicions and a lack of trust.

The perception and reputation of MINUSMA is also related to the context of other military operations – such as the French intervention Operation Barkhane – with which there was no coordination. There is no visible communication strategy, and it appears that the capacity for local outreach is limited³. The issue of perceptions and the link with local populations matter because ultimately it relates to accountability. To what extent are those missions demand-driven as defined by the local population? Civil society organisations can play a role in (indirectly) supporting communications and local exchanges on the subject of the mandate with the population.

Another challenge of engaging with civil society in Mali is the political fragmentation of the local groups. It is important to acknowledge this problem and approach engagement critically. It is a challenge knowing whom to talk to in this context - counterparts often end up being the known international NGOs, most frequently the humanitarian ones.

The military strategy in Mali is limited as it is not able to address the ‘intangibles’ of the conflict drivers. For example, it cannot remedy the issue of revenge amongst different population groups following recent violence. These are dynamics that civil society groups can monitor and address through community-level dialogue, and such efforts also contribute to stability.

Missing or weak links

Whereas the civilian branch of MINUSMA is strong in Bamako, it has a weak presence in the field (the North) where the conflict areas are. On the other hand, the military branch has a stronger presence in conflict areas and less so in the capital. Yet, the relevance of civil society and NGO involvement is reflected in the fact that the civilian branch component is by many seen as “*by far the most important*” in order to facilitate information exchange between civilian and military branches. The civilian component is linked with the humanitarian effort, as well as dealing with issues such as political reconciliation, human rights, gender, rule of law, or protection of civilians/children.

³ Some participants asserted that the engagement gap was not always as big as presented – that the UN mission always starts by exploring an area including NGOs as soon as it enters.

The civilian branch and OCHA are the ones relating directly to civilians; OCHA in this sense is the crucial link. At the same time, OCHA is also “the missing link” as they have very few staff compared to the amount of expectation on them to fulfil this important role.

The military forces have limited experience of dealing with NGOs, and within MINUSMA the force has “a life of its own” with many different parts. In recent conversations taking place between NGOs and Dutch and Swedish troops preparing for a mission to Mali through MINUSMA, the level of discussion reflected how much ground there is to be covered. There is a need to widen the understanding about civil society groups and NGOs beyond humanitarian groups.

“Military often see civil partners as a negative energy structure, for example as supporting a rebel movement, because they [civilians] engage with them... They are either seen to be in the way or they are seen to be a need, as information holders or otherwise. So there is this negative approach to civil partners from the military point of view, but my view is that civil partners can contribute to a mission. For example, in Mali, the French NGOs had good relationships with religious organisations in the north of Mali and in the churches they explained what the French mission was going to do, to establish trust. This type of thing is often lacking in military missions. Recognition of local, non-state organisations as a positive contribution is important.”

Opportunities

There is scope for more shared analysis and information exchange, as is already happening to some extent between the regional civil society network WANEP with ECOWAS as part of the regional early warning early response system (ECOWARN). This is specifically relevant to the role of local and regional peacebuilding organisations, as opposed to humanitarian groups that need to protect their neutral space.

Recommendations

- Pay attention to the diversity and interagency challenges within UN missions
- Strengthen the civil-military links within missions and across geographic areas
- Strengthen the capacity of UN OCHA to coordinate relationships with NGOs, and develop civil-military guidelines beyond humanitarian field.
- Improve local communication strategies of the mission.
- Acknowledge the role of local civil society in addressing conflict dynamics and contributing to conflict early warning and response.

Case study 2: UNMISS in South Sudan

South Sudan became independent in 2011 after signing a peace agreement with Sudan in 2005. The United Nation Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) already had very limited means relevant to its mandated tasks before new war broke out in South Sudan at the end of 2013. The UNMISS mandate changed towards Protection of Civilians (PoC) exclusively, removing state building and security sector reform, to reflect the new situation of war in South Sudan, and to make the most of the available staff and resources towards protection of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in the UN camps. Around 100.000 IDPs live on UN sites, now dubbed PoC sites. These sites were initially not meant to harbour refugees, but crowded camps amidst many security threats proved very challenging to protect.

A.A, a member of the Dutch military police (Financial Investigator Economic Crime) served in the 5th rotation of Dutch participation in UNMISS. In practise, his main tasks consisted of community-policing tasks in the PoC sites. Hans Rouw works for PAX and focuses his work in South Sudan on community security, Protection on Civilians and disarmament.

Mission mandate and conditions

The Dutch police contingency of UNMISS were prepared in the Netherlands and in-country through a course on community policing. However, shortly after arrival the delegation was told that the mandate had been changed. It was no longer about training on community policing, but about implementing the Protection of Civilians mandate in ‘red areas’ (dangerous zones). Tasks included gate controls and patrolling inside the PoC sites.

“I could understand that the mandate changed, but what I didn’t understand is this: why was it changed to be only about protecting, instead of also incorporating training of the South Sudanese police? They could have kept it together – protecting and training.”

Overall, the PoC mandate faced significant capacity challenges, both in terms of the conditions in the field and the composition and capacity of the mission itself. Juba had 20.000 Internally Displaced People, with three protection camps in Juba alone. Capacity was an issue in relation to the scale of the problem; in a particular site there were 15 people in charge of watching over the thousands of displaced people. The conditions such as infrastructure (lack of roads) and climate (rainy seasons) pose physical barriers that would require specific equipment such as helicopters and boats, which UNMISS does not have.

Site-specific coordination

Tactical Operations Centres were responsible for the security of the PoC site in question, and it was at this level of the immediate environment that coordination was most tangible and possible. It used a decentralised information system, with the idea that *“If you want to achieve something, you can do it and report afterwards”*. The centre took a team works approach to collaboration with the different entities present. The patrolling inside the sites was under the lead of the UN, though the policy advisors assigned by the Dutch forces had some room for manoeuvre within this mandate. The centre included UNPOL, police advisors, uniformed police force, UNDSS and other organisations active within the camp.

From the police point of view, the collaboration with NGOs on the site was seamless given that they were ultimately seen to be *“doing the same job”* in aiming to protect the IDPs. NGOs would voice problems in joint meetings where *“everyone was sitting in one room”* and the Tactical Operations Centre would be able to respond and assist. NGOs faced a lot of security issues within the site. Information sharing was not an issue within this setting; in this sense, PoC within a site is fundamentally different from going on patrol. The main issue in working with NGOs within the UN framework, from the mission staff point of view, was the slow pace of getting things done.

While this perspective reflected the experience in the site in Juba, the capital, the experience elsewhere – for example in Malakal – was quite different and not as positive. The opportunities for engagement and coordination with civil society was easier in the capital than in the rural areas.

Working with civil society

While UNMISS representatives spoke of a positive experience in engaging with NGOs in the camps, the NGO experience was that local groups were rarely included in this engagement, and that involving UNMISS on their own terms was extremely challenging. This was explained as partly due to limited capacity, partly due to a lack of explicit mandate to engage beyond the camp. It also relates to questions about accountability to the population. Nevertheless, NGOs can play a role in enabling UNMISS to manage expectations related to their mandate and its limitations.

“You have had a good experience in working with international NGOs. But what about the local South Sudanese NGOs? They are often not invited. Then UNOCHA clusters: all the white people sit around to talk about what needs to happen. It is the PoC, so why are we not bothered by what the South Sudanese have to say about this?”

From a mission point of view, working with the multitude of NGOs in the context was initially a challenge, and many mission staff had no prior experience with this. Questions about legitimacy, of “*how to ensure you are talking to the right people*” arose: how to navigate the various interests, their potential link to ‘spoilers’ such as armed groups, the perception that some NGOs “*were just after the funding and visibility*”.

Different types of ‘screening’ of the civil society groups were mentioned: for example, those working in the camps were necessarily scanned by the relevant UN agencies, but there is little capacity to do this more widely. International NGOs would also tend to have links with local groups based on years of collaboration and can advise on this basis. However, they should not have a say in a formal selection process of which groups to involve (or not).

Community perceptions and political dilemmas

UNMISS does not have access to the population due to the many infrastructure and capacity issues mentioned above, and many or most of the challenges stem from that. Closely related to the access issue are the community perceptions that influence the relationship with UNMISS and its ability to make an impact. UNMISS has a reputation to be misused by the government for political gain, which is seen to deflect its own responsibility and blame the security failures on UNMISS. For example, many believed in the accusation that UNMISS was bringing in arms, even if factually incorrect. Historically, UNMISS has also not been engaging with local populations directly and is not set up to do that. The UN country teams are the ones in the lead of this, and UNMISS is ‘learning by doing’.

Culturally, the population is characterised by tribal divisions and several local languages, which make broader engagement more complicated. For instance, UNMISS must be seen as not taking sides in the ongoing war, whereas their mandate stipulates them to support the government to protect civilians.

Keeping the peace even in the smaller protection camps is very challenging, and UNMISS is only one of the potential security providers for the population. There is a wide-spread perception – even if not necessarily true – that UNMISS only appear on the scene “to count the dead” after something has happened. Meanwhile, local police that come in to disarm inhabitants are often connected with robbing and raping the population. People of South Sudan are speculating about what is actually happening in the camps. However, perception and needs are two different things, and there are different interests being played out at these levels. The role division of actors needs to be informed by how these two are connected.

Lack of UN coherence

The extensive guidance documents issued by UN offices in New York are not necessarily used in the field. For example, throughout the UN there is no accepted definition of Protection of Civilians. Without a common definition, it is difficult to produce an operational plan that goes beyond reaction to the context. Individual UN officers that are motivated to make a difference can feel frustrated within the confinements of the mission. Furthermore, at UNMISS there are over fifty nationalities represented, posing language or cultural barriers to achieving some coherence within the mission.

“Your mission depends on a definition [of Protection of Civilians] or at least an understanding of how each group’s definition is, and how that defines your role. The definition does not have to be the same in every context. The opportunity is that having at least this definition is an area of cooperation. It is common ground for cooperation.”

Recommendations

- Manage expectations regarding the mission mandate
- Focus security efforts on the process rather than the outputs (beyond training)
- Start early with needs and capacity assessments
- Talk with a range of local organisations before, during, and after mission deployment.

Case study 3: Resolute Support and Dutch missions in Afghanistan

With its history and the extent of heavy international military presence, Afghanistan is a particular case. The speakers and discussions mainly focused on the NATO and Dutch interventions. Since the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission ended in 2014, The 'Resolute Support' mission is the next phase in the process of transferring security tasks from the NATO-led ISAF to Afghan forces. Its mandate is to 'train, advise and assist'. Compared to ISAF, with 60,000 troops, the Resolute Support mission has a lighter footprint with around 12,000 troops contributed from 43 nations, both from and outside NATO.

Working for the civil-military interaction branch of SHAPE (NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe), James Collins reflected on the military perspective on the ISAF mission, NATO's largest involvement in history outside its territory. He especially focused on the difficult transition process from ISAF to Resolute Support, where NATO handed over full responsibility to Afghan security forces through training and support. Paul van den Berg, working at Cordaid's head office as political advisor, was programme officer in Cordaid during the Dutch Uruzgan mission, which is still an important reference in discussions on the comprehensive approach. He focused on the lessons learned from Uruzgan from a civilian point of view, emphasising the necessity for long-term involvement and Afghan ownership.

Military planning and mission

Resolute Support has five Train, Advise and Assist Commands (TAAC) across the country, with 20-25 representatives in command operations who are essentially civilian advisors to military planners. The Military Planning Approach is highly complex. It takes a lot of time and practice to understand how the planning process goes forward, starting with an end state, and with defined milestones along the way.

Civilian advisors point to what may work or not in the plan, and how to take the work forward with the international community. The planning, which started two years ago, led to a programme which has brought together the different international stakeholders in preparation for the mission. Referring to the discussion on theories of change, it was pointed out that each planning step is essentially a theory of change. The challenge for a comprehensive approach would be how to align the assumptions – or strategic narratives – with other stakeholders on how to protect civilians as part of this planned intervention.

Mainstreaming civ-mil interaction?

For the Resolute Support mission, there is a clear added value in interacting with 'the outside world'. However, it needs to be managed through proper coordination and at the right moment; *"What we struggle with is when there is a push to do it just to do it."* Once the interaction has been established, another struggle is maintaining value for the organisations involved.

As part of the mission to train, advise and assist, it is understood that 'everyone' in the mission will be doing civil-military interaction to some extent. This means there is not any designated CIMIC person there to give specific guidance; instead there are specialist departments, such as gender, detention issues, and so on, with specialists at the headquarters working as contact points. The mission is currently defining how to share information across these different departments. However, it was noted that the lack of a CIMIC function was also a result of budget cuts and not solely a strategic decision. NGOs present in Afghanistan noted that the capacity of civilian advisors was something that was built by the end of a mission, thus needing time.

Non-military interventions

It has been widely acknowledged that the solution to the situation in Afghanistan is not a military one, hence NATO also works with the international community on reconstruction and development. This includes identifying alternative livelihoods to the narcotics trade, developing and ensuring respect for the rule of law, establishing trained and capable security forces, and developing good governance without corruption. This is widely linked to the idea of ‘winning hearts and minds’ of the Afghan population, but has also been criticised as a new level of ‘mission creep’ for military missions.

Civil society has criticised this trend for the lack of local ownership and (hence) sustainability of projects such as the construction of large infrastructures and the use of them once set up. The projects were more regarded as ‘charity’ by the intervening nations rather than Afghan-owned. Another issue was that the maintenance was not taken into account in the planning, where these types of interventions were not sufficiently embedded in a long-term strategy responding to clearly defined needs. Such outcomes have led many civil society groups to call for a critical assessment of the role of the military in development projects.

“Subcontractors constructed roads, bridges, mid-level primary school [and] an [airport terminal] in Uruzgan without true community involvement. [To be sustainable] local communities and local NGOs should be involved in the earliest phases of development projects and planning.”

Mission transition and handover

The handling of major changes to the mission mandates and the intended gradual handover have had a significant impact on the Afghan security context. The transfer of tasks has been and continues to be a major challenge, as it was insufficiently prepared and there have been unrealistic expectations on the Resolute Support mission. The negotiations between the various donor countries on the distribution of different tasks amongst contributing forces have been dealt with in the high-level political arenas. From a military perspective, there is a need for long-term commitment.

“There were some 650 tasks to be handed over. They thought they could just ask another government if they could take over these huge projects. There was a naive understanding of how the international community really works. These handovers have to be built into different frameworks – we spent almost a year on training ourselves in how to do that properly.”

The handover between different national forces also affected population perceptions, and the ability to collaborate with other sectors, disrupting existing relationships and modes of engagement; *“Withdrawal of Dutch troops from Uruzgan was a kind of betrayal – taken due to a political decision at home.”* There has been very little awareness-raising to NGOs, local communities and authorities about the new mission. The poorly managed handover was also reflected in The Netherlands, as it did not manage information or preserve the institutional memory of the Dutch involvement in Afghanistan.

Perceptions and communications

NATO missions often struggle with communicating their positive ‘achievements of strategic success’. The image of the mission amongst the local population also depended on the nationalities involved – whether from the US or Europe. This challenge takes place in a context where there is limited awareness of the mandate, which creates scepticism about its value and place. Civil society groups highlight that it is not clear how the missions meet local demand (*“Is focusing only on SSR in Afghanistan a good idea in such a context? why not strengthen agriculture or health system?”*).

There are also issues of expectations at NATO itself; the missions need to show that they are efficient to stay relevant and ‘ahead of the curve’ on key issues such as human rights. Questions of efficiency are increasingly important in monitoring reports to the international community, especially given the significant downsizing of the operations. This requires transparency and communication.

Sharing information and analysis

The willingness and ability to work ‘comprehensively’ has been uneven, with different models and policies on how to implement a comprehensive approach – for example through in-house capacities or by outsourcing activities. Different objectives of supporting the Afghan government and reconstruction have also been competing for attention since the invasion in 2001, which has led to varying ‘comprehensive approaches’ - and results – in the different provinces. Thus, there was no unified ISAF strategy or approach, but a multitude of these. Different ideas on what needs to be done to meet the demands on the ground has also led to complications within the coordination and cooperation between the UN and NATO.

When international organisations try to work together, national political factors are an important constraint for further cooperation. Working together at the strategic, operational and tactical levels is so highly complex that the need to focus on increased dialogue between the different levels is inevitable. As such, although the Allies at NATO and members at the UN desire ‘interlocking institutions’ that can complement each other, national politics and practical issues often make them ‘interlocking’ organisations⁴. The conversation to understand the situation on the ground therefore needs to start before attempting to formulate an intervention strategy.

For this, information sharing at different levels is needed. However, to do so at different levels - from The Hague and NATO headquarters to Kabul and Afghan provinces - during planning, deployment and aftermath of a mission is challenging. Nevertheless, information and local network management and maintaining institutional memory is necessary for coherent civil-military relations, especially to be effective on a local level.

Within Resolute Support, the situation assessment is done differently depending on the origin (NATO, ISAF, etc.); a process has now been instituted where the data is cross checked, among others through outreach and engagement programmes so that the information can be shared and verified.

In the Netherlands, the civilian assessment on the situation in Afghanistan informed political decisions in relation to the context. There was a joint effort between civil society, the Dutch government and other actors through the ‘Afghanistan Platform’ to assess the situation in Uruzgan before the political decision on the actual military deployment was taken by the Dutch government. While this approach was seen as ‘revolutionary’ at the time, it has not been repeated since, partly because it is politically sensitive for the Dutch Parliament.

NGO involvement

Many international NGOs have a presence in Afghanistan as part of long term development engagements. They can be involved for advice behind the scenes, especially to facilitate a degree of accountability and ownership of large projects. Neutral spaces were set up in Uruzgan for civil-military coordination, which worked well. However, it was pointed out that this only works “when it’s a 2-way street”. NGOs will participate when there is something in it for them (for instance information on where Improvised Explosive Devices have been detected by military), in return for providing the information. Local NGOs provide the crucial link to communities, and can be more relevant than INGOs in that regard. Tribal and cultural advice is crucial for the military mission.

Recommendations

- Involvement of NGOs and engaging in local communications at the earliest phase in the mission design is key to achieving local engagement, which in turn can contribute to fostering local ownership and accountability.
- Ensuring a neutral space for civil-military coordination worked well; more interaction and NGO involvement ‘behind the scenes’ is needed.
- NATO needs to better manage expectations:
 - need for transparency and communication
 - need for awareness raising on new mission
- Organise a civil assesment as was done in Uruzgan in 2006, facilitate joint reflection and include local civil society groups in such meetings.
- Enable joint brainstorming to take place on a regular basis.

⁴ Yost, D. (2007) Enhancing NATO’s cooperation with international organizations In: The Military/Civilian divide: Peacekeeping and Beyond, NATO Review, Issue Autumn 2007

ANNEX 2

List of Participants

Participants

SIPRI (1)

1st German/Netherlands (NATO) Corps (1)

Alliance for Peacebuilding (2)

CIMIC Centre of Excellence (2)

Cordaid (3)

Coventry's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (1)

ECDPM (1)

GPPAC (3)

Human Security Collective (1)

Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law (1)

Kroc Institute, University of Notre Dame (1)

Ministry of Defence (5)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (4)

NATO SHAPE (1)

Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA) (1)

PAX (2)

Police (3)

TNO (2)

WO=MEN (1)

On 24 February 2015, GPPAC, Cordaid and PAX convened a discussion in The Hague, focussing on Dutch and international interventions in fragile and conflict-affected areas. The event brought together officials from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security & Justice, as well as civil society, academia and think tank participants. The participants contrasted the different perspectives, identified areas of common understanding and opportunities, and reviewed the contextual and institutional dynamics framing the civil-military roles and relationships.

This report summarises the main discussion points from the presentations, plenary and break-out sessions, as well as the follow up suggestions and recommendations that emerged from the event.

While drawing on the various perspectives present, the conclusions presented here are those of the organisers.

