



Upcoming Events...

- ❖ **Heads of Civil Affairs Workshop**
17-20 January 2017, NY
- ❖ **Briefing to the C34 on Civil Affairs**
20 January 2017, NY

A new learning tool for Civil Affairs Officers

In February 2016, the Civil Affairs team in PBPS launched an eLearning course on the role of Civil Affairs in peacekeeping operations. Based on the Civil Affairs Handbook, this course provides participants with key concepts, best practices and lessons learned regarding the various roles Civil Affairs components play in peacekeeping operations. The course is available on Inspira under LMS-2267-1. As of 17 October 2016 179 staff members enrolled in the course, 127 men and 52 women.

Reconciliation Initiatives in the Central African Republic

Since the onset of MINUSCA, Civil Affairs HQ and field offices have been actively engaged in providing significant support to community dialogue. Civil Affairs has been at the forefront of coordinating and testing pilot mediation and multidimensional support initiatives to solve local community conflicts.

A key example of the resolution of a complex conflict issue, through the implementation of an integrated approach, is the reopening of the Muslim cemetery in Bangui whereby the Mission fostered reconciliation between Muslim inhabitants of

Bangui's third district and Christian inhabitants of the Boeing neighbourhood.

In the specific context of allowing the Muslim residents access to the cemetery in Boeing, Civil Affairs engaged in a process of intense mediation between community representatives of the Boeing neighbourhood, including anti-Balaka leaders in the area, and representatives of the largely Muslim area of Bangui's third district.

Thanks to intense negotiations under the lead of Civil Affairs with the daily involvement of Community Liaison Assistants (CLAs), the process resulted in the willingness of the Muslim community and inhabitants of Boeing to reach a peaceful solution and sign a "non-aggression pact."

This innovative approach involved several high level meetings with the leadership of key ministries. In addition, 200 youth, 100 from Boeing and 100 from Bangui's PK5 neighbourhood, including ex Seleka, Anti-Balaka and other youths at risk took part in a project that consisted in the cleaning of the cemetery and the

road leading to the cemetery.

As a result of this reconciliation and despite violent incidents in recent months more than 10,000 inhabitants of both areas have been sensitized and involved in this huge change of perception towards acceptance of others, disappearance of fear and freedom of movements.

Engaging Communities and Youth in Local Peace Building in Eastern DRC

Social relations between three different communities in the areas of Kibirizi and Nyanzale, North Kivu, have recently deteriorated. In an effort to address the situation in Kibirizi, Civil Affairs, together with representatives from other MONUSCO sections, engaged in a series of consultations with government partners where support was provided in the conceptualization of a strategy to ease the tensions between the different communities through a series of dialogue sessions.

Prior to the dialogue sessions, Civil Affairs proposed the idea of an event targeting primarily the youth in



International Peace Day March in Kibirizi

Kibirizi at the International Peace Day on 21 September 2016. Civil Affairs officers played a significant role in assisting representatives from the provincial government to organize and conduct the event which saw the participation of over 122 youth from different communities and over 2000 community members.

Jointly with the communities, a forum was organised with the youth where they identified threats and the sources of intercommunity tensions as well as possible solutions including regular consultations and the development of intercommunity initiatives. In addition, a peace march was conducted through the village and surroundings to mark the beginning of a process to improve social relations and ties between communities.

These initial efforts were effective in raising awareness amongst the youth and communities on peaceful coexistence, prevented a further escalation of tensions and paved the way for upcoming social dialogue.

The Gony v. Thuyic Conflict in South Sudan

Over the course of 2015 and 2016, Civil Affairs in Lakes region of South Sudan continued supporting resolution of nine major conflicts. Of which the root causes include poverty, economic stagnation, competition over resources, weak state authority and near absence of the rule of law.

One such conflict was the renewal of tensions between the Gony and Thuyic communities in August 2014. Since then, Civil Affairs, alongside other UNMISS components have held a number of roundtable discussions targeting women, youth, traditional leaders, chiefs and intellectuals. Civil Affairs also initiated and led integrated short and long duration missions to the area which helped to maintain

situational awareness, show UNMISS presence, deescalate the violence and provide protection for civilians.

A combination of these engagements enabled bringing conflicted parties together for the Civil Affairs funded and facilitated conflict resolution forum in February 2016.

Consequently, the team supported implementation of the forum's resolutions which included, inter alia, the formation of a joint Peace Committee for the purposes of reporting conflict early warning, conflict mitigation and dissemination of peace messages. Further resolutions focused on the return of stolen and raided cattle to their rightful owners and communities and the facilitation of traditional peace and reconciliation ceremonies in both communities.

The team was also involved in consultations with conflict affected communities in 12 villages and cattle camps which led to a grand peace conference for 120 community members from both sub clans including intellectuals and government officials in April 2016.

At time of writing (December 2016), peace is holding and the local peace structures set up based on the

conference resolution help Civil Affairs support early warning mechanisms.

Promoting Social Cohesion in Kidal, Mali

In the aftermath of the crisis in 2012, communities in Kidal entered into a political fray that accentuated social polarization between the Ifoghas and the Imghads. As a result, the leaders of local communities have met on a limited number of occasions to discuss issues related to social cohesion and peace in Kidal.

With this in mind, Civil Affairs supported an initiative of the Coordination of the Chiefs of Fractions of Kidal to gather customary and religious leaders, local authorities and representatives of local civil society organizations to reflect on the current situation and identify a feasible way forward to restore peace in the region.

The workshop entitled “Awareness-Raising Meeting for the Restoration of Peace and Social Cohesion in Kidal” laid the foundation for renewed dialogue and created momentum to institutionalize common objectives to unify the fragmented communities in Kidal society. The meeting facilitated



Kidal, Mali: Sensitization Meeting for Social Cohesion and Reconciliation

discussions to redefine the principles of peace and social cohesion and also to map out practical strategies at the local level to achieve these objectives.

Working with authorities to prevent conflicts in Cote d'Ivoire

Since 2014, UNOCI Civil Affairs has led the conception, planning and implementation of a national-early warning project. The project has empowered the Ivorian Administration and community leaders with technical and material capacities to identify, address and pre-empt instances of violence whilst promoting good governance and national ownership of reconciliation efforts.

Thanks to this initiative, UNOCI designed and provided a conflict analysis matrix tool to the institution within the Ministry of the Interior responsible for coordinating and overseeing the work and actions of all *Préfets* and *Sous-Préfets* (DGAT). The DGAT then made it available to all prefectural authorities who use it on a daily basis.

With the help of Civil Affairs Officers at the local level, all prefectural authorities were thus enabled to gather information about the nature, location, causes, actors, evolution, stage, responsive actions and

recommendations regarding conflicts. Ahead of UNOCI's imminent phasing out, the project has been completely handed over to the Ministry of Interior in the framework of the transfer of responsibilities and competencies to the Ivorian government and UN Agencies. The DGAT now leads all project activities and ensures continuity.

Building Trust between Communities – Peace Campaigns in North Darfur

Communities in Darfur have been divided as a result of more than a decade of conflict between alleged pro-rebel African communities and pro-Government Arab communities. This has resulted in ongoing hostilities between Arabs, who are mainly nomadic herders, and African communities who are mainly farmers.

To mitigate conflict between the groups, UNAMID Civil Affairs devised the use of peace culture campaigns at the grassroots which target nomadic settlements, farmers and herders to inculcate the culture of peaceful coexistence. To date, over 17 peace forums and peace campaigns targeting more than 8,500 people, of whom 30% were women, from both communities were conducted by Civil Affairs in North Darfur.

The peace campaigns have contributed to increased agricultural output and have enhanced the relationship between herders and farmers.

To sustain the momentum going forward, Civil Affairs in North Darfur conducts monthly consultation, and coordination meetings with the Deputy Wali (governor) to advocate with the Government to enhance conflict prevention and resolution of intercommunal conflicts. Civil Affairs also uses the opportunity to brief the State government on its activities to support conflict prevention and mitigation through early warning, support to reconciliation processes and activities aimed at promoting peaceful co-existence among the communities.

The Civil Affairs advocacy role resulted in the North Darfur State Government reactivating dormant farm protection committees at state and locality level. The committees meet with farmers and herders, disseminate peace messages and advocate for the protection of farms and peaceful co-existence among communities.

Fighting Cholera in Haiti

In response to the cholera epidemic, the Quick Impact Projects program (QIPs) has funded from 2010 to 2016 212 health, water and sanitation projects.

One such project targeted the locality of Los Palmas, one of the hardest-hit areas of the country. Los Palmas has benefitted from clean drinking water this year thanks to a new water delivery system which reaches 30,000 people. The 14 July 2014 marked the first stage in the Los Palmas project and the determination of the Civil Affairs team saw the new system inaugurated on 2 June 2016.



Training prefectural authorities on conflict prevention and management

This new system is part of the national campaign launched by the Haitian Government and supported by the United Nations to improve access to drinking water and sanitation systems throughout Haiti.

Diffusing Religious Tensions in Liberia

During the first half of 2016, UNMIL Peace Consolidation Section (Civil Affairs) helped diffuse potential conflict between Christian and Muslim communities which emerged from the country's constitutional review process promoting a constitutional amendment declaring Liberia a Christian nation.

Muslims perceived this so-called *Proposition 24* as a serious provocation which revived memories of decades of religious discrimination and resulted in the National Muslim Council of Liberia and the Imam Council suspending their participation in the Inter-Religious Council of Liberia.

Considering these developments as a serious threat to peace consolidation, national unity and reconciliation, Civil Affairs officers, alongside Political Affairs colleagues, engaged with Christian and Muslim leaders through a set of bilateral meetings to ascertain the framework for a constructive inter-religious dialogue in an effort to diffuse tensions.

The process led to the creation of a set of high level meetings between the SRSG, senior religious leaders and politicians. Using his good offices, the SRSG created opportunities for Christian and Muslim leaders to think about the consequences of pursuing *Proposition 24* and allowed both sides to focus on issues such as consolidating the hard-earned peace, addressing the root causes of conflict and the wider development prospects for the



country. Consequently, the religious leaders articulated a narrative of common interest and placed emphasis on the positive achievements of the Inter-religious Council of Liberia.

Ultimately, the SRSG's robust engagement led to the Liberian Council of Churches and the leadership of the Legislature and the Executive branches of Government publicly dissociating themselves from *Proposition 24*; a development which fostered constructive engagement between the two communities. Civil Affairs Officers and their Political Affairs colleagues continue to monitor the situation as a group of Christians belonging to the Pentecostal Churches have vowed to soldier on support for the incendiary proposition to be considered for a constitutional referendum.

Training for Municipal Police Officials in Lebanon

Municipal Police personnel in Lebanon are usually recruited following some very basic criteria and without any specific qualifications. Thus finding themselves deployed for duties without being fully aware of the municipal prerogatives and remaining unable to properly serve the citizens.

In response to this serious need for training, UNIFIL Civil Affairs liaised with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to obtain approval for delivery of a training module. This approval was received in early 2015 and a training module was held this same February.

Topics of the training included conduct and discipline, behaviour at checkpoints, communication and patrolling. Since the launch of the pilot project until date, more than 80 local municipal police officials have undergone this training.

Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Mayors have communicated that trained personnel now have a better understanding of concepts and procedures required for carrying out their policing functions leading to greater residents' satisfaction. Residents also profess to a closer connection to the police.

Civil Affairs continue discussions with newly elected municipal officials for their views and recommendations in planning future interventions. Discussions are also held with UNDP for information and experience sharing to adopt a coherent and unified approach to institution building.