



Civil Affairs Newsletter 2014



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Upcoming events

- 14 January: Informal briefing on Civil Affairs to the Special Committee of the General Assembly on peacekeeping operations.
- Mid-January: Publication of guidelines on understanding and integrating local perceptions in multi-dimensional peacekeeping missions.
- Mid-May: Heads of Civil Affairs components workshop in New York.
- May: Publication of study on peacekeeping and civil society.

Civil Affairs: A Year in Review

It has been an eventful year for peacekeeping that presented many new and complex challenges for the Organization. In DRC, MONUSCO deployed additional forces to implement the mission's robust mandate to tackle the threat of the M23. All facets of the mission's capabilities were employed to ensure that the political process drove the agenda and that military gains were in support of the process and accompanied by civilian efforts to stabilize newly controlled territory. In South Sudan, recent events have highlighted the fact that peace in the country remains precarious and will require long-term, dedicated support from the United Nations. In Mali, MINUSMA is working to deploy to the field under conditions that are in many ways new for peacekeeping. Meanwhile, DPKO is closely following a number of states in crisis where UN peacekeeping may engage, including the Central African Republic, Somalia and Syria,

and preparing to launch effective responses. Across peacekeeping missions, the role played by Civil Affairs officers is as crucial as ever. Civil Affairs sections are leading missions' efforts to build confidence in peace processes, restore state authority, and help resolve local conflicts, to name just a few of the many tasks performed by Civil Affairs colleagues. The versatility of the Civil Affairs professional profile makes it a uniquely flexible tool for missions to adapt to the needs on the ground.

In 2013, the Civil Affairs team in the Policy and Best Practices Service at DPKO/DFS headquarters continued its efforts to add technical depth to the Civil Affairs skillset and increase the breadth of operational guidance available to Civil Affairs officers in the execution of their duties. The Civil Affairs Handbook, released in 2012, continues to be one of the most sought-after guidance products in DPKO/DFS and will soon be made available in Arabic. In complement to this core manual, a major study on understanding and integrating local perceptions in multi-dimensional peacekeeping missions was completed in 2013, with the support of the Government of

Australia, and associated guidelines are in their final stages. The team is now undertaking another study, supported by the Government of Denmark, on how peacekeeping missions work with civil society actors to advance mandate implementation, with guidelines to follow in mid-2014. A third project on peacekeeping and state-society relations supported by the Government of Norway will begin later in the year.

In the field, Civil Affairs officers demonstrated exceptional innovation and adaptation in 2013 by developing creative responses to dynamic security and political challenges. For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, DRC, Darfur, and Haiti, Civil Affairs sections have used multi-faceted mediation tools to build trust among communities, improve the security environment and manage local conflicts. In Afghanistan, Liberia and South Sudan, Civil Affairs has supported efforts to promote local ownership of development processes, empower women in society, and decentralize governance. This newsletter provides a brief overview of just some of the many Civil Affairs activities ongoing in



Ivorian and Liberian traditional chiefs meet during a cross-border dialogue session organized by UNOCI and UNMIL Civil Affairs.

peacekeeping missions around the world.

Building Confidence among Communities in DRC

Since August 2013, Civil Affairs in MONUSCO has led the implementation of an outreach strategy to strengthen confidence-building between the mission, civil society, local authorities and the population.

The strategy includes a series of activities targeting local populations affected by conflict in eastern DRC. In less than five months, focus groups have been held with approximately 4,000 people. The focus groups gathered local perceptions on a variety of security issues and sought to promote a better understanding of the mission and its mandate.

During the meetings, community leaders, local authorities, women and youth learned about the efforts by MONUSCO and the Government of the DRC in the ongoing peace process. They agreed to support this processes by sensitizing their own communities about the joint peace efforts. Journalists who attended the meetings also agreed to support these efforts by publishing information on the peace process. To encourage public support for the restoration of state authority in eastern DRC, civil society actors agreed to improve the flow of information to the population about the neutralization of armed groups and the ongoing political negotiations.

In November 2013, Civil Affairs, the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and UNDP launched the DRC Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Data Project to gauge the population's level of

confidence in justice and protection institutions. The project, which aims to assess changing public perceptions around stabilization and peacebuilding, includes two baseline public perception surveys and a series of six quarterly polls over an initial period of 18 months. The surveys aim to evaluate security activities in the field by assessing core indicators such as confidence in national security services. The resulting data will help identify the needs of the population, enhance early warning systems and inform strategic planning. The surveys will also inform the work of Civil Affairs in DRC in engaging local actors to build confidence in the peace process.

To complete the initial baseline survey, the team is collaborating with a number of local educational institutions, including the Université libre des Pays des Grands Lacs in Goma and the Catholic University in Bukavu. In mid-December, 66 researchers received training on data sampling and basic interview techniques. They were then deployed across North Kivu, South Kivu, and Ituri provinces for several weeks of data gathering. Preliminary data analysis and data mapping will be available in January 2014. The first quarterly polls on security and protection, conducted by specially-trained MONUSCO Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs), will be undertaken in the first months of 2014, with North Kivu serving as a pilot.

Facilitating Mediation in Haiti

Between 25 October and 5 November in Haiti,

violent clashes erupted between the populations of the Grand Berard and Lacouture localities over an unresolved land dispute. The fighting resulted in five deaths, hundreds of burnt and looted houses, and almost 300 displaced families. In response, MINUSTAH Civil Affairs leveraged the credibility it enjoys in both communities to convene and facilitate a mediation session between the two groups. The meeting brought together a host of civil society actors, humanitarian actors and judicial authorities as well as the Public Prosecutor to discuss the tensions between the communities. Judicial authorities present at the meeting decided to immediately hold legal proceedings to enact a temporary moratorium on the use of the disputed lands by either group until a final legal decision is made regarding usage rights.

The mediation session provided an opportunity for the representatives from the two localities to express their grievances to each other in the open rather than allowing frustrations to fester in private. After exchanging views, the two groups agreed to establish a reflection committee to identify feasible solutions to the land dispute and to facilitate peaceful coexistence.

In parallel, the Civil Affairs section engaged with the Haitian National Police to enhance security in the area. It was agreed that joint patrols between MINUSTAH uniformed personnel and the Haitian security services would be conducted within the disputed area. In addition the mission facilitated the distribution of food kits and potable water to members of the population displaced by the fighting. As discussions between the two communities continue, Civil Affairs is playing a key role in supporting local authorities' mediation efforts and confidence building activities.

Promoting accountability in Afghanistan

Throughout Afghanistan, UNAMA Civil Affairs officers work with civil society networks, communities, national and provincial governments and the international community to support the national transition process and strengthen development coordination. In 2013, Civil Affairs focused much of its attention on helping Afghanistan in its political transition at the sector level by increasing national ownership of the development process.

For example, in Herat province the agriculture sector, which contributes significantly to the country's GDP, is being threatened by difficult



A municipal forum in Terre-Neuve, Haiti between local authorities and community members

political and socio-economic conditions as well as cultivation of illicit crops such as opium and marijuana. In collaboration with international partners, in 2013 the UNAMA Civil Affairs section helped the Provincial Government of Herat to organize the first agriculture development conference.

At the conference, 53 priority agricultural development projects with a combined cost of USD 41 million were presented to development partners including bilateral and multilateral donors, the private sector and civil society. Civil Affairs assisted the Provincial Government in integrating these projects into its recurrent development budget to provide the initial funding for the launch of the projects within the framework of Herat's 15-year strategy for economic development.

In parallel, Civil Affairs is coordinating support from the donor community to align development assistance in the agriculture sector to these projects. Taken together, these efforts will help to ensure ownership of the development process and promote the building of Provincial Government capacity to begin the process of reducing dependency on external support.

Cross-Border Dialogue in Côte d'Ivoire/Liberia

In October 2013, Civil Affairs in UNMIL and UNOCI demonstrated flexibility and multidisciplinary expertise in coordinating across the two missions to facilitate a Joint Council of Chiefs and Elders Meeting to manage conflict and promote peacebuilding across the Liberian and Ivorian borders.

The event was coordinated by joint technical committees in both countries comprised of representatives of the countries' respective ministries of internal affairs and foreign affairs, UNOCI and UNMIL Civil Affairs and Inter-Mission Cooperation focal points. The three day meeting was attended by approximately 100 traditional chiefs, women's representatives, youth, Ivorian refugees and local authorities from all border regions. Civil Affairs played a key role in providing advice in the development of workshop modules and ensuring that the various technical groups hold meetings regularly. Civil Affairs officers also facilitated similar workshops at the field level.

As a result of the Joint Council meeting, a communiqué was signed reflecting a shared engagement to establish regular cross-border civilian dialogue and information sharing. The

Council also addressed strong messages to the Ivorian refugees, urging them to return to Côte d'Ivoire. A follow up meeting is planned in Côte d'Ivoire in 2014 to further strengthen cooperation efforts.

Supporting Decentralization in Liberia

The Government of Liberia has prioritized decentralization and devolution of authority as part of its National Decentralization and Local Governance Policy. Accordingly, in 2013 UNMIL Civil Affairs focused much of its efforts on providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Internal Affairs in drafting policy documents, preparing its Local Government Act, developing terms of reference for the Government's Decentralization Board Secretariat and holding public consultations.

With a focus on promoting participation of women and youth, in 2013 Civil Affairs supported the Liberian Governance Commission in the planning of workshops targeting women in the country's 15 counties to discuss decentralization issues and consult on the Local Government Act. This process made dialogue on this important national program accessible to marginalized and vulnerable groups, who actively participated in discussions to clarify provisions of the draft laws and to gain a better understanding of their key elements, including local elections.

The ongoing support of Civil Affairs to civil

society and the Government will continue to be crucial in advancing the decentralization process, improving the Government's awareness of the needs of citizens, and improving gender balance in political discourse.

Addressing Resource Disputes and Empowering Women in South Sudan

The seasonal migration of cattle owning tribes and their livestock from the Republic of Sudan into South Sudan occurs every dry season, often increasing the likelihood of violent conflict between them and sedentary communities over scarce grass and water resources.

UNMISS Civil Affairs in Unity State works with the local government, tribal and community leaders, nomadic representatives and civil society actors to prepare for the migration season and proactively manage potential conflict. These efforts include ensuring that there is an understanding among the nomadic groups and host communities of each other's needs and advocacy for the peaceful sharing of resources.

Unity State has few women in leadership positions and lacks employment opportunities for women. The dominant male ethos at the local level restricts women's ability to participate in political, economic and social life and to take part in inter-community dialogue



Members of the Kunar Provincial Council meet with UNAMA officials in eastern Afghanistan

and conflict management efforts. To address this issue, in 2013 Civil Affairs organized a series of women's forums to increase women's capacity to participate in decision making and encourage women leaders to speak out.

Civil Affairs developed a programme to target specific communities including at least 50 emerging women leaders at the village level in two counties. The forums were designed to support and encourage women to play active leadership roles in a variety of areas, including politics, peacebuilding, public administration and private sector management.

Following advocacy efforts by Civil Affairs and a women's group in Mayom County, the county Commissioner appointed the first ever female traditional town chief in the County on 29 November 2013.

Fostering Dialogue in Cyprus

In 2013 UNFICYP Civil Affairs initiated and facilitated informal dialogue between communities, involving local farmers, civil society representatives, mayors and mukhtars (heads of villages or neighborhoods) through lunches and social events. These events contribute to confidence building and the reduction of mistrust in this sensitive environment, where previously there had been limited formal engagement between Nicosia municipal authorities and Turkish Cypriot political leaders.

After a degree of improvement in inter-community relations, Civil Affairs worked to establish stronger relations with Turkish Cypriot authorities through formal lunches with the SRSG and, subsequently organized informal social activities with elected officials, senior bureaucrats and other public officials from both communities. Since these officials are high profile civilian authorities, their meetings receive media coverage and exposure, which promotes a message of mutual understanding and tolerance. The ultimate goal of Civil Affairs

is to make such meetings municipally-owned in future years.

Supporting Conflict Resolution in Darfur

In November, UNAMID Civil Affairs partnered with the Darfur Land Commission to organize a conference in Kartoum on land issues in Darfur. The conference brought together representatives of Darfurian communities, including state officials and traditional Native Administration leaders, together with participants from Sudanese government ministries, the diplomatic community, national and international technical experts, and the Darfur Regional Authority.

The conference was held to discuss the roots of conflicts over land ownership and natural resources in Darfur and to identify opportunities to facilitate local-level mediation and reconciliation and promote peaceful coexistence among different communities. Participants also discussed land use in relation to sustainable development and planning, and the role of the

Darfur Land Commission in supporting the responsible management of natural resources. Participants discussed the complex set of issues surrounding access to lands traditionally used by a particular clan or tribal group, including restitution for agro-pastoralists displaced from lands in the 1970s to make way for investors, minor tribes' access to land, and the lack of a judicial process for contesting land property rights.

At the end of the conference, the participants recommended a review of land ownership regulations, promotion of awareness of local citizens on the proper use of land, development of a comprehensive natural resource and land use database and a deeper analysis of the root causes of the conflict in Darfur. The conference also highlighted the need to establish arbitration committees in all five states in Darfur to promptly resolve conflicts over land before they escalate, the importance of capacity building for relevant government institutions and Native Administration members on how to resolve disputes of land ownership and natural



UNMISS staff and members of a women's civil society organization celebrate the appointment of the first female town chief in Mayom County, Unity State, South Sudan

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