



Upcoming Events

- **Civil Affairs roster**
A Generic Job Opening for the Civil Affairs roster at the P3 and P4 level will be launched in February/March 2015.
- **Expert meeting March 25-26, Addis Ababa**
The expert meeting, organised jointly with NUPI, will discuss the role of peacekeeping in supporting state-society relations
- **Online course on Civil Affairs**
This e-learning tool, based on the Civil Affairs Handbook, will be launched in the second quarter of 2015

Civil Affairs: A Year in Review

Throughout 2014, civil affairs continued to prove its versatility, adapting its strategies to the specific context of each mission, but always playing a critical role in the implementation of mandated tasks by peacekeeping missions. Leveraging its proximity to grass-roots actors and local officials, civil affairs extends the ability of the mission to reach beyond major urban hubs and elites. They help missions to integrate a more sophisticated understanding of local dynamics, needs and priorities into their strategies and operations.

In South Sudan, where civil affairs previously played a significant role in supporting the extension of state authority, the dramatic events of December 2013 and the subsequent change of mandate, means that the component now focuses on protection of civilians and on addressing inter-communal conflict.

The improving security in Haiti has accelerated MINUSTAH's drawdown, shifting civil affairs' focus from capacity-building to supporting the transition of responsibilities to other actors and above all the Haitian government.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo, progress made in neutralising armed groups and extending the presence of state authority in Eastern DRC has required civil affairs to work on two fronts: supporting protection of civilians strategies,

on the one hand and accompanying the stabilisation process on the other.

The opportunities and challenges faced by civil affairs in different peacekeeping missions were very much at the centre of the discussion among heads of civil affairs during their bi-annual workshop held May 2014 in New York, which was hosted by the South African Permanent Mission. At the workshop the discussion focused on the best way to capitalise on civil affairs' versatility, while further professionalising its profile in order to effectively perform its broad range of tasks - especially those related to the restoration and extension of state authority and protection of civilians. The outcome of the workshop kick-started the discussions on reviewing the 2008 Civil Affairs Policy directive, expected to be a focus for the first half of 2015.

Participants agreed that the central value of civil affairs is to engage with officials and social actors at the local level on a broad range of issues that are relevant to the peacebuilding process. This allows civil affairs to address local level conflict dynamics closer to their roots, to understand threats to civilians from the angle of the potential victims, to promote the extension of state authority beyond the simple reestablishment of state institutions, fostering closer relations between the state and society and promoting inclusiveness. Ultimately, civil affairs provides a bottom-up perspective to the mission's reading of the conflict and formulation of appropriate solutions.

It was, nevertheless, acknowledged that the potential of civil affairs is not always fully exploited and that efforts are still required to ensure that appropriate staff

are recruited for such complex work, and that these staff members are provided access to more detailed guidance materials and tools in areas where established good practices remain very tentative, such as in supporting the restoration and extension of state authority at the local level and in addressing inter-communal conflicts.

To address these needs over the past year the civil affairs team at Headquarters has re-doubled its efforts to increase its operational support to civil affairs components in the field despite limited resources, especially during mission start-up (MINUSCA), strategic assessments (MINUSMA and MINUSTAH) and civilian staffing reviews (MINUSTAH, MONUSCO), while expanding the existing body of guidance materials.

In June 2014, a new set of guidelines on "Understanding and Integrating Local Perceptions in Multi-Dimensional UN Peacekeeping" were promulgated by DPKO/DFS, while research work is currently underway to survey practices and draw lessons on engaging with civil society actors and promoting state-society relations (relevant guidelines are expected to be finalised by mid-2015). These projects have benefited from the generous support of Australia, Denmark and Norway.

An eLearning course based on the 2012 Civil Affairs Handbook will also be finalised during 2015 and made available to all current and prospective Civil Affairs Officers, while additional work is being planned to expand on the palette of working tools available to civil affairs in implementing tasks in support of the restoration and extension of state authority, as well as community conflict resolution.



Participants at the Wanalel Cattle Camp Peace Conference.

Reconciling local communities in South Sudan

In South Sudan, civil affairs remain heavily engaged in diffusing tensions and supporting reconciliation initiatives among local communities. One such instance involves the Tonj South County of the Warrap State where, over the last decade, the river separating two Dinka communities has been more than just a geographical barrier. Inter-communal tensions in the area have resulted in killings and cattle rustling that have often dangerously escalated, with the risk of destabilizing the whole state.

While state authorities had previously established a Special Court to resolve the outstanding cases of cattle theft and murder, the forty-two most controversial cases remained unsettled, continuing to fuel tensions.

The Deputy Governor solicited civil affairs support to promote reconciliation and dialogue between the two communities, and their respective allies. To this end, government authorities and civil affairs travelled to the Wanalel Cattle Camp to lead a series of initiatives facilitating dialogue between the opposing parties. These initiatives were able to engage about 3,000 stakeholders ranging from local traditional authorities, spiritual leaders, cattle keepers, and community members to senior government officials, neighbouring county commissioners and members of parliament.

Eventually the two communities came to agree on a 19-point resolution which addressed a number of root causes to the conflict. The parties agreed, *inter alia*, that special attention should be paid to the protection of women and children; that under-aged persons should not be allowed to carry guns; that firearms be replaced with traditional bows and arrows in cattle camps; that raided cattle should be returned to the respective owners; and that support to law enforcement agencies should be increased.

To sanction the agreement and stress the willingness of the two communities to cooperate and peacefully coexist as neighbours a symbolic crossing of the river - the first in over 10 years - was staged by members of the communities.

Subsequently, civil affairs conducted follow-up missions to the area in August and October and were able to confirm that the agreement was still in force and that no conflict-related acts of violence had occurred.

Fostering a gender perspective in liaising with local communities in Uvira, DRC

The peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo, known by its acronym MONUSCO, has been spearheading innovative approaches to implementing protection of civilians mandates over the last several years. Among these, civil affairs played a key role in introducing two important mechanisms, namely the Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs) and the Community Alert Networks (CANs).

These mechanisms are intended to bring the voices and concerns of local communities to the mission and help to address their protection needs. However, despite their unquestionable successes they have also often fallen short in capturing the voices of women in those communities primarily because the mission could not recruit sufficient numbers of female CLAs willing to deploy in such hardship locations.

To address this gap the civil affairs team in Uvira (South Kivu) decided to pilot a different approach, establishing a roving CLA team composed by two female CLAs that would not be permanently deployed with the troops, but would travel to those areas and closely coordinate with their male colleagues deployed in the Ruzizi Plain and Fizi Territory.

The pilot was effective and it was found that women in local communities were willing to share their experiences and concerns with the female CLAs - allowing the mission to access a wealth of information not otherwise available to them and to understand the threats facing communities through a different lens, that being of the primary victims, women.

However the work of the CLAs doesn't stop at information gathering and in December 2013 civil affairs supported a network of women to build a market in the Baraka area (Fizi Territory), motivating several communities to interact more regularly in that area. This allowed the CLAs to support the establishment of a Community Alert Network committee composed of five female focal points.

In April 2014, the two women CLAs undertook a follow-up mission and found that the committee regularly provided CLAs in Baraka and in Uvira with reliable and useful information. For instance, on 8 April the CAN Committee alerted the CLAs that that MM Yakutumba armed group was planning to attack the Congolese army (FARDC) following an incident involving the local population and the Kaza mining company in Misisi. The prompt and successful intervention by the Pakistan Battalion prevented the population from being caught up in the clashes.

To date, three Local Protection of Civilians Committees have been set up in Uvira Territory, Mutarule and Katekama - and civil affairs is finalizing the establishment of a fourth one in Luberizi. In each of these committees Civil Affairs CLAs have encouraged the inclusion of female members, as they are often in the best position to provide vital information on impending threats. Nevertheless, the vulnerability of these brave women should not be underestimated as they can easily face stigmatisation or even worse from their own communities for taking such a prominent role and sharing sensitive information.



CA Uvira staff, including two gender CLAs, at the Bwegera capacity building session for the LPC.

Empowering traditional and community leaders in meditation and conflict resolution in Cote d'Ivoire

In the aftermath of Cote d'Ivoire's post electoral crisis, western regions of the country suffered greatly from the breakdown of social cohesion amongst communities, and a loss of respect for the authority of traditional and religious leaders - previously pillars of peace and stability.

Taking note of this important factor, civil affairs organized a capacity building workshop in collaboration with the regional council of the Guémon region (West), one of the regions of the country most affected by recurrent conflicts linked to land disputes - exacerbated by population displacement that occasionally resulted in violent outbreaks (as was the case in Bangolo in May 2014).

The main objective of the workshop was to provide support for traditional and community leaders from the Guémon to fulfill their roles as mediators and conflict resolution agents within their communities; providing them with tools that would help them to restore their authority as key actors at the local governance level.

The workshop was attended by nearly 500 traditional and community leaders of the region. It endeavoured to boost their capacities in rural land management and intercommunity dialogue, and support them to use their newly acquired tools for conflict resolution within their communities.

The most significant outcome of the workshop was the adoption of the 'Déclaration de Bangolo', which sets up a regional committee for peace (in operation since since May 2014), tackling the most sensitive issues undermining peace and social cohesion in the area.

Promoting women's political engagement in Haiti

In Haiti, the mission's efforts to strengthen democratic governance are illustrated by an initiative organised by the Civil Affairs QIPs Unit, in partnership with the Government's Ministry for the Status of Women and Women's Rights, to organize a series of workshops and fora across the country. These were intended to sensitize the population on the amended constitutional requirement for a 30% quota for women's participation in public services and political parties.

Civil affairs, worked with Electoral Assistance, Human Rights and Public Information, to bring together a range of civil society organizations and

local authorities to discuss various issues, including: the national electoral law, UNSC Resolution 1325 (affirming the importance of women in peacekeeping and humanitarian response), and the UN General Assembly's 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

The sensitization campaign reached over 1,000 direct beneficiaries - most of them women in local and political party leadership roles and as such best placed to promote women's participation in upcoming elections, as well as gender equality in the Haitian political process.

In the North-East Department, participants (about 180 women and 30 men), formulated possible ways of implementing the quota policy, ranging from party structures to candidate selection processes. Throughout the workshops emphasis was placed on the fundamental importance of access to quality education at all levels, and on the need to respect the new 30% quota in any upcoming elections.

Building peace in the Central African Republic

The first Civil Affairs Officer deployed in Bangui, Central African Republic, on 2 September 2014, establishing the civil affairs component in MINUSCA. As the process of recruiting and deploying personnel continues in a challenging environment, the work of civil affairs focuses on supporting local level efforts and bottom up approaches to political dialogue and the promotion of social cohesion. This will be done by; liaising with local communities to address protection threats through alert networks and

community violence reduction initiatives; by promoting reconciliation, inter-communal dialogue and confidence building through the engagement of civil society actors and by supporting the restoration of state authority and local governance, strengthening the delivery of administrative and social services at the local level.

Implementing a "Peace Campaign" in Darfur

In UNAMID, civil affairs continues to support local level mechanisms in promoting peaceful coexistence among different groups in Darfur. Among such mechanisms are the Agricultural Protection Committees and the Peaceful Coexistence Committees. These play a vital role in preventing local-level conflicts by bringing different groups together to discuss how best to share access to the available natural resources.

The committees play a particularly important role particularly during the agricultural season when conflicts between farmers and pastoralists are exacerbated. Most of the problems there stem from the struggle between farmers and nomads to access farmable land, jeopardizing agricultural production and generating food insecurity - perpetuating the vicious circle of inter-communal tensions.

To support the difficult work of these committees, civil affairs worked with local tribal leaders and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to conduct peace campaigns promoting peaceful coexistence between farming and pastoral communities in North and West Darfur states.



Workshop held in the North East Department for women groups on the 30 percent minimum quota for women in offices throughout the government.

Civil affairs worked behind the scenes with local leaders on both sides to constitute teams - composed by tribal leaders from Arab and non-Arab communities and supported by local administrators and community leaders - that would lead the campaigns, while FAO provided the material incentives for dialogue and sharing of natural resources.

For instance, in North Darfur peace campaign teams organized public meetings between 10 and 21 September 2014 and delivered peace messages to the men and women of the nomadic settlements in the localities of Korma, Tawila and Al Waha. A total of 3,899 participants from Arab and non-Arab communities from 45 nomadic settlements and farm villages attended the public meetings.



Participants seated in front of the campaign banner in Asanga, West Darfur.

Supporting sub-national governance in Afghanistan

The Government of Afghanistan is committed to strengthening local governance at provincial, district and municipal levels to be more responsive and accountable to citizens. In order to support sub-national institutions and extend the authority of the Government across the country, UNAMA Civil Affairs works closely with government counterparts in a wide range of areas such as; providing good offices in support of provincial administrations, strengthening the monitoring and oversight roles of the Provincial Councils, and enabling Local Administration to improve sub national planning and coordination. For example, in February 2014, in Herat Province, Civil Affairs hosted and facilitated an orientation session on the Provincial Development Plan aiming at supporting dialogue between local authorities and representatives of civil society and United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

The event contributed to the alignment of sub-national and national priorities, as well as providing a platform to mobilize resources in support of provincial development. The event also made an attempt to change the perception of women - presenting them as partner stakeholders rather than beneficiaries.

Promoting social dialogue in Timbuktu, Mali

Civil affairs in MINUSMA has been working consistently toward the restoration and extension of state authority in Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal.

To this end, civil affairs facilitated in September a two-day workshop on local tax collection, chaired by the Regional Council of Mopti. Gathering state representatives, local authorities from the fifteen *cercles* and regional civil society actors, the workshop focused on exploring alternative solutions to the chronic low revenues that impact so negatively on the delivery of social services.

The participants recognized that the lack of confidence in local authorities motivated by poor governance practices, lack of capacity and limited presence of state institutions (including security forces) was a major obstacle to the improvement of revenue collection and the provision of social services.

In consideration of these challenges, the participants agreed on an array of actions such as; updating statistics and fiscal records, holding public audiences, and establishing a community steering commission to raise awareness on citizens' rights and obligations at the local level.

Moreover, the need to further involve traditional and local chiefs was stressed as necessary - to enhance the population's confidence in the state. Likewise, participants recommended that the state adapt education and health programmes to the nomadic way of living.

The workshop concluded with a commitment by local authorities to develop a roadmap based on these recommendations. Civil affairs will continue to support this process, as a contribution to the mission's mandate to support the re-establishment of State authority throughout the country.

- Are you working as a Civil Affairs Officer in the field?
- Are you a UN staff member interested in civil affairs work?
- Are you not yet part of the Civil Affairs Network?

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