



Civil Affairs Newsletter 2013



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Upcoming events

- **Workshop February 26-28 Entebbe**
"Understanding and integrating local perceptions in the work of peacekeeping operations", organised by the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) in collaboration with DPKO.
- **Deadline for roster applicants February 2- 8**
 Generic vacancies for civil affairs roster membership are currently open on Galaxy. They close on Feb 2 for P3 and P4 candidates and on Feb 8 for P5.
- **In-mission skills training**
 March, UNAMA, Kabul – TBC
 April, UNOCI, Abidjan – TBC
 May, UNAMID, El Fasher – TBC

in support of the national and local authorities in promoting democratic governance.

At a global level, Heads of civil affairs met in April 2012 in New York to review progress and share ideas. They stressed the value of the range and flexibility of the civil affairs role; allowing the components to tailor their work to different situations and to respond to evolving situations over time. They stressed that the growing architecture for institutional support to the function (in the form of rosters, policy, guidance, training, community identity and exchange of good practice) was vital to accommodating this range and flexibility while ensuring consistency and high-quality across civil affairs work.

The civil affairs team in the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET) of DPKO/DFS

continues to advise on civil affairs and to strengthen this institutional architecture. Notably in 2012, the Civil Affairs Handbook was launched, with the generous support of the Governments of Australia and Norway, and has since been distributed in hard copy to every Civil Affairs Officer in a UN peacekeeping mission. The publication of the Handbook is a landmark event. It is the first time that this level of operational guidance has been provided to civil affairs staff, who are called on to perform a wide range of tasks at the local level. The handbook is also accessible online to the broader public who may be interested in this work*. It has already been used by several other organizations, including the East African Standby Force, in their own training activities. A French language version of the handbook is also now available online and will be printed and distributed to relevant missions in early 2013.

Civil Affairs: A Year in Review

Civil affairs continues to be one of the most dynamic and versatile components in peacekeeping operations. In 2012, civil affairs components across the globe adapted to evolving and challenging contexts to have a real impact at the local level in support of peace processes.

Colleagues in South Sudan, Darfur and Cote d'Ivoire continue their efforts in support of conflict management, early warning and community reconciliation activities; while in Liberia, Haiti and Afghanistan civil affairs components are called on to address the challenges posed by transition environments - working hard to strengthen and support the role of local authorities. Civil Affairs Officers in the eastern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo are ever more deeply engaged in support of mechanisms and strategies to address threats to civilian populations, in what remains an extremely challenging context. In December 2012, the civil affairs component working in Timor Leste was closed as UNMIT enters its liquidation phase, leaving a significant legacy



Figure 1 Children in Zouan, Cote d'Ivoire, view a movie on social cohesion in the framework of the Community Dialogue Caravan

*<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/policy/civilhandbook.asp>

Looking ahead, alongside ongoing work in a variety of areas, the team is currently working on researching and developing more detailed guidance on some of the core civil affairs tasks. Most imminently, operational guidance for peacekeepers on understanding and integrating local perceptions in their work, will be finalized in the Spring of 2013, drawing on existing good practice and lessons learned by civil affairs and others.

Strengthening Links with Communities in DRC

Consistently at the forefront of innovations that support implementation of the MONUSCO protection of civilians mandate, civil affairs in the Democratic Republic of Congo have worked with JMAC over recent months to develop a conflict and risk analysis prioritization tool. This tool supports the systematic identification and mapping of local conflict using six key criteria and a series of 24 standardised indicators. Local conflicts are categorised and the risk of escalation is measured, establishing a level of priority for intervention in affected areas. Between January and August 2012, MONUSCO conducted an extensive exercise to update its database on local conflict, organising 15 workshops at provincial and local levels.

The total number of recorded conflicts was

brought to 1,533, with 19% classified as Priority 1, representing the highest priority risk level. Not surprisingly, the majority of such high-risk conflicts (85%) are located in Eastern DRC where the presence of several armed groups increases the odds of violent conflagrations.

Civil affairs in DRC has also strengthened its support to the early warning architecture by recruiting and deploying an additional 113 Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) during 2012, bringing the total number around the country to 164. Recruitment of a further 38 CLAs is planned in early 2013.

Deployed in the deep field alongside the blue helmets, CLAs represent the first and daily line of contact between the local population and authorities and the Mission. Their work consists in building trust with local actors; promoting understanding of the role they can play in their own security; supporting local authorities to develop local protection plans; and contributing to participatory conflict mapping and risk analysis exercises that engage local actors in planning actions aimed at building peace at the local level. The role of the CLAs, and the relationships that they establish locally, are vitally important; helping to sustain local engagement and confidence in the search for solutions.

Hortense Barholere, a CLA in Bukavu, recalls when she was the first to be alerted by local villagers that were suffering abuse and

extortion by three men posing as FARDC (national army) soldiers. The villagers approached the CLA in the confidence that it would be possible to ascertain the identity of the three men without themselves being put at risk of retaliation. Their approach to the CLA triggered a mechanism by which the National Congolese Police, supported by MONUSCO, was able to apprehend the 3 culprits. Strong ties with communities, and privileged relationships with civil society actors that civil affairs have established over several years, also proved critical in aftermath of the latest crisis in Goma. These pre-existing relationships of trust helped to diffuse tensions more quickly, increase popular understanding of the mandate of the Mission and preempt the manipulation of a large swathe of the local youth into conducting violent protests or retaliatory actions. In Uvira, for example, civil affairs worked with civil society and other mission components to organize public meetings that allowed local youths to vent their frustrations in a controlled and non-violent setting.

Building Trust in Haiti

Civil Affairs Officers in Haiti have developed solid relationships with local communities and authorities over the course of several years, allowing them to play a catalytic role in mediation and reconciliation processes. Two examples from 2012 show how civil affairs is able to spend the confidence credit it has built, both to address violent confrontation and to empower local authorities.

In Cité Soleil, an extremely impoverished and densely populated commune in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area, civil affairs has been engaging with local communities since 2007, when the government regained control of the area after successful MINUSTAH operations to neutralize local gangs.

Despite local government control, the restoration of state authority in Cité Soleil remained frail after 2007. Civil affairs played a pivotal role in encouraging and supporting municipal authorities to establish a dialogue with the destitute population of Cité Soleil through weekly security and rule of law meetings. Continued advocacy and facilitation work by civil affairs eventually bore fruit in early 2012 when these meetings were transformed into proper public meetings, held no longer at the police station but in the municipal townhall. Today citizens and authorities regularly meet there to discuss issues of municipal budgeting, disaster



Figure 2 Hortense, Prisca and Aimée, MONUSCO Community Liaison Assistants in South Kivu (DRC)

prevention and accountability.

Another example of the role that civil affairs plays in building confidence between local players unfolded this year in Seguin National Park in Haiti, where parcels of land belonging to the park have been occupied since 1942 by a community of 600 farmers.

Tensions between the authorities, in particular the national police, and the farmers escalated recently into violent clashes resulting in four deaths, as police tried to evict the farmers. After the incident, Civil Affairs Officers were the only actors that enjoyed sufficient confidence and credibility to be able to reach out to the community entrenched in Seguin Park, with a view to mediating dialogue between the occupants and the local authorities.

The negotiations, that took place in the regional field office of MINUSTAH, focused not only on the outstanding problem of the relocation of the community from Seguin, but also on the opening of a formal investigation into the killing of the four farmers. The discussions helped to normalize relations between the community and the authorities, contributing to conditions that are more conducive to a final resolution of the problem.

Supporting Local Governance in Timor Leste

As the work of civil affairs component in Timor Leste came to a close in December 2012 with the formal liquidation of UNMIT, it could proudly claim to have significantly advanced dialogue between institutions and citizenry through the organization of regular Democratic Governance Fora (DGF).

The final report issued by the Democratic Governance unit reviews in detail the resolutions adopted by the DGF, which were held in all of the 65 sub-districts of Timor Leste from February to October 2012. Each forum provided local communities with the opportunity to state their expectations vis-à-vis the new President, Parliamentarians and Government, as well as to spell out the nature of their own commitments in support of the peace consolidation process. Civil affairs was instrumental in the organization of the DGFs, also ensuring that relevant national authorities had full access to the proceedings and resolutions adopted by the local communities during this exercise.



Figure 2 Civil Affairs meets with the community in Seguin Park

A Dialogue Caravan in Cote d'Ivoire

In 2012, in line with the latest UNSC resolution, civil affairs in UNOCI launched a number of activities in support of social cohesion, reconciliation and post-electoral reconstruction. Key among these was a "community dialogue caravan", held in the west of Cote d'Ivoire. The caravan is an ensemble of Mission components, international and local actors that join together in organized activities set in a series of villages along a pre-set route.

The caravan set off in September 2012, promoting intercommunity and intra-community discussions along the Guiglo-Blolequin axis, where it was successful in engaging village leaders to act as advocates, for peace and reconciliation: helping to build consensus around the peace process and creating a climate conducive to reconciliation. The caravan works by initiating discussions with traditional village leaders and community representatives to identify strengths and weaknesses, threats and opportunities to social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. This process, repeated in the several villages affected by intercommunity conflicts and/or tensions, provides the basis from which to promote a dialogue between the various stakeholders of the different villages, helping to build a consensus around solutions to disagreements and tensions among local communities. In each instance the process culminates in a Cultural Day where agreements that have been reached are formalized before the authorities.

Civil affairs worked in close coordination with the UN Country Team as well as with international NGOs to analyze the conflict drivers and engage the community. The process benefitted hugely from the firm partnerships that civil affairs have developed with local NGOs and the local representatives of the Commission Dialogue, Verité et Reconciliation (CDVR).

Darfur People's Conference on Peace and Development

In Darfur, civil affairs has played a key role in the dissemination of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) across the five states of Darfur from January to July 2012, in support of the Civil Society Follow-up Mechanism (FUM), the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the rebel group Liberation and Justice Movement (LJM).

Civil affairs facilitated the realization of a total of 140 workshops, with an attendance of 25,000 participants drawn from the GoS, LJM, Native Administration, women and youth groups, nomads and farmers, IDPs, civil society organisations, academia, media, religious leaders and local NGOs. Around 34% of the participants were women, which is an indication of an increased awareness among women of the role they can play in the process.

The dissemination process was positively received by most participants, who expressed

satisfaction with the interactive nature of the fora, allowing them to exchange ideas and discuss issues related to the peace process. The majority of stakeholders believe that a Darfur-based internal dialogue would strengthen popular support for the Agreement.

Civil affairs UNAMID will work closely with the Darfur Regional Authority to advocate for continued dissemination efforts by the signatories to the agreement; both to capitalize on the knowledge gained by the participants during this exercise as well as to sustain the political space created through the interactive workshops.

Addressing Land and Resource Disputes in South Sudan

In support of the UNMISS mandate to support the Government in maintaining peace and promoting development, civil affairs teams across the ten states are supporting local authorities to resolve inter-communal conflicts; many of which have their roots in land disputes and competition over water and pasture land.

In Upper Nile State, which has the longest section of the border with Sudan, conflict management extends to monitoring the seasonal migration of pastoral nomads crossing from Sudan and promoting dialogue with host communities to prevent tensions mounting. The effectiveness of civil affairs work here is built around initiating and promoting partnerships between the State Executive, the State Legislature, political parties, UN Agencies and wealth of international organisations and NGOs.

This effectiveness was exemplified in 2012 in the critical partnership between civil affairs and UNDP to establish 'Peace Cadres' in Fashoda and Akoka counties, where a dispute over boundary and access to land had led to clashes between Shilluk and Dinka tribes and unfortunate loss of life. These cadres (which draw their membership from county authorities, community elders, chiefs, women and youth representatives) aim to resolve tensions inside their own communities while waiting for the national government to institute a boundary commission to investigate competing claims. Efforts to date have included invitations for visits being extended between communities, helping to normalise relations between

communities which used once to be bonded by marriages.

Civil affairs in Upper Nile State has also partnered with Concordis International and AECOM International. This project draws on close working relationship with state and county authorities to help strengthen traditional mechanisms of conflict management between host communities and pastoral nomads from Sudan on the one hand, and seasonal pastoralists migrating from the neighbouring state of Jonglei on the other.

Civil affairs regularly facilitate transport by helicopter of joint teams to remote and inaccessible locations, allowing them to engage directly with migrating herdsmen and involve them in dialogue over the use of land for pasture, minimising the risk of disputes arising.

Supporting Transition in Afghanistan

Civil affairs in Afghanistan are playing a pivotal role in supporting provincial authorities to reach out to local communities and sensitise them over the critical importance of the National Priority Programs (NPPs).

The NPPs have become the main mechanism to funnel international aid in Afghanistan following the adoption in Toyko in July 2012 of the

Transformation Decade (2015-2025), which decrees that 80% of all international aid will be aligned with government priorities in Afghanistan, 50% of which will be channelled through the government itself. These changes will have a significant impact on local development planning and on the work of provincial and district level administrations. It will be important that Line ministries and Provincial Councils have a clear vision of the NPPs in order to adjust local planning and project formulation in accordance with the targets set in the national priority policy. In recognition of this, civil affairs conducted a survey, revealing that there was in fact little or no awareness of the NPPs at the provincial and district levels, and that little consultation had taken place around the NPPs sub-nationally.

To address this situation civil affairs responded to a request from the Provincial Governors Offices (PGOs) to develop, translate and deliver orientation sessions about the NPPs in all the provinces. The NPP awareness sessions were highly welcomed by the PGOs, civil servants, CSOs and PCs across the region. The events were also covered by local media and TV networks, further laying the foundation for wider public engagement. The next phase of the NPP awareness campaign will consist in rolling out the orientation sessions at the district governor and mayoral levels.



Figure 3 NPP Orientation Session in Balkh