CCOE Online Seminar Series

Civilians in Conflict - 'A Ukraine Case Study'

Meeting Minutes

Format: Online Seminar

Moderators: Lieutenant Colonel Ralf Baur, Mr. Alexander Grif

- **Mr. Alexander Grif** – Country Director of the Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)

- **Mr. Serhiy Doma** – CIVIC Senior Military Advisor in Ukraine

- **Mr. Sergio Da Silva** – United Nations staff member working for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) as part of the Civil-Military Coordination Service

- **Dr. Agata Mazurkiewicz** - Assistant Professor in the Institute of Political Science and International Relations at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow

Audience: Open to public. Practitioners, experts, academics and advanced students

Date: 14 June 2024, 14:30 – 17:10 (UTC+2)

Duration: 160 min

Online Seminar of the Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Centre of Excellence and the Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)

In this online seminar, we aimed to nurture and strengthen the discussion of the complex humanitarian aspects of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in conflict zones, specifically focusing on the Ukraine crisis. The effective collaboration between humanitarian organisations and military forces plays an essential role in the protection of the most vulnerable, facilitating humanitarian efforts, promoting stability, and aiding in peacebuilding.

The key takeaway of this seminar was that CIMIC is a critical capability needed across all levels of the armed forces of the alliance. The states inside the Alliance all have different opinions on the role of civilians in security but the war in the Ukraine showed once again the importance of CIMIC. Coordinating the efforts of civilian organisations and armed forces is crucial for generating the desperately needed understanding the Civil Factors of the Operating Environment and saving and improving lives.

Presentation of Mr. Alexander Grif and Mr. Serhiy Doma:
The protection of civilians and civil-military cooperation in Ukraine:
Transformations during a large-scale, high-intensity conflict

About the Center for Civilians in Conflict:

- **Mission:** Supports conflict-affected communities seeking protection and empowers armed actors to prevent civilian harm.
- **Activities:**
  - Works directly with conflict-affected people.
  - Conducts research and analysis (e.g., Ukraine).
  - Informs national and international policymakers (sharing lessons learned).

Ukraine Case Study:

Sources and Threats for Local Communities:

- **Preparation:** Ukraine anticipated a full-scale invasion, but engagement with locals could have been improved.
- **Information Environment:**
  - 2022: Ukrainians relied heavily on information from their armed forces.
- **Role of Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC):**
  - 2014: Ukraine adopted the J9 doctrine, giving its military an advantage in understanding civilian factors.
- **Disinformation:**
  - Russian disinformation (e.g., via Telegram) misled civilians, causing some to evacuate into occupied territory.

Key Civilian Challenges:

- **Targeting:** Over 10,582 civilians killed (likely much higher) since February 24th, 2024.
- **Explosive Weapons:** Densely populated areas under constant bombardment.
- **Critical Infrastructure:** Attacks leave civilians without essentials like heating.
- **Limited Shelters:** Insufficient bomb shelters (e.g., 17 for a 100,000+ city).
- **Disinformation:** Limited understanding necessitates further research for better civilian protection measures.

Ukraine's CIMIC Transformation:

- **Pre-2014:** Small CIMIC force.
- **Post-2022:** Significant expansion (new units, groups, officers).
- **Lessons Learned:** Every force needs a prepared CIMIC interface.
- **Current State:**
  - Tenfold increase in CIMIC officers compared to pre-2014.
  - CIMIC departments integrated throughout the command and control structure (strategic, intermediate, operational levels).
  - CIMIC officers embedded at all operational levels (including brigades).

CIMIC Stakeholders at the Operational Group of Forces:

- **Military:** Include Military Police, National Guard, State Emergency Service, National Police.
- **Civilian:** Include civilian authorities (Mayors, District Military Administration) and entities like energy companies, industries, businesses, and NGOs.

CIMIC Tasks at the Operational Level:

- **Coordination:**
  - Collaborate with brigade/battalion CIMIC officers and civilian authorities on new tasks arising from the invasion.
  - Facilitate humanitarian aid delivery (with NGOs, INGOs, CIMCOORD, and UN OCHA).
- **Planning:**
  - Develop CIMIC planning documents alongside J-2, J-5, and J-3, detailing civil factors of the operating environment.
- **Reporting:**
  - Document and report civilian/critical infrastructure incidents to the Commander and Strategic Group of Forces (including detailed data).
  - Submit PMESII reports (updated weekly/monthly) to support integrating Protection of Civilians (POC) into military planning.
- **Engagement:**
  - Engage with civilian authorities on:
    - Stationing military units.
    - Protecting critical infrastructure.
    - Organising evacuations (especially during high movement periods).
  - Train brigade and battalion CIMIC officers.

CIMIC Case Studies:

- **Nursery Canteen:** A newly built nursery used for military meals was targeted and destroyed. Lesson: Advise local leaders against such repurposing.
- **ATGM Strike:** A village's sole access road was targeted, hindering food deliveries. CIMIC helped establish safe night-time deliveries.

Challenges and Problems:

- **Commanders' Understanding:** Poor understanding of CIMIC's value - key obstacle to reintegrating POC into military thinking.
- **Policy Gaps:** Gaps in civil-military cooperation policies (laws and policies for civilian authorities).
- **Resource Constraints:** Limited vehicles, fuel, and equipment hinder reaching affected populations.
- **New CIMIC Officers:** Lack of experience among newly appointed officers.
- **Military Soft Skills:** Deficiencies in communication skills needed for successful civil-military interaction.
- **Analytical Capability:** Insufficient capability for analysis at operational and strategic levels.

Presentation of Mr. Sergio de Silva:
Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination in Ukraine:
Implications for CIMIC

Primary Goals of CM-COORD:

- **Preserve humanitarian space:** Safeguarding the ability of humanitarian actors to operate freely and deliver assistance.
- **Facilitate information sharing:** Ensuring clear communication and understanding between military forces and humanitarian organizations.
- **Coordinate civil-military humanitarian assets:** Optimizing the use of resources for effective humanitarian response.

Key Point: Upholding Humanitarian Principles

- CM-COORD emphasizes the need to understand, protect, and promote fundamental principles of humanitarian action.

Tasks of CM-COORD:

- **Dialogue & Engagement:** Establishing and maintaining communication channels with military forces and other armed actors.
- **Information Sharing:** Implementing mechanisms for information exchange between military and humanitarian actors regarding humanitarian activities.
- **Negotiation Support:** Assisting in negotiations on critical areas of interaction between humanitarians, military forces, and other armed actors.
- **Context-Specific Guidance:** Developing and disseminating guidance tailored to specific contexts for the safe and effective interaction between humanitarian actors and military forces.
- **Monitoring and Observation:** Observing the activities of military forces and other armed actors to ensure they respect the distinction between civilians and combatants, minimizing negative impact on humanitarian action.

Humanitarian Situation in Ukraine:

- Half of the Ukrainian population requires humanitarian assistance.
- Close collaboration between humanitarian actors and the armed forces is crucial.
- A key focus is ensuring a clear distinction between humanitarian activities and military operations.
- Planning of aid deliveries and humanitarian convoys requires close cooperation.
- Guaranteeing a safe operating environment for humanitarian organizations is a shared objective.
- Information sharing through coordination meetings is essential.
- Collective training sessions on humanitarian principles are crucial for all parties.

Forward-Looking Challenges & Enablers: A Way Forward

- **Adapting to New Operational Environments:** CM-COORD's response capacity needs to adapt to evolving situations like network collective defence scenarios.

- **Enabling Humanitarian Access:** Addressing bureaucratic hurdles that sometimes impede humanitarian access.
- **Engagement with All Conflict Parties:** Maintaining dialogue and collaboration with all parties involved in the conflict.
- **Preserving Neutrality, Impartiality, and Humanitarian Distinction:** Maintaining a neutral and impartial stance while upholding the distinction between humanitarian and military activities.

What to Expect from CIMIC:

- **Entry Point:** Providing access to key military entities such as Command, Operations, and Plans departments.
- **Understanding the Environment:** Facilitating a deep understanding of the civilian and humanitarian environment for effective collaboration.
- **Information Exchange:** Enabling the exchange of relevant and critical information between military and humanitarian actors.

Investing in Collaboration:

- **Mutual Understanding of Mandates:** Fostering a shared understanding of operational modalities and mandates.
- **Training & Exercises:** Participation in joint training and exercises.
- **Doctrine Development:** Facilitating consultations on the development of military doctrines that prioritize civilian protection.
- **Continuous Learning:** Emphasizing ongoing learning through regular reviews and knowledge sharing based on lessons learned.

Adapting to Recent Developments and New Settings:

- The critical challenge is ensuring civilian protection and supporting humanitarian work in complex network collective defence scenarios.
- The solution lies in adapting CIMIC through:
    - Enhanced training on humanitarian principles for CIMIC personnel.
    - Training on the operational needs of humanitarian organizations.
    - Updating military doctrines to integrate lessons learned (e.g., Ukraine) with a strong emphasis on civilian protection (applicable beyond CIMIC personnel).
    - Establishing strategic partnerships through continuous dialogue with humanitarian actors and collaboration with organizations like UN-CIMCO to enhance civilian protection and assistance.
- The overall goal is to refine strategies, enhance capabilities, and strengthen partnerships to:
    - Protect civilians in complex conflicts.
    - Uphold humanitarian principles.
    - Deliver life-saving assistance more effectively.

Presentation of Dr. Agata Mazurkiewicz:

The conceptualisation of Civilian Involvement in Deterrence and Defence in NATO 'Frontline States'

Understanding Security:

- **Comprehensive Approach:** Security encompasses military, social, political, and economic aspects.
- **Hard Power View:** Security focuses primarily on military strength against threats.

Security Strategy Documents:

These documents outline a country's security vision and objectives.

Main Questions:

- How are civilians involved in deterrence and defence?
- How can civilians contribute to security provision?

First case study: Romania

The 2007 National Security Strategy of Romania

- directly refers to comprehensive approach to (homeland) security and crisis management
- recognises cooperation between military and non-military actors in terms of homeland (public?) security
- civilians/society framed as a referent object, not a provider of security

Romanian National Defence Strategy 2020-24

- reflects the general assumptions of comprehensive approach
- acknowledges the need for a multi-faceted cooperation (inc. civil-military) to strengthen resilience
- emphasises the importance of inter-institutional cooperation in defence but without directly linking military and non-military actors
- Civilians/society framed as a referent object, not a provider of security

Model of civilian evolvement in security in which Civilians are more passive and treated as a referent object of security (object that requires protection).

Second case study: Estonia

The 2010 National Security Concept:

- Directly refers to comprehensive approach and comprehensive/total defence: involvement of all sectors of the society

The 2023 National Security Concept:

- "Based on Estonia's comprehensive national defence concept, the defence of the nation and preparations for it draw on all available military and non-military

- civil society as an important component of the enhancement of national security
- deterrence and defence involve all state structures (including military) and the population
- resilience and psychological defence as elements of the national defence system

capabilities and resources, involving also the public, private and third sector." (p. 4)
- various domains of the state and society (public, societal, military, economic, internal and external) viewed as interlinked, mutually supportive and of equal value

Civilians are seen and treated as equally valuable in this model of civilian involvement in security.

Third case study: Poland

The 2014 National Security Strategy:

- reflects the general assumptions of comprehensive approach,
broad definition of national security,
different actors play their roles in increasing national security,
the internal-external security nexus
- in terms of deterrence and defence the societal and economic subsystems are subservient to the Armed Forces

The 2020 National Security Strategy:

- directly mentions and emphasises the comprehensiveness of security
- announces the necessity to build a system of comprehensive defence "based on the effort of the whole nation" (p.15) but the Armed Forces are still discussed and treated separately
- societal and economic subsystems are no longer framed as support to the defence subsystem
- Territorial Defence Forces – an attempt at bringing the military and non-military subsystems closer together

Civilians are involved in deterrence and defence but through military means.

Conclusion:

- There are varying perspectives on civilian roles in deterrence and defence:
  - Passive recipients of security.
  - Active security providers.
  - A spectrum in between.
- The Ukrainian experience highlights civilian agency in mitigating harm during conflict.

Frameworks for Civilian Participation:

- Some countries (Poland, Estonia) utilize paramilitary or military service options for civilian involvement.
- Questions remain about non-militarized civilian participation in security.