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INTERNATIONAL PEACE INSTITUTE

Mitigating the Consequences of Violent Conflict: What Works and What Does Not?

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The purpose of the second International Expert Forum, "Mitigating the Consequences of Violent Conflict: What Works and What Does Not?," which was held at IPI on June 6, 2012, was to take stock of the consequences of ongoing violent conflict and means to prevent and reduce them, including peacekeeping operations and special envoys. The ambition was to identify patterns and formulate lessons learned and policy implications in the short, medium, and long term. The forum was divided into three sessions: mapping the trends and causes of violence against civilians; mapping the challenges and impact of peacekeeping operations; and mapping the challenges and impact of special envoys.

Introduction

Identification of the causes and consequences of violence against civilians in war, post-war, and non-war settings is a growing global preoccupation across advocacy, policy, and research communities. Scholars from the public health and social sciences are mobilizing a range of technologies to bear witness to the consequences of armed conflict—from passive surveillance and household surveys to crowdsourcing and satellite mapping. These and other efforts are beginning to give a clearer picture of the extent of human suffering in the midst of chronic violence. Moreover, a chorus of actors spanning the security and development sectors—within and outside the United Nations—is calling for a more concerted focus on the protection of civilians.

The introductory session of the second International Expert Forum was opened by Susana Malcorra, *chef de cabinet*, of the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General. She drew attention to the critical, if changing, role of the UN in preventing and reducing organized violence in armed conflicts and post-conflict settings. The UN lends moral consciousness and leverages wide-ranging experience in this regard; it has important convening powers; it has capacities to exercise its Good Offices; and it has a long experience obtained from setbacks and successes. It is also working with increasing coherence and coordination. Its comparative advantages include its legitimacy in contested spaces but also the wide range of agencies and instruments at its disposal from peacekeepers and peacebuilders to human rights, humanitarian, and development experts.

The opening presentation emphasized the importance of putting national priorities and capacities first. The UN is attempting to rebalance the ways in which national and local capabilities and ownership are supported. The organization acknowledges the importance of reconstituting the social contract binding states and their citizens but also the centrality of host governments and societies in organizing and managing the process. With over sixty

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This meeting note was drafted by Robert Muggah, principal at the SecDev Group and research director at the Igarape Institute, and Birger Heldt, director of research at the Folke Bernadotte Academy. It reflects the *rapporteurs'* interpretation of the discussion and does not necessarily reflect the view of all participants.

The International Expert Forum was originally launched at IPI in New York on December 15, 2011. It is a joint collaboration of the Folke Bernadotte Academy, IPI, the SecDev Group, and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC). The second International Expert Forum was held at IPI on June 6, 2012.

years of experience working on issues of international and internal armed conflict, the UN has acquired a series of insights into how these objectives can be achieved. These include the need to do the following:

- Adopt multiple perspectives or lenses when reading conflicts since there are many "truths" in determining their causes and consequences.
- Privilege local ownership of the recovery agenda. The UN should not want peace more than the actors themselves, and the UN needs to understand that local agents have the best information.
- Achieve a balance between attaining rapid stability and security and addressing underlying causes. If security is elevated over justice, then reconciliation may prove more difficult and security gains more fragile; meanwhile, processes to combat inpunity can generate instability.
- Promote inclusive politics. Constitution-building and institutional support are crucial for opening up countries' political space.
- Avoid looking at countries with a foreign mindset. Institution-building processes need to be adopted to local conditions and cultures; institutions cannot be built in a couple of years.
- Combine disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes with reconciliation (R) processes.
- Make security services the right size, and improve accountability. Security sector governance and DDR must take place in the context of local ownership, as it lays the foundation for a new social contract. The UN is well positioned to carry out such tasks.
- Solve the DDR and security sector reform (SSR) challenges. DD is often more successful than R; making programs sustainable is of critical importance. Often program designs are based on available resources rather than actual needs.
- Consider the needs and aspirations of young people. This is of central importance, as illustrated by the events in the Arab world. We need to understand this dynamic and adapt UN programs accordingly.
- Ensure that essential quick impact projects are rooted in the needs and priorities of local communities.
- Harness knowledge and expertise of returning diasporas, make sure they see their role in an emerging country.
- Expand and solidify regional relationships and partnerships. There is a need to strengthen or create regional coordination mechanisms; trust in the region is important, and sometimes lack of trust is an important source of conflict to begin with. Moreover, regional cooperation can assist in successfully dealing with joint issues such as infrastructure, environmental issues, etc.
- Promote the empowerment of women and protection from discrimination. Organized sexual violence is sometimes a tactic of war, but few peace accords make a reference to it. We have a long way to go in this regard. Moreover, we need to improve employment opportunities for women.

The ensuing discussion ventured into areas such as coordination, data gathering, emerging threats and obstacles, and how the UN is assisting nations in transitions. For instance, while the UN has taken steps to enhance its capacity to deploy civilians, a major gap continues to be the UN's capacity to recruit, train, deploy, and manage civilian specialists. Even more important, states affected by chronic organized violence lack core capacities. There is a large need to build local civilian capacity to address the needs of societies in transition. More positively, there is some evidence of regional entities and south-south alliances beginning to fill the gaps, though much more investment is needed in this regard. The example of IGAD's work in South Sudan was cited as a positive case. Timor-Leste is also widely regarded as a success story, and we need to calibrate how to retain some presence so that Timor does not relapse. The UN is working hard to improve this string of work and is committed to working on issues like this during the coming five years.

The international system is not well equipped to manage contemporary threats. Sometimes it is struggling with social, economic, environmental, and peace and security challenges without taking into due consideration that they are interconnected yet totally different threats. The international diplomatic architecture is still ill-equipped to address contemporary transnational threats related

to global financial market shocks, climate change, and a wide range of threats to peace and security. Indeed, sometimes the UN and other international entities struggle to meet these challenges in isolation, not recognizing how their causes and consequences can be related. The overall challenge is to find a way for the international community at large to deal with these threats, rather than relying on unilateral responses alone.

What has changed is not just the diversity and spatial character of peace and security risks, but also their rapid temporal manifestation and spread. Some participants noted that traditional approaches are fast being overtaken by events and becoming increasingly irrelevant. There is also a need for early warning mechanisms to deal with these emerging threats, to allow for sufficient time to prevent and react. For example, the Arab Spring highlights the ways in which previously marginalized groups—including youth and women—emerged to challenge the status quo. One important question is how to create real participation for these groups: employment is part of the answer, but it is not enough. What is needed are ways to meaningfully channel these groups' energies in the right direction, to rebuild the social contract.

The UN is beginning to rethink its assumptions and tool-kits and explore new ways and means of working in societies confronting turbulence and transition. It acknowledges that it is contending with twenty-first century problems with twentieth century tools. It recognizes that the demands often outsize its capacities to deliver and that changes are needed to increase its coordination and effectiveness on the ground.

Mapping the Challenges of Organized Violence in Contemporary Conflict: Data and Trends

There has been a dramatic expansion in quantitative and qualitative research on the costs of organized violence over the past decade. The most comprehensive datasets are now used not just to measure the frequency and severity of deaths at the national level on an annualized basis, but also to examine spatial and temporal characteristics of intentional violence and victimization at the subnational level. This kind of diagnosis can serve at least two purposes: providing a comprehensive record of mass atrocities and violations of human rights post facto and helping to predict violence dynamics. The insights are sobering and clarifying, as they correct long-held assumptions and anecdotal evidence on the prevalence of violence that have come to inform policy. The panelists set out a far-reaching agenda that raised a number of fundamental questions about the definition of armed conflict and the implications of organized violence.

The first session chaired by Dr. Robert Muggah considered the global characteristics of organized violence. He discussed the main findings and insights from the recent research mapping out the onset, duration, and intensity of conflict and non-conflict violence. What is increasingly recognized is that a vast majority of the global burden occurs not in countries affected by armed conflict but in those that are ostensibly peaceful. More than 525,000 persons are killed by intentional violence each year of which 55,000 die from combat-related causes in war. More than 395,000 persons are killed as a result of homicide in non-war settings and another 21,000 from extrajudicial killings. Most violent deaths are concentrated in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as central and southern Africa, and there is a worsening situation in the cities of the south. The panelists reflected on what is "new" and "old" about contemporary organized violence. It was agreed that organized violence in a range of "fragile settings" is increasingly simultaneous, overlapping, and integrated, and as a result it is challenging our classification systems. Imputing intentionality or motive is challenging when there is a blurring of political and economic interests. Many security, humanitarian, and development agencies are actively reflecting on what this changing face of violence means legally, conceptually, and operationally.

Sexual violence was described by Dr. Ragnhild Nordås as one of the most significant challenges of our time. Indeed, the UN Secretary-General has repeatedly called for more data collection and analysis of the incidence, trends, and patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict. But there are difficul-

ties in tracking sexual violence, and as such it tends to be overlooked, misunderstood, and sometimes overstated: under-reporting as well as over-reporting are common. There is also a real absence of solid and reliable baseline data to allow for an assessment of how much sexual violence actually increases in times of war instead of just an assessment of the absolute amount of such violence. If any real global assessment is to occur, more temporal, typological, perpetrator, and environmental information needs to be collected, even if a caution is warranted regarding intrinsic biases. We need better data in order to make better policy.

One promising research initiative described by Dr. Nordås seeks to generate a comprehensive cross-national dataset mapping out global trends in sexual violence. Partly financed by the Folke Bernadotte Academy, the data include event-based information 1989-2010 and is designed to generate information and analysis to shape early-warning efforts and facilitate preventive interventions. The dataset considers sexual violence in many of its forms (e.g., rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced abortion, sexual mutilation, and sexual torture) occurring in armed conflicts of varying intensity and with multiple actors (states and rebel groups). It also considers trends in post-conflict settings. While preliminary, early results suggest that only a minority of armed groups are involved in perpetrating sexual violence and that rates are often higher than anticipated at war's end. This may be because during intense armed conflicts, fighters are more preoccupied with staying alive, and therefore have fewer opportunities to exercise sexual violence. Anticipating these trends may help to predict when and where sexual violence is more likely to occur.

Dr. Michael Spagat discussed the distribution and intensity of fatalities and targeting of civilians in wartime settings. New geo-referenced conflict data is becoming available and present new opportunities for micro-level—instead of national level—empirical research. Examining large event-based datasets such as the Iraq Body Count (IBC), Dr. Spagat has developed a set of basic ratios that he and co-authors describe as "the dirty war index." It divides female and child victims killed in war settings (the numerator) by all fatalities (the denominator) and parses them out according to the type of weapon involved. Types of killings classified include air attacks, mortars, vehicle bombs, suicide bombs, gunfire, execution, and execution with torture. For instance, it was found that air attacks have the highest rates of killed women and children, indicating how indiscriminating such attacks are. While such research does not allow for a determination of intentionality, it does offer insights into the likely consequences (and determination of proportionality) of particular weapons systems.

Another kind of index being developed is called the "civilian targeting index," which focuses on the ratio of battle deaths among civilians as compared to overall deaths. It attributes deaths arising in armed conflicts to specific armed groups of all types—more than 500 worldwide. It then considers the extent to which groups are intentionally and systematically targeting civilians. Curiously, the data suggest that most non-state armed groups (more than 60 percent) do not routinely target civilians. However, preliminary analysis suggests that the "duration" and "scale" of armed group involvement in a given armed conflict does seem correlated with the likelihood of increased targeting of civilians. Another finding is that the larger the scale of organized violence, the lower the relative level of civilian targeting, suggesting that many groups are in fact adhering to the Geneva Conventions. Another interpretation is the one suggested above for sexual violence: in intense armed conflicts, fighters are more focused on survival and have fewer opportunities to exercise atrocities against civilians.

The discussant Dr. Chetan Kumar reflected on the changing nature of violence and the implications for programming and the considerable challenges associated with post-conflict transitions. A key shift is a movement away from all-out warfare and armed conflict to lower-level and recurrent types of violence. Dr. Kumar drew attention first to so-called "transitions"—a complex process of political, economic, and social change that falls between armed conflict and nonconflict. Often it entails a series of recurrent and interlocking conflicts. In such settings, the objective may not be to "resolve" the conflict but rather to contain and stabilize it. Yet, we still know little about the conditions for violence in transitions, and how to prevent violence.

Dr. Kumar also singled out another type of insecurity he described as "turbulence," itself rooted in a combination of economic, social, and political factors. During such incidents localized social protests may spiral out of control and assume national proportions.

A number of operational responses and practices are required to address these transitions and turbulences. Many of the required tools are signaled in the World Bank's *World Development Report* 2011—including reform and the formation of broad and inclusive political coalitions to manage change. Recent experience suggests that reforms and reform initiatives can be instrumental in bringing security. Dr. Kumar emphasized the importance of supporting the formation of lead actors that can create coalitions capable of delivering reforms rapidly: cohesive communities are better at dealing with such challenges, though it is very challenging to achieve such coalitions. He drew attention to the need to reorient attention to the importance of local governance, including local law enforcement and local knowledge networks.

Along with inclusive, resilient, and responsive governance, Dr. Kumar highlighted other factors that can promote protection. For example, border control remains a major priority, one that requires smarter border management. Likewise, community level mediation is critical, including interventions that bring public security and civil society groups together. Ultimately, an integrated approach must prevail, one that is less palliative and more systemic in nature.

The ensuing discussion highlighted the ways in which the UN is beginning to recognize that fragility, transitions, turbulence, and other forms of insecurity are a "new normal." It highlighted the good news that the UN is no longer the only actor in dealing with these challenges. An important question raised concerned what the necessary next steps are for the UN. A reactive approach is insufficient: once turbulence sets in, it is exceedingly difficult to know where it is going to lead. As such, the UN needs to rethink its models. One participant suggested that it is important to avoid piecemeal prevention and adopt instead a more comprehensive approach to preventing and reducing conflict and organized violence. Others questioned the extent to which SSR efforts can and do prevent and reduce violence and whether alternate approaches were needed. For instance, DDR may make conflict less likely at the national level, while at the same time making violence more prevalent at the local level.

Many policy makers and researchers working on peace and conflict issues are increasingly revisiting their assumptions and examining the wider dynamics of organized violence. Questions were raised regarding the extent to which violence against civilians is linked to strategic goals, and to what extent it is ephemeral. It was also suggested that there is a need to look at different types of organized violence—one-sided, interpersonal, communal—and the extent to which they overlap. There is now much more data available for examining underlying trends and exploring cause and effect relationships. At the same time it is important to define what kinds of violence we are talking about and analyzing so that we do not mix up these categories, which may have very different causes, dynamics, and solutions. It was also pointed out that detailed and geo-referenced data now being produced can be used to name and shame perpetrators, but that it also shows that most groups do not carry out violence against civilians, and that women and children are the groups most exposed to deaths due to explosive weapons. Campaigns of sexual violence and mass atrocities are the exception—not the norm—in armed conflicts.

Contemporary Challenges and Evolving Roles in UN Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping and peace support mandates have adopted an ever-expanding set of expectations related to the protection of civilians. They have shifted from being a specific set of actions advanced by the UN to monitor and enforce a ceasefire to a wider set of activities entailing a range of actors from the UN to regional organizations with far-reaching expectations to promote the rule of law and justice. During the past twenty years a number of UN-led and non-UN led peacekeeping operations have sought to promote humanitarian objectives, though few applied force to halt genocide and mass atrocities. UN operations are in that respect very different from non-UN led

operations.

This session chaired by Dr. Birger Heldt, featured the insights of practitioners and scholars regarding the impact of the UN's peacekeeping operations in alleviating the consequences of war. It explored how UN peacekeeping has adapted to maximize its efforts and impact, including enhanced partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations on the ground and through joint operations, and to what extent these partnerships have been successful.

The first panelist, Ms. Erin Weir, reflected on the evolution of the protection of civilians agenda both in New York and in the field where peace operations are underway. On the one side, there appears to be considerable dynamism and innovation in the use and deployment of protection tools and concepts in the area of protection of civilians. Yet, there are important conceptual gaps. One concern relates to the limits of the use of force: protection—not victory—is the objective. For instance, use of force may lead to regime change (i.e., victory), although it was never intended. A second big gap concerns harm reduction: when force is used, things get broken. When is this acceptable? When is it really necessary to use force, and what steps should be taken to make amends when unintended consequences arise?

Ms. Weir pointed to some examples of the operationalization of the protection agenda at the field level. Regarding military tools, there is a proactive approach being adopted by DPKO in eastern DRC and South Sudan due in part to increased expectations and pressure generated by the New Horizons report. Positive changes have been created by this, but the application has been inconsistent across peacekeeping operations, partly for logistical reasons. Yet, even though advances have been made regarding the protection of civilians, military force is not the answer. It is therefore important to examine civilian tools. One example is the promotion of community liaison assistants—locally hired staff that speak the local languages, know all the facts on the ground, and link civilians to peacekeepers. However, these and other actors can actually increase the vulnerability of civilians and both short- and long-term strategies are therefore needed.

Next, panelist Dr. Paul Williams considered partnership peacekeeping in terms of UN and non-UN operations, focusing on Africa. Williams noted that the previous decade was one of good news in this respect, and that there are encouraging signs for the future. If partnership peacekeeping works, the international community will have more options when it comes to protecting civilians. The issue is now how one can make this partnership work even better. However, there is a lack of understanding about how to choose between different types of partnerships. For instance, the UNAMID-UNISOM partnership has not been ideal. Williams suggested that in order for the partnership to work, three challenges must be overcome: economic, technical, and political. In terms of the economic challenges, there is an inequity in financial arrangements, which leads to one side financing the operations. A more effective partnership requires more equal financial burden sharing. Turning to technical challenges, the inequality of military assets in quantitative and qualitative terms, but also logistics and bureaucracy, hinders effective partnerships. Finally, political challenges are the most important ones and cover issues such as the following:

- the indeterminate nature of Chapter 8 of the UN Charter in terms of what a strategic partnership should really entail;
- the diversity of the world's regions and the different natures of the challenges, meaning there is a need to reflect on how to create a partnership system where all regions receive equal priority;
- the lack of shared analysis, and a consequent lack of consensus on the conclusions from such analyses, and therefore also a lack of consensus regarding what courses of action to pursue;
- the lack of common concepts of what peacekeeping operations should entail; the AU has one concept, the UN has another, etc. For example, the AU deploys peacekeeping operations in ongoing conflicts and carries out peace enforcement, whereas the UN's peacekeeping operations have a much stronger focus on post-conflicts.

Dr. Williams also described three, positive templates. First there are spearhead or vanguard operations, where some type of Western coalition paves the way for a UN operation, such as in Haiti or Timor-Leste. Second, in firefighting missions

Western forces play an enforcement role, examples of which include Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, and the DRC. Third and finally, there are the over-the-horizon operations—or out-of-area operations—in that a region deploys troops in another region of the world, such as the US Joint Task Force in Liberia and the EU force in the DRC and Chad. Yet, and in Dr. William's assessment, many of these operations constitute "band-aid" solutions.

Dr. Williams continued to discuss what the AU and the UN want from partnerships. On the former question it was suggested that the AU wants recognition as an important actor. But it also wants to become eligible for assessed economic means for peacekeeping operations from the UN, and it wants long-term UN support for the AU peacekeeping architecture. The UN, on the other hand, desires partnerships in order to enhance its crisis response; to promote an approach that does not privilege Africa at the expense of other nations; and to ensure good value for money while remaining sensitive to the spirit and contents of the UN Charter. These different goals—or lack of a common vision and basic values—have resulted in an ad hoc approach.

The first discussant, Mr. David Haeri, indicated that history indicates that "success" is a political matter and is only afterwards shaped by the military and civilian capability of troops and associated technical assistance. He emphasized the critical place of sustained and long-term commitment from the UN together with international, regional, and national engagement. And while UN peacekeepers are often regarded as guarantors of transitions and of a sustainable peace, this has only been a feature since the early 1990s. Mr. Haeri stressed that it is difficult to quantify what works, and what does not, when it comes to the protection of civilians, and that there is a large need to think of unintended consequences. He also suggested that there is a need to build more expertise on DDR, Rule of Law (RoL), and SSR, and more carefully consider natural resources as drivers of conflicts.

The field-level protection of civilians was described as a key problem for peacekeeping missions, and it was stressed that it is important to be honest about these issues and discuss them more but also have reasonable expectations of what can be achieved in these regards. Concerning partnerships, it was stressed that there is a need to have intensive and ongoing dialogue among partners, shared standards, and improved interoperability, but that these issues are now dealt with in an ad hoc manner. Mr. Haeri emphasized the importance of keeping a distinction between what constitutes AU and UN peacekeeping, as they are two different types of peacekeeping.

The second discussant, Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, focused on what works instead of focusing on negatives when it comes to organized violence and UN response. Ambassador Mulamula highlighted the centrality of national and local "ownership" in relation to UN peacekeeping—though noted this was easier said than done. She emphasized the importance of Africa, in particular, both owning its problems and owning its solutions: African solutions for African problems. And in reflecting on the ever changing and expanding mandates of UN peacekeeping, Ambassador Mulamula asked to what extent the UN is even doing peacekeeping anymore: from a more narrow and traditional focus on enforcing ceasefires, there is an ever more wide-ranging agenda involving peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peace consolidation. There are many practical challenges to ensuring local ownership. On the one hand, it requires much more than simple consultations between the UN and AU partners. Indeed, the case of MONUC which, over the past decade shifted from a narrow mandate to enforce a ceasefire to the "protection of civilians" and "stabilization," was described as a case in point. Ambassador Mulamula called for a more collaborative approach than is often described in theory and called for an approach that was more bottom-up and drew on local capabilities. Along with other panelists, Ambassador Mulamula noted emphatically that there were few genuine partnerships.

It was noted by one participant that MONUC and MONUSCO have been at the frontiers of R2P, and maybe even have been experimental in terms of protecting civilians. Moreover, it is not uncommon for peacekeeping operations to evolve towards more enforcement, more nation building, and more consolidation over time. From that perspective MONUC is not unique and, in fact, closely resembles ONUC of the early 1960s or even UNPROFOR of the early 1990s. In addition, there is in practice a division of labor in that the UN focuses on post-conflict peacekeeping with

elements of nation building, whereas non-UN peacekeeping is much more likely to intervene during ongoing conflicts, while at the same time adopting narrower, more traditional peacekeeping tasks. While this may be due to the limited financial resources of regional actors, it raises the question of whether there is a working division of labor among UN and non-UN peacekeeping operations. Such a division of labor was also suggested in the Brahimi Report some twelve years ago.

Among the UN operations, two stand out in terms of their robust methods for addressing genocide and atrocities carried out by armed groups. First is UNPROFOR in Bosnia that established protected zones, delivered humanitarian aid, and on occasions used force beyond self defense. The second prominent example is MONUC, which may be said to be at the front line of robust proactive use of armed force by UN operations against armed groups spoiling the peace and/or committing atrocities. UN operations have rarely deployed for the stated primary task of protecting civilians from genocide or atrocities and used force beyond self defense to achieve those goals from the outset. Rather, the operations have evolved. Close cases include UNAMID deployed in 2007. While having a focus on protecting civilians from human rights abuses, it did not develop a robust practice of using force reactively or proactively. In contrast, multilateral non-UN interventions deployed primarily to halt ongoing genocide/politicide and atrocities are rather common throughout history and include INTERFET (Timor-Leste), EUFOR DRC/ ARTEMIS (DRC), RAMSI (Solomon Islands), MIFH (Haiti), KFOR (Kosovo), among others. A preliminary insight offered from these cases is that multilateral interventions have worked well when robust and applied to small countries or territories and avoided siding with any of the conflict parties. Also, some kind of division of labor between UN and non-UN missions appears to have emerged.

The participants singled out some contradictions and challenges emerging in the course of the presentations. For example, how can the UN maintain a consent-based approach when the state is often a key perpetrator of organized violence against civilians? What is peacekeeping when there is no peace to keep? How can civilians be protected when the UN is expected to maintain impartiality? Has impartiality (evenhandedly implementing the peacekeeping mandate) been confused with neutrality (doing nothing), and if so, has this conceptual confusion hampered the discussion and clarity of thinking? Has the responsibility to protect doctrine muddied the waters? How can troop contributing countries be encouraged to enforce the peace when they are not interested in doing so? At a minimum, panelists agreed that there is a need to go back to the original idea of peacekeeping as founded in the aspiration of collective security. Indeed, its very structure is not designed to allow for "interventionist" activities, and the protection of civilians mandate is without prejudice to the peacekeeping mandate.

The Role, Challenges, and Tools of Special Envoys

A critical instrument in the "protection" arsenal of the UN is the special envoy. There are in fact multiple types of special envoys, the most prominent being Special Representatives of the Secretary-General. The role of these envoys varies in length of deployment, mandate, functional scope of their activities, and, to a considerable extent, their personal attributes and leadership styles. The final session, chaired by Mr. Youssef Mahmoud, considered the experiences of special envoys and some emerging research on the scale and distribution of SRSGs and the effectiveness of their interventions. The discussion was focused particularly on their practical experiences and the critical role of their own background and the support systems they operated within.

The first speaker, Dr. Jamal Benomar, considered his own experiences as a special envoy. He emphasized that there is no handbook to guide mediation and dialogue. There are no clear resolutions, and there is no one single way to proceed: the scope and scale of intervention varies from place to place. He also stressed that the UN is now starting to develop mediation capacity and working to develop a handbook. Yet, it is occurring at a time when the UN role is ever more diminished in mediation.

Notwithstanding decades of special envoy activity, Benomar stressed the importance of adopting humility and acknowledging the limited state of knowledge on what works and what does

not. He highlighted the importance of ensuring cultural continuity. He pointed to the challenges of recognizing local compacts, agreements that may not always be in line with UN standards. In discussing the situation in Yemen, he noted the multiple and overlapping conflicts and the importance of reading between them. But he also stressed that the UN had certain advantages, including being regarded as an honest, or at least impartial, broker and could also play a role in influencing more progressive norms in peace agreements.

The next speaker, Dr. Manuel Fröhlich, considered the findings of recent research on the role of SRSGs in relation to peace processes. Dr. Fröhlich traced the evolution of special envoys and their expansion.[1] He highlighted the growth of SRSG and HLA functions since the 1950s—from an average of ten to fifteen between 1950 and the 1980s to ninety-five in 2011. In fact, there have been roughly 358 SRSGs (1946-2011) from ninety-nine different countries. The steep increases were attributed to conflicts in Africa and transnational issues such as climate change. The top contributing countries for SRSGs included the US (53), Norway (27), Sweden (24), UK (23), Algeria (18), India (18), Italy (18), Pakistan (16), France (13), Switzerland (13), and Canada (13). It should be noted that in some cases, there were multiple SRSGs in a single country. Overall, most deployments of SRSGs were to Burundi, Cambodia, Cyprus, Haiti, Iraq, Kosovo, Liberia, Middle East, Somalia, Sudan, and Western Sahara.

Dr. Fröhlich also considered the particular influence of SRSGs on the incidence of armed conflicts. Although findings are temporary, he noted a strong correlation between declining intrastate conflict and SRSG presence though could not (yet) determine a causal effect. Indeed, he stressed that structural factors (i.e., the environment) are the most important (75 percent), but that SRSGs appear to play an important role. These statistics suggest how little—or how much—one should expect SRSGs to achieve. He also noted that there are other critical micro factors that determine the influence of SRSGs. These relate to the personality of SRSGs, their experience, their style, and the way they work in teams and in relation to the UN.

The final intervention by Mr. Giandomenico Picco considered the central place of agency in shaping the direction of peace agreements as well as the limitations of claims to "impartiality." Mr. Picco noted, along with others, that the world has changed. Mediation during the Cold War was more straightforward. Since the 1990s, it has become fiendishly more complex. Building on personal experience Mr. Picco stressed the importance of understanding the "narrative" of those involved in mediation and the importance of individual agency and working relations with superiors in shaping the direction and outcomes of mediation. He also highlighted the ways in which "minilateralism" has come to shape mediation over the past two decades. In addition, Mr. Picco suggested that neutrality is not important. Instead, the actors just need to know which "camp" a mediator belongs: no actors want neutral mediators, and no mediator can be completely impartial anyway.

The ensuing discussion touched upon the issue of the division of labor among SRSGs, whether it is time for a new agenda for peace, and what may be the role of mediators in the future. In addition, the challenges caused by the fragmentation of conflict parties were discussed, in particular with regard to whether the UN is equipped to deal with fragmentation and whether there are relevant lessons from cases in the past that could be applied to current and future cases of mediation.

Concluding Reflections

This International Expert Forum featured many takeaways and key concepts, such as "coordination and coherence," "social contract," "band-aid," "partnerships," "local micro-level data," "dynamics of violence against civilians," "influence of local conditions," etc. For instance, research indicates that localized forms of violence are shaped by changes in the military balance of power. Civilians are often punished for perceived disloyalty. One implication, then, is that no matter how challenging it may appear, the peacekeeping goal should be to

1 The first special envoy was Folke Bernadotte in 1948 based on a General Assembly Resolution and selected by the permanent five members of the Security Council. Next was Francesco Urrutia (1957) from Colombia in Israel/Jordan. Others in the 1960s included Adrian Pekt (Guinea),Johan Beck-Friis (Thailand), Eduard Zellweger (Laos), and Herbert de Ribbling (Oman). Also Pier Spinelli (Portugal) was requested to mediate in Jordan in 1964. The Secretary General came up with the concept of UN "presence" in lieu of peacekeeping force.

create robustly defended ceasefires (even localized ones) instead of siding with any conflict parties. Historically this has decreased incentives for rebels to commit atrocities, since government forces are no longer considered an acute threat and territory is not at risk of being lost to the other side of the conflict. It may also provide breathing room for an unavoidable political solution to develop and for third parties to pursue diplomatic options.

The seminar highlighted how the landscapes of organized violence are diffuse and dynamic. National-level assessments disaggregated by year are increasingly being supplanted by subnational assessments that offer more granular and geo-spatial assessments. What they are showing is a heterogeneous picture. Nonstate armed groups are not necessarily widely involved in killing civilians while state-based groups are. Not all armed groups are involved in perpetrating sexual violence, but it appears that such violence often persists well after conflicts end. It is critical that research continues to assess these variations.

The seminar raised questions about the definitions and classifications for "armed conflict" and signaled a new terminology to describe organized violence. Indeed, panelists and participants alike raised important questions about what is "armed conflict," "postconflict," and "other forms of violence." In some cases, other expressions seemed more appropriate to capture the real dynamics on the ground, including "transitions," "turbulence," "instability," "fragility," and other "situations of violence." A new nomenclature is emerging—one that has profound implications for how the international community thinks about responses.

The seminar drew attention to new and innovative forms of applied research. Researchers noted the rapid evolution of datasets that account not just for events over time, but also geo-spatial and environmental units of analysis. These datasets move beyond counting the dead and injured to account for a wider range of victimization and variables related to the types of weapons used in the event. They focus not just on armed groups' presence but also on their motivation and intentionality. Such datasets have a potentially important role in documenting atrocities for tribunals but also for developing predictive modeling for prevention and early warning. An outstanding question, however, is how we get this information into the hands of senior policy makers.

There was a consensus that many of the tools to respond to organized violence need to adapt. Most participants noted how narrow approaches to minimizing violence that emphasize peace support and peacebuilding and enforcing ceasefires are giving way to more transformative agendas promoting not just multidimensional peacekeeping, but local ownership, governance, and architectures of peace. This evolving agenda will demand new forms of cooperation, a capacity to learn across different settings, and a commitment to monitoring outcomes. It will require partnerships that include regional organizations.

There was agreement that local ownership, local resilience, and enhanced partnerships were essential but challenging. While peacekeeping approaches have made important gains, it is still largely piecemeal and top down. A recurring question was how to ensure a more emphatic "regional voice," while also managing major technical, economic, political challenges. Participants agreed that reinforcing national and local capacities was central, and would present one of the more important, if challenging, priorities for the UN in the coming decade.

All of the presentations pointed to a major dilemma facing contemporary efforts to prevent and reduce organized violence. On the one hand, there are unprecedented opportunities for research, agency, and interventions. On the other, there are formidable transnational risks, complex interests, and old and outdated assumptions and approaches. The question facing the security and development establishments is how to take advantage of these new opportunities while minimizing the risks. At a minimum, it will require acknowledging that the UN is not necessarily the only, much less the central, player. It will also require understanding how power is more widely distributed. Finally, it will mean working proactively with regional partners and building coalitions across public and private spheres.

Agenda

**Mitigating the Consequences of Violent Conflict:
What Works and What Does Not?**

The International Expert Forum

Wednesday, June 6, 2012

09:00 – 09:15 **Welcome and Introductory Remarks**

Mr. Youssef Mahmoud, *Senior Adviser, International Peace Institute*
Dr. Birger Heldt, *Director of Research, Folke Bernadotte Academy*
Dr. Robert Muggah, *Principal, SecDev Group*

09:30 – 09:45 **Keynote Address**

Ms. Susana Malcorra, *Chef de Cabinet and Under-Secretary-General, Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General*

09:45 – 11:15 **Session 1: Mapping the Challenges of Organized Violence in Contemporary Conflict: Data and Trends**

This session discusses the main findings and insights from the recent research mapping out the onset, duration, and intensity of organized violence. Particular consideration will be given to the spatial and temporal distribution of mortality, organized violence, and associated displacement. Additional attention will be given to the risks giving rise to organized violence (including targeted mass atrocities and sexual violence), trends, and future challenges.

Chair
Dr. Robert Muggah

Presenters
Dr. Ragnhild Nordås, *Senior Researcher, Centre for the Study of War, Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)*

Dr. Michael Spagat, *Professor, Department of Economics, Royal Holloway University of London*

Discussant
Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo, *Coordinator, Conflict Prevention Team, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*

11:15 Coffee Break

11:30 – 13:00 **Session 2: Contemporary Challenges and Evolving Roles in UN Peacekeeping**

This session features the insights of practitioners and scholars regarding the impact of the UN's peacekeeping operations in alleviating the consequences of war. A particular focus will be put on the contemporary challenges for UN peacekeeping and the evolving roles of civilian, police, and military peacekeepers in confronting those challenges. In this regard, this session will also explore how UN peacekeeping has adapted to maximize its efforts and impact, including enhanced partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations on the ground and through joint operations and to what extent these partnerships have been successful.

Chair
Dr. Birger Heldt

Presenters
Ms. Erin A. Weir, *Protection and Advocacy Adviser, Norwegian Refugee Council*
Dr. Paul D. Williams, *Associate Director, Security Policy Studies Program, The Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University*

Discussants
Ambassador Liberata Mulamula, *Senior Diplomatic Adviser to the President of the Republic of Tanzania*
Mr. David Haeri, *Chief, Peacekeeping Best Practices Section, United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations*

13:00 – 14:45 Working Lunch

Session 3: The Role, Challenges, and Tools of Special Envoys

This session features insights from practitioners and scholars, but with a focus on the role of special envoys—appointed either by the UN Secretary-General or in collaboration with regional organizations—in alleviating the consequences of war. The role of these envoys varies in length of deployment, mandate, functional scope of their activities, and, to a considerable extent, their personal attributes and leadership styles. The session will look at the main challenges for past and present holders of these posts and how the role of special envoys has evolved over the years.

Chair
Mr. Francesco Mancini

Presenters
Dr. Jamal Benomar, *Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General and UN Special Envoy to Yemen*
Dr. Manuel Fröhlich, *Professor of International Organizations and Globalization, Friedrich Schiller University of Jena*
Mr. Giandomenico Picco, *Chairman and CEO, GDP Associates; former UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs and UN Special Envoy to Lebanon*

14:45 **Closing Remarks**

Mr. Youssef Mahmoud
Dr. Birger Heldt
Dr. Robert Muggah

Participants

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