

# Civil-Military Coordination in Peace Operations



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*Cheryl Pearce (second from left), Acting Military Advisor of the Office of Military Affairs at United Nations Headquarters, visits the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) to meet with mission leadership and peacekeepers. Ms. Pearce speaks with peacekeepers from Ethiopia serving with UNMISS, who invited her for a freshly brewed traditional Ethiopian coffee. 16 May 2024. UN Photo by Nektarios Markogiannis*

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Williamsburg, VA 23185 USA  
*[www.peaceopstraining.org](http://www.peaceopstraining.org)*

First edition: 2008  
Second edition: 2012  
Third edition: 2017  
Fourth edition: 2024

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# Civil-Military Coordination in Peace Operations

## Table of Contents

Foreword.....	viii
Method of Study.....	x
<b>Lesson 1    What Is Civil-Military Coordination?.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Section 1.1    The Nature of Civil-Military Coordination.....	13
Section 1.2    Peace Operations, the Use of Force, and Civil-Military Coordination.....	18
Section 1.3    Comparative Approaches to Civil-Military Coordination.....	23
<b>Lesson 2    Civil-Military Coordination in the Full Spectrum of Peace Operations.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Section 2.1    The Evolution of Complex, Multidimensional Peace Operations.....	35
Section 2.2    Civil-Military Coordination in the Full Spectrum of Peace Operations.....	41
Section 2.3    Integrated Peace Operations: Civil, Police, and Military Partners.....	43
Section 2.4    Protection of Civilians in a United Nations Integrated Field Mission — UNMISS.....	55
Section 2.5    Civil-Military Coordination in an African Union Mission — AMISOM.....	56

<b>Lesson 3</b>	<b>Military Support to Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief.....</b>	<b>63</b>
Section 3.1	United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination.....	65
Section 3.2	Military Support Roles.....	75
Section 3.3	Case Study: The Haiti Earthquake of 2010.....	76
<b>Lesson 4</b>	<b>Military Support to Peacebuilding.....</b>	<b>83</b>
Section 4.1	Adaptive Peacebuilding and the Peace Operations/ Peacebuilding Nexus.....	85
Section 4.2	Peacebuilding Frameworks.....	89
Section 4.3	Peacebuilding Actors.....	90
Section 4.4	Military Support to Peacebuilding.....	94
Section 4.5	Peacebuilding and Conflict Management.....	102
<b>Lesson 5</b>	<b>United Nations Mission Integration and Coordination.....</b>	<b>106</b>
Section 5.1	Coordination in a Peace Operations Context.....	108
Section 5.2	United Nations Mission Coordination.....	110
Section 5.3	United Nations Mission Civil-Military Coordination Structures.....	113
Section 5.4	Integrated Assessment and Planning.....	115
Section 5.5	UN-CIMIC Structures and Capabilities.....	120
<b>Lesson 6</b>	<b>Civil-Military Liaison and Information-Sharing.....</b>	<b>126</b>
Section 6.1	What is Civil-Military Liaison?.....	128
Section 6.2	Civil-Military Liaison and Information Collection.....	129
Section 6.3	Civil-Military Assessment and Reporting.....	134
Section 6.4	Civil-Military Information- and Knowledge-Sharing, Management, and Integration.....	137

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<b>Lesson 7</b>	<b>Civil Assistance and Engagement.....</b>	<b>143</b>
Section 7.1	Engagement and Civil Assistance.....	145
Section 7.2	Protection of Civilians.....	148
Section 7.3	Military Support to Gender Mainstreaming and Youth.....	152
Section 7.4	Military Support to DDR and SSR.....	157
<b>Lesson 8</b>	<b>Civil-Military Project Management and Monitoring &amp; Evaluation.....</b>	<b>166</b>
Section 8.1	Civil-Military Project Management.....	170
Section 8.2	Quick Impact Projects.....	174
Section 8.3	Civil-Military Monitoring, Evaluation, and Reporting.....	177
<b>Lesson 9</b>	<b>Civil-Military Communication and Negotiation.....</b>	<b>184</b>
Section 9.1	Operating in an Information Environment.....	186
Section 9.2	Civil-Military Coordination and Strategic Communication.....	190
Section 9.3	Public Information and How to Engage the Media.....	193
Section 9.4	Cross-Cultural Communication and Working with Interpreters.....	197
Section 9.5	Negotiations.....	202
<b>Appendices</b>		
Appendix A:	Glossary.....	211
Appendix B:	List of Acronyms.....	224
Appendix C:	Course and Lesson References.....	228
Appendix D:	Civil-Military Coordination Learning Resources.....	233
About the Authors.....		235
Instructions for the End-of-Course Examination.....		237



## Foreword

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This course provides an overview of the theory and practice of civil-military coordination within the full spectrum of peace operations. As such, it reviews the dialogue and interface among the military, civilian, and police components of a peace operation with respect to political, security, humanitarian, developmental, and other dimensions of the same operation to attain larger, more strategic political goals. This may be in the conduct of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and humanitarian assistance, or under stabilization or “conflict management” conditions.

Often misconstrued as a tactical activity in the pursuit of public relations agendas, civil-military coordination is an inherently strategic, integrative, and adaptive endeavour that is essentially about managing interactions among disparate players involved in or peripheral to the peace process. It is also about managing the transition from conflict to peace and from military to civilian dominance of that process. Civil-military coordination is essential to any complex peace operation because it is central to mission coordination and achieving a system-wide impact on the conflict.

United Nations Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CIMIC) officers are military officers responsible for the military part of interactions among the civilian, police, and military components of an integrated United Nations field mission in a peace operations environment. They must work effectively with United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord), Civil Affairs, and Political Affairs officers, as well as many others working in the civil-military coordination context. They also need to understand the roles and functions of development and peacebuilding actors, including United Nations police, to facilitate and coordinate support from the peacekeeping force to others in the mission, non-mission actors, and the local community, as appropriate.

This course is designed for multiple audiences. For UN-CIMIC and engagement officers, it serves as an introduction to the basics of civil-military coordination within a wider United Nations peace operations context and as a field reference. For United Nations and non-United Nations civilian, police, and military personnel, it provides instruction on civil-military coordination in general and a window on how to coordinate with and leverage the military component. This facilitates greater interoperability while respecting integrity and equities among multifarious entities working for a common purpose — as part of or in partnership with United Nations-mandated operations. This includes CMCoord, Civil Affairs, and Political Affairs officers; United Nations police and Department of Security and Safety personnel; and Military Experts on Mission, as well as those involved in rule of law, logistics, and other mission and non-mission agency and organizational leadership functions.

A course of this nature can never cover all potential variations in today’s complex and dynamic strategic and operations environments. Rather, it blends the broad application of concepts, principles, and policies with as much practical guidance as possible for those working in the field. It also provides examples of civil-military structures and operations from United Nations and African Union missions. Ultimately, it is up to civil-military practitioners to interpret and apply the general knowledge it offers to their own mission context.

As both theory and practice, this course is laid out in two informal parts. The first part (Lessons 1–4) explains the concepts and principles of civil-military coordination mainly from a wider, full-spectrum United Nations peace operations context, with attention to military support to humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding. The second part (Lessons 5–9) goes into the practical application of these strategic ideas at operational and tactical levels. This includes civil-military coordination as a function of United Nations mission coordination and joint analysis and



planning; civil-military liaison and information-sharing; and support to civil assistance, along with tactical engagement as prescribed by the United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual, in the protection of civilians, gender mainstreaming, youth, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR). The course then ends with practical discussions of civil-military project management and monitoring and evaluation, as well as civil-military coordination in the information environment.

This course is a natural progression from the original 2008 POTI course, *Civil-Military Coordination*, its 2012 revision titled *UN Civil-Military Coordination*, and the previous version of *Civil-Military Coordination in Peace Operations* in 2017. This edition is based on input and best practices from various United Nations missions, the United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and other sources.

At a minimum, we strongly suggest that students new to United Nations peace operations first take the POTI core courses, *Principles and Guidelines for UN Peacekeeping Operations* and *An Introduction to the UN System and Its Role in International Peace and Security*, to understand better and utilize this course. We also recommend the courses *International Humanitarian Law and the Law of Armed Conflict*, the military or police version of *Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Training Materials for United Nations Peace Operations*, and the courses *Leading Within United Nations Peace Operations*, *Peacebuilding*, and those on gender awareness (as appropriate) to enrich the content of this course.

We welcome any comments, corrections, suggestions, and contributions of examples and case studies from those who have taken and applied this course. We would like to thank those who have already contributed, as well as our colleagues at DPO, OCHA, and many other United Nations agencies. We would also like to express our gratitude to those in United Nations and African peace operations and many organizations and individual experts, including the US Army Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI) and African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), for their assistance.

We dedicate this version of the course in memory of our friend and colleague, Stephen A. Henthorne, who was an original author of this course and succumbed to COVID-19 in 2021.

Last but certainly not least, we dedicate this course in general to the many civilian, police, and military professionals, past and present, who have served and sacrificed in the cause of peace to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, as stated in the preamble to the Charter of the United Nations.

— Christopher Holshek and Cedric de Coning, July 2024

## Method of Study

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*This self-paced course aims to give students flexibility in their approach to learning. The following steps are meant to provide motivation and guidance about some possible strategies and minimum expectations for completing this course successfully:*

- Before you begin studying, first browse through the entire course. Notice the lesson and section titles to get an overall idea of what will be involved as you proceed.
  - The material is meant to be relevant and practical. Instead of memorizing individual details, strive to understand concepts and overall perspectives in regard to the United Nations system.
  - Set personal guidelines and benchmarks regarding how you want to schedule your time.
  - Study the lesson content and the learning objectives. At the beginning of each lesson, orient yourself to the main points. If possible, read the material twice to ensure maximum understanding and retention, and let time elapse between readings.
  - At the end of each lesson, take the End-of-Lesson Quiz. Clarify any missed questions by rereading the appropriate sections, and focus on retaining the correct information.
  - After you complete all of the lessons, prepare for the End-of-Course Examination by taking time to review the main points of each lesson. Then, when ready, log into your online student classroom and take the End-of-Course Examination in one sitting.
- » ***Access your online classroom at***  
***<[www.peaceopstraining.org/users/user\\_login](http://www.peaceopstraining.org/users/user_login)>***  
***from virtually anywhere in the world.***
- Your exam will be scored electronically. If you achieve a passing grade of 75 per cent or higher on the exam, you will be awarded a Certificate of Completion. If you score below 75 per cent, you will be given one opportunity to take a second version of the End-of-Course Examination.
  - A note about language: This course uses English spelling according to the standards of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (United Kingdom) and the *United Nations Editorial Manual*.

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# LESSON 1

## What Is Civil-Military Coordination?



The need for better civil-military coordination is driven by the complexity of the peace operations environment, growing demand, and increasingly limited resources.

UN Photo by Micheal Ali.

### In This Lesson »

- Section 1.1 The Nature of Civil-Military Coordination
- Section 1.2 Peace Operations, the Use of Force, and Civil-Military Coordination
- Section 1.3 Comparative Approaches to Civil-Military Coordination

### Lesson Objectives »

- Understand what civil-military coordination is and what it is not.
- Explain how international laws and criteria on the use of force apply to civil-military coordination.
- Distinguish among major international civil-military approaches.



*The region of Menaka, located 1,500 km from Bamako in the northeast of Mali, has been experiencing increasing insecurity as a result of attacks by terrorist groups and other armed groups. United Nations Police serving with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) carry out daily patrols in order to secure the civilian population. 13 June 2021. UN Photo by Gema Cortes.*

## Introduction

Civil-military coordination is an inherently strategic endeavour that, regardless of doctrinal approach, type and scope of operation, or level of application, is essentially about managing interactions between disparate players involved in or peripheral to the peace process and the transition from conflict to peace. Civil-military coordination is often misconstrued as “public affairs” or as a “force multiplier”. In reality, it is central to United Nations field mission integration and the achievement of a system-wide impact on the conflict that a peace operation is attempting to transform.

Civil-military coordination is the dialogue and interface between the civilian, police, and military components of a peace operation with respect to political, societal, security, humanitarian, developmental, and other factors. This dialogue and interface can help attain larger, more strategic political goals related to conflict prevention, peacemaking, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, or peacebuilding, as well as

humanitarian assistance under stabilization or “conflict management” conditions. Effective civil-military coordination and civil engagement enable the fulfilment of a mission’s mandate. Civil-military coordination helps United Nations integrated field missions better see, understand, and influence the all-important civilian operating environment, protect civilians, and enable the peace process, including transitioning the military out of the mission environment at minimal human, financial, and physical cost.

It is well known that military forces alone could not resolve conflicts or keep the peace. The ever-increasing need for better civil-military coordination is driven by the growing complexity, dynamism, and hazards of the peace operations environment, as well as the growing demand for increasingly limited resources. These resources include donor funding and peace operations personnel from troop- and police-contributing countries (TCC/PCCs). In this regard, civil-military coordination is an exercise in the military principle of economy of force or effort.

Coordination among myriad actors did not come naturally and requires dedicated efforts, specialized civil-military expertise, and specific guidance. Many TCC/PCCs and mission staff officers with mission coordination responsibilities are often not prepared for this vital undertaking, which hampers the interoperability and integrity of different organizations working for a common purpose as part of or in partnership with United Nations-mandated peace operations. However, it is not only incumbent upon military staff to understand civil-military coordination; this is also a duty of component professionals in the civilian and police contingents. As the 2022 United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO) *Policy on Civil-Military Coordination in UN Integrated Peacekeeping Missions* (UN-CIMIC Policy) makes clear: “All components within the mission structure should mainstream civil-military activities in their workplans, activities, training, monitoring and evaluation.”<sup>1</sup>

This course is intended to ensure preparedness for this role and contribute as such to greater peace operations effectiveness.

## Section 1.1 The Nature of Civil-Military Coordination

### A historical view of civil-military coordination

Civil-military coordination is as old as peace and war. In Julius Caesar’s *Commentaries on the Gallic Wars*, the political and military spheres are described as having been intertwined in civil-military government, as they were in ancient Persia, India, and China. Many aspects of the medieval European codes of chivalry and Japanese *bushido* were rules on how warriors were to interact with civilians — politically and socially. Both conflict and peace comprise, above all, a political undertaking deciding the fates of peoples.

As war became deadlier on a mass scale in the mid-nineteenth century, organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross formed to deal with wounded warriors and the impact of battle on civilian populations. The international norms for civil-military interaction, including the military, government, and humanitarian responsibilities of commanders towards populations in territories they occupied, became codified in the Hague Conventions of 1908 and the Geneva Conventions of 1949. From the Second World War onwards, most victims of conflicts have been civilians, as conflict and peace have become increasingly people-centric. After the Cold War, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) increased in number and capacity. At the same time, military concepts and capabilities for civil-military coordination grew as military forces saw more frequent involvement in humanitarian assistance and development operations between peace and war. The lines between the activities of civilian and military organizations began to blur, necessitating greater coordination between them.

1) DPO, *Policy: Civil-Military Coordination in UN Integrated Peacekeeping Missions (UN-CIMIC)*, Ref. 2022. 01, 1 January 2022, B.7. Available from: <[https://resourcehub01.blob.core.windows.net/\\$web/Policy%20and%20Guidance/corepeacekeepingguidance/Thematic%20Operational%20Activities/Military/2022.01%20Civil-Military%20Coordination%20in%20UN%20Integrated%20Peacekeeping%20Missions%20\(UN-CIMIC\)\(Policy\).pdf](https://resourcehub01.blob.core.windows.net/$web/Policy%20and%20Guidance/corepeacekeepingguidance/Thematic%20Operational%20Activities/Military/2022.01%20Civil-Military%20Coordination%20in%20UN%20Integrated%20Peacekeeping%20Missions%20(UN-CIMIC)(Policy).pdf)>.



By the twenty-first century, “security” had taken on a new meaning. As violent conflict occurred more within States than between them, the concept of “human security” emerged. In its 1994 *Human Development Report*,<sup>2</sup> the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) introduced a new concept of human security, identifying the security of communities and resilience of civil society as the keys to peace and stability. The democratization of both conflict and peace occurred as technology and globalization distributed power, once exclusive to States, to individuals and networks both legitimate and illicit. Unlike the conventional national security fixation with threats, human security is more about the drivers of conflict and instability — the difference between treating symptoms and curing the disease or preventing its outbreak in the first place. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention have grown as civil-military enterprises in response to this paradigm shift.

Further adding to the complexity and dynamism of peace and security, the drivers of conflict have become psychological as well as physical — encompassing misinformation and disinformation, cyberattacks, illicit networks, violent extremists, and other asymmetric challenges. This is prompting a revision of concepts such as civil defence, societal resilience, and even the protection of civilians. Peace operations personnel must now focus more on (indirectly) enabling civilians to protect themselves against many of these asymmetric, non-military drivers as much as (directly) protecting them from armed threats, giving even greater impetus to the partnership aspect of the civil-military and security enterprises.

All this time, the impetus and demand for more comprehensive, collaborative, and coordinated approaches in international interventions have grown. As the capacities for humanitarian response and the promotion of peace and civil society increasingly lie with civilian entities, including rule-of-law instruments such as the police, civil-military coordination has equally developed as a nexus of conflict management and resolution. This makes civil-military coordination more than incidental to increasingly integrated operations. In truth, this has always been the case.

Viewed strategically, two imperatives have driven the need for better mission coordination and civil-military coordination in peace operations. For one, the complexity of the peace operations environment requires greater coordination among actors, programmes, and activities because of their cross-cutting impacts and interdependency. Secondly, increasingly limited resources in the face of growing demand means more must be done with less. Available resources (including funding and peace operations personnel) must be used more judiciously, efficiently, and effectively. Because peace and conflict exist within the same continuum, it is important to understand and integrate civil-military coordination among the primary ways by which both are managed.

## **What is civil-military coordination?**

Understanding the nature of civil-military coordination is paramount to being able to conduct it adaptively and effectively. First, civil-military coordination is inherently strategic. As well as the management of interactions among a complexity of players involved in or peripheral to the peace process, it entails the management of transition and consolidation from conflict to peace, shifting from short-term military and security concerns to long-term civil and political outcomes — and from military to civilian dominance of that transition. As such, it can be considered the nexus of any complex peace operation because it is central to United Nations mission coordination and the achievement of a system-wide impact on the conflict the peace process is attempting to transform — a subset and a synonym for the coordination of a complex, multidimensional integrated United Nations field mission.

Civil-military coordination, like peacebuilding, concentrates more on the drivers of conflict and instability, which are deeply rooted and long term, and therefore more strategic challenges, rather than superficial immediate threats,

2) UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). Available from: <<https://hdr.undp.org/content/human-development-report-1994>>.



*Peace operations personnel from Zambia have been deployed with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in the northeast of the Central African Republic since June 2019.*

*Seen here are four personnel from Zambia speaking with the local population during a patrol of the area to protect the civilians. 05 February 2020. UN Photo by Herve Sereffo.*

which are more of an operational or tactical problem. Many of these drivers emanate from the security sector, typically comprising a variety of police, intelligence, and military agencies. This interest in drivers and threats is also reflected in the UN-CIMIC Policy's emphasis on the civil-operational estimate (CIV-OES) as a major deliverable for the mission at large and the military component in particular.

Second, civil-military coordination is inherently integrative. As the nexus of mission coordination, civil-military coordination integrates civil and military capacities in peace and security operations and all the inflexions of national power (political, military, economic, informational, etc.) through civil analysis, coordination, and liaison. Civil-military operators play a central role in synchronizing a host of multicomponent ways and means to manage and resolve conflict, helping leverage the comparative advantages of all actors to generate desired mission outcomes and effects.

From a military operations standpoint, civil-military coordination fuses the material and moral (or physical and psychological) aspects of peace and security. Its civil information and engagement roles can contribute immensely to mitigating mis- and disinformation and other people-related asymmetric threats, enabling both moral and physical spaces for intersectoral and inter-organizational dialogue. As such, civil-military coordination operationalizes peace, which, in more practical terms, is the greater propensity of actors to choose civil dialogue over civil violence as the way to resolve conflict.

Third, civil-military coordination is the applied civil-military relationship in democratic civil society. Because it promotes dialogue and interface among the civilian, police, and military components of a peace operation, with the primary aim of more effective mission coordination, it can also help normalize the relationships among those same three components in the host State that form the security sector — unconsciously if not intentionally. As the 2015 *Report of the High-Level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations* (known as the HIPPO Report) noted, rather than military and technical engagements, "Political solutions should always guide the design and deployment of UN peace operations".<sup>3</sup> This invokes both the democratic principle of the primacy of civil authority as well as the idea of war and peace as an extension of policy.

As such, civil-military coordination operationalizes the civil-military relationship in democratic civil society and is a continuous, politically driven dialogue in problem-solving, innovation, and expectations management, regardless

3) United Nations General Assembly-Security Council, *Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects*, A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015, 10. Available from: <<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2F70%2F95&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>>.



of the type, scale, or intensity of the operation. The truth of the matter is that it is not the civilian and police components that are the “force multipliers” — this role belongs to the military component as the force that multiplies the other components. A deployable working model of the civil-military relationship in democratic civil society is, in fact, found in any multicomponent, multidimensional United Nations integrated mission, as the military force uses its capacities to support and “multiply” the efforts of its civilian and police partners.

This course describes the process of how civil-military coordination enables external civilian and local (or internal) partners, respectively and from a non-doctrinal perspective, as “civilianizing” and “localizing”; these are discussed in greater detail in Lesson 4. Carried out simultaneously as well as sequentially, civilianizing and localizing are processes by which military civil-military operators work alongside, with, and through civilian and police partners to improve local capacity and confidence and enable the eventual withdrawal of the external peace operations force. While this general civil-military approach is ideal for transitioning from stabilization to peace operations to peacebuilding, it is also appropriate for supporting humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, as well as in conflict prevention.

Fourth, civil-military coordination can be said to embody what the Chinese military philosopher Sun Tzu called “winning without fighting”. This involves employing non-military and non-lethal ways and means to achieve political aims short of armed conflict. In peace operations, of course, the aim is not victory over an enemy — the enemy, in fact, is the conflict itself. Therefore, the use of non-military, non-lethal ways and means to win the peace (as defined in the mission mandate) is more desirable, less resource-intensive and risky, and more effective than it is in winning wars. In many ways, it entails the same approach as conflict prevention, although it also takes place during conflict. Influence, legitimacy, and credibility are the desired effects of winning the peace without fighting. Those who tend to be more successful at it are learning organizations, that is, those entities that facilitate the learning of the people that compose them and prioritize growth through knowledge transfer.

Civil-military coordination, as an inherently people-centric organizational learning endeavour, not only effectively marshals the psychological as well as physical elements of power to gain and grow influence, legitimacy, and credibility, but it also opens and integrates an expansive array of non-lethal options for mission leadership. Its civil analysis and engagement capacities and activities help them to see, understand, and influence the civil environment. Lastly, by helping the mission win the peace without fighting, civil-military coordination acts as a primary economy of force or effort capacity.

Lieutenant General (retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz wrote on how civil-military coordination helps protect the force and the mission in his seminal 2017 study *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers*:

“Civilian-military coordination (CIMIC) activities help prevent attacks and permit an operational response by reinforcing local support networks and obtaining essential information.”<sup>4</sup>

Fifth, civil-military coordination is adaptive leadership. More than managing the links between peace and security, drivers and threats, and strategy and tactics, it is about persuasion, collaborative problem-solving, and consensus-building; it is not about coercion and command and control. Moreover, civil-military leadership is done mostly by example. Given that actions speak louder than words, the personal behaviour of peace operations personnel — guided by the United Nations Code of Conduct — has the greatest impact on gaining or losing influence, legitimacy, and credibility in the mission area. Simply talking about human rights, sexual and gender-based violence,

4) Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers: We need to change the way we are doing business*, 19 December 2017. 13. Available from: <[https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/improving\\_security\\_of\\_united\\_nations\\_peacekeepers\\_report.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/improving_security_of_united_nations_peacekeepers_report.pdf)>.

gender mainstreaming, respect for others, and other such issues is inadequate. One must also demonstrate commitment to principles and values. This gives every peace operations personnel member from every component an inherent role in civil-military coordination, making it an essential twenty-first-century peacekeeping skill or capacity.

As an exercise in learning and adaptive leadership by example, civil-military coordination is also fundamentally about partnership — shared values, goals, and principles, if not shared objectives and methodologies — through a co-created learning network in which those working for peace can learn faster and better than the spoilers to that process. One of the things that binds all three components of a United Nations mission — civilian, police, and military — is their sense of public service to three constituents: the international community the United Nations mission represents, the contributing countries from where they come, and most importantly, the host State and its local community. Setting this example is important to building the capacity and confidence of local partners and instilling the same sense of unity of purpose in their three components.

Given the importance and complexity of the mandate, civil-military coordination professionals must, therefore, be among the best of their kind — with superior civil assessment and analysis, planning, operational integration, and project management capabilities. Beyond thinking and acting strategically and adaptively, they must contend with numerous policy and operational frameworks and communicate and work effectively in both civilian and military worlds. They must be effective speakers and writers and have negotiation and mediation skills. They must also possess the right attitude; civil-military coordination, after all, is more a mindset than a skill set.

As practitioners of strategic and operational management, civil-military coordinators must be able to think globally and act locally (or think strategically while acting tactically) and artfully leverage the comparative advantages of each component or partner to maximize stakeholders in and minimize spoilers to the peace process in the right place, manner, and time.

### **What civil-military coordination is not**

Civil-military coordination is not “winning hearts and minds” (i.e. using intellectual or emotional appeals to gain public support) or public relations. Among the greatest misconceptions is that civil-military coordination is a tactical activity in the pursuit of public relations agendas. In numerous operations, such a short-sighted approach has proven counterproductive because it limits the aim and effect of both military and peace operations. In addition to being harmful to applied strategic thinking, it can place greater moral focus on a person’s own legitimacy and credibility rather than on those the person is trying to help (i.e., on external more than internal actors). Additionally, it can present significant dangers and risks, especially to humanitarian partners, become unsustainable, or run counter to the democratic civil-military relationship in civil society. Furthermore, it has the potential to reinforce rather than reduce local dependency on military forces, and thus encumber the military and political end states. Civil-military coordination also risks the perception that the force is taking sides in the conflict, compromising the peace operation’s principle of impartiality, along with the mission’s legitimacy, credibility, and influence.

Along these lines, although some contingents may conduct their own public affairs initiatives to improve relations with the local population, in the context of United Nations peace operations, they cannot designate them as CIMIC projects. In the United Nations context, these projects are not allowable, except in support of civilian-directed humanitarian projects, quick-impact projects (QIPs), or projects to alleviate human suffering. In these instances, the military is clearly the supporting and not the leading component, and the project must have some kind of capacity-building effect.

As an essential element of twenty-first-century peace and security strategy and operations, regardless of how conventional or asymmetrical, large- or small-scale, or violent a conflict is, civil-military coordinators are not extraordinary to operations, nor are they enablers, combat multipliers, or something to do after the battle. As a result, high demands are placed on their knowledge, skills, and other personal and professional capacities.

## Section 1.2 Peace Operations, the Use of Force, and Civil-Military Coordination

The principle of the rule of law looms large in understanding the context of civil-military coordination. An implied task for civil-military professionals is to understand the international legal frameworks and criteria for the use of force established through civilian political decisions.

### The legal framework for United Nations peace operations

The legal authority of the United Nations as the international body responsible for global peace and security derives from Article 1 of the *Charter of the United Nations*, which states that the purpose of the United Nations is:

“[...] to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace”.<sup>5</sup>



*Representatives of the civilian, military, and police components of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) held the first of several meetings, focusing on the theme of peace and reconciliation, with students of the University of Bamako and explained the mandate of the United Nations mission. A wide view of the setting during the presentation by MINUSMA to university students. 18 April 2014. UN Photo by Marco Dormino.*

5) United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, 1945, 1 UNTS XVI, I.1.1. Available from: <<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>>.

Although Chapter VI of the Charter does not specifically refer to the deployment of troops to monitor or supervise ceasefires or peace agreements, most traditional peace operations were authorized under the provisions of Chapter VI (the peaceful settlement of disputes) and have been referred to as Chapter VI missions, these missions are only authorized to use minimum force — in other words, to only use force in self-defence or defence of the mandate.

Chapter VII, however, provides for enforcement powers, entitled “Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression”. Article 39 empowers the Security Council to determine threats to the peace, make recommendations, or decide what measures to employ to restore international peace and security. Article 41 deals with enforcement measures that do not involve the use of armed force, such as economic sanctions and the severance of diplomatic relations. Article 42 gives the Security Council the power to take any action necessary to maintain or restore international peace and security.

The *Charter of the United Nations* remains relevant to any discussion and analysis of peace operations and civil-military coordination in peace operations. No matter how peace operations evolve, they have to remain true to the spirit, principles, and provisions of the Charter, especially Chapters VI and VII, as well as the laws of war set out in the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law.

### International criteria on the use of force — Lethal and Non-Lethal

A more conscientious approach to the use of force is a defining characteristic of complex contemporary United Nations peace operations. Although still grounded in and characterized by the core principles of consent, impartiality, and the minimum use of force, the interpretation and application of these principles in practice have developed considerably. In 2008, the then Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) released *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*,<sup>6</sup> a policy document also known as the Capstone Doctrine.<sup>7</sup> The document provides a contemporary understanding of the three basic principles of United Nations peace operations: consent, impartiality, and non-use of force, except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

**Consent** by the parties to the peace or ceasefire agreement is a dynamic and multi-layered concept. It is essential for mission success and must be constantly managed, but it may often be lacking at the tactical level.

**Impartiality** means the mandate must be applied without favour or prejudice to the parties to the peace agreement. It should not be confused with neutrality. Neutrality, in the context of peace operations, refers to non-interference. If the United Nations mission is mandated to act — for instance, to protect civilians — it will not be bound by non-interference but will act according to its mandate. Accordingly, United Nations peace operations are often said to be impartial but not neutral, i.e., the mission will not take sides, but it will act against any party that is in breach of its mandate.

**The non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate** implies that a United Nations peace operation uses the minimum force necessary to protect itself and others covered by its mandate, but it is also now understood that United Nations peace operations should have the capacity and mandate to prevent or counter serious threats, including threats against those it has been mandated to protect. This principle relates to the humanitarian civil-military principles of “do no harm” and “last resort” discussed in Lesson 3.

The Capstone Doctrine also introduced the concept of “robust peacekeeping”, in which the use of force at the tactical level may be necessary when authorized by the Security Council to defend the mission and its mandate and to protect civilians.

6) United Nations, *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines*, 2008. Available from: <[https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/capstone\\_eng\\_0.pdf](https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/capstone_eng_0.pdf)>.

7) As part of organizational restructuring beginning 1 January 2019, DPKO became the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA) became the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA).

In addition to the peace operations principles, the 2004 Report of the Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change entitled *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility* identifies five basic criteria of legitimacy that the Security Council should always address when authorizing the use of force. While intended for the use of lethal force, these same criteria may be appropriate when considering the use of any non-lethal military capabilities, for example, in civil-military activities.

- » *"Seriousness of threat.* Is the threatened harm to State or human security of a kind, and sufficiently clear and serious, to justify *prima facie* the use of military force? [...]
- » *Proper purpose.* Is it clear that the primary purpose of the proposed military action is to halt or avert the threat in question [...]?
- » *Last resort.* Has every non-military option for meeting the threat in question been explored [...]?
- » *Proportional means.* Are the scale, duration and intensity of the proposed military action the minimum necessary to meet the threat in question? [...]
- » *Balance of consequences.* Is there a reasonable chance of the military action being successful in meeting the threat in question, with the consequences of action not likely to be worse than the consequences of inaction?"<sup>8</sup>

These criteria emphasize clear purpose and appropriate limitations on the use of force, with careful consideration of consequences. Just as the in rules of engagement on the use of deadly force, these are the kinds of considerations that practitioners of civil-military coordination should foremost consider.

The Capstone Doctrine also stresses three other success factors: **legitimacy**, **local ownership**, and **credibility**. The legitimacy of United Nations peace operations is derived from its unique position in international law, the *Charter of the United Nations*, and Security Council authorization. This legitimacy is rightly seen as one of the key assets — and comparative advantages — of United Nations peace operations. United Nations operations can lose legitimacy when perceived to be serving national or regional interests and when they fail to secure local ownership, to be discussed more in Lesson 4.

A peace process cannot be consolidated if it is not locally owned and if the host State cannot assume responsibility for its own governance. United Nations missions and other international actors can inadvertently undermine local ownership. A more people-centric approach to peace operations with analysis-driven community engagement can help mitigate this risk. Although the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) could appoint an advisory board of community leaders such as prominent religious, academic, and other civil society personalities, the best judge of the effectiveness of the mission is ordinary people — do they feel safer, or is their trust in the justice

8) United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change*, 2004, 67. Available from: <[https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/hlp\\_more\\_secure\\_world.pdf](https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/hlp_more_secure_world.pdf)>.



system decreasing? Civil-military coordinators and military engagement personnel have a unique vantage point to observe and assess this.

It is challenging but critical to also maintain credibility — a critical success factor — throughout the lifetime of a peace operation. Missions have lost credibility for a variety of reasons, mainly because of failures to protect civilians and themselves from being a threat through sexual abuse and exploitation and other offences. This is often amplified by mis- and disinformation, underscoring how civil-military coordination, at its base level, must be a form of leadership by example.

The Capstone Doctrine recognizes that, while United Nations peace operations are meant to support the peace process, they cannot deliver peace on their own. United Nations peace operations are part of a larger peacebuilding process. In this larger context, the core business of United Nations peace operations is threefold. First, missions should create a secure and stable environment, including strengthening the capacity of the State to provide security with full respect for the rule of law and human rights. Second, United Nations peace operations should facilitate the political process by promoting and enabling dialogue on peace, security, and reconciliation, as well as supporting the establishment of legitimate and efficient governance institutions. Third, they should provide a framework for ensuring that the United Nations, along with other international actors, pursues its activities at the country level in a coherent and coordinated manner.

However, in the twenty-first century, the context for collective security and the use of force with respect to the *Charter of the United Nations* has changed. With the blurring of lines between State and non-State actors and between combatants and civilians, the distribution of power, and the rise of human (versus State) security invoking the protection of (often traumatized) civilians as well as conflict prevention, peace operations have become more complex. The HIPPO Report acknowledges that United Nations peace operations may find themselves, to some extent, involved in stabilization or conflict management roles. With respect to deterring further escalation of violence, containing the conflict, protecting civilians, and reviving the peace process, the HIPPO Report calls for clear guidance on the use of force under more robust circumstances. It goes on to state that:

“Peacekeeping operations are but one tool at the disposal of the Security Council and they should perform a circumscribed set of roles. In this regard, the Panel believes that UN troops should not undertake military counterterrorism operations. Extreme caution should guide the mandating of enforcement tasks to degrade, neutralize or defeat a designated enemy. Such operations should be exceptional, time-limited and undertaken with full awareness of the risks and responsibilities for the UN mission as a whole. Where a parallel force is engaged in offensive combat operations it is important for UN peacekeeping operations to maintain a clear division of labour and distinction of roles.”<sup>9</sup>



*The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) Human Rights Division worked with the South Sudan People's Defense Force to launch an action plan to address combat-related sexual violence and to foster dialogue between the military and civil society. 14 June 2019. UN Photo by Eric Kanalstein.*

9) United Nations General Assembly-Security Council, *Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects*, A/70/95-S/2015/446, 17 June 2015, x.

All this has critical implications for civil-military coordination. The legitimacy and credibility of the presence and activities of peace operations forces are essential to conflict transformation, particularly in the engagement of local civilian partners and populations. This is why the principles described below — especially the primacy of civilian authority — reflect the civil-military relationship legitimized in democratic societies. This not only ensures the appropriate operational application of military power but also substantiates the moral and legal standing of the peace operation and encourages partner and host-State security sectors to emulate this important relationship.

### Some operative principles of civil-military coordination

Below are some operative principles that practitioners of civil-military coordination in peace operations may consider applying, regardless of mission or circumstances. They are mindful of the integrated United Nations peace operations model and are mainly drawn from the international legal framework for peace operations and criteria for the use of force, as well as the principles of peace operations and the 2022 UN-CIMIC Policy.

- **The Primacy of Civilian Authority:** Civilian authority is paramount in United Nations missions. The SRSG is responsible for overseeing the operations of the entire mission. The Head of Military Component (HOMC), i.e., the Force Commander, is responsible for planning, coordinating, and executing military operations. In an integrated mission, the Force Commander comes under SRSG authority.
- **The Military is Supporting and Not Supported:** The division of labour, as explained in the UN-CIMIC Policy, is as follows: Delivery of a secure environment is primarily a military function, while support to the political process and long-term social stability (including through the delivery of the rule of law, governance, humanitarian assistance, and development) are primarily civilian functions. The force takes the lead role in security but plays a supporting — and never a supported — role in civilian-led or police-mandated tasks. The implied task, for both the military component and its civilian and police partners, is a solid grasp of the civil situation and the political and social context of mission operations, the efforts and issues of other components, and ways in which the military can make a constructive contribution to the mission as a whole.
- **The Military as Enabler:** The essential aim of civil-military coordination is for the military to create enabling conditions for civilian organizations and partners — especially the host-State government and local communities — to accelerate the peace process and bring about the mission end state. Beyond delivering a secure environment, the military can help build the capacity of and confidence in external and internal civilian or police partners by leveraging its organizational comparative advantages in planning, coordination, intelligence, logistics, training, etc., facilitating the eventual departure of military forces. In other words, the paradoxical purpose of civil-military coordination is to help work the military force out of its job.
- **Indirect Versus Direct Support:** To minimize dependency on the force and to promote locally led and locally owned solutions, UN-CIMIC activities should be indirect. Civil-military coordination should be conducted by, with, and through United Nations and other international or external civilian partners as their “multiplier” to improve local capacities and confidence. Direct civil assistance should only be in cases of dire need and last resort: when no police or civilian alternative is available or when immediate action is required.
- **Managing Civil-Military Interaction and Transition:** Civil-military coordination is done along two lines. The first is to manage the operational and tactical interaction (or relationship) among civilian, military, and police components in peace operations. The second is to maximize and leverage the comparative advantage of all actors operating in the mission area to facilitate the transition from peace operations to peacebuilding. Civil-military coordination is, thus, a strategic leadership and mission coordination function within the context of the peace operation.



## Section 1.3 Comparative Approaches to Civil-Military Coordination

### The United Nations: two Complementary concepts for civil-military coordination

Peace operations do not take place in isolation and will always require some form of coordination between the peace operation itself and other actors in the country in which the peace operation is deployed. In the past, civil-military coordination was primarily a liaison task. It has now developed into a dedicated and specialized function that is considered a critical factor in the success of contemporary humanitarian assistance and complex peace operations. This is the main reason why the United Nations has developed two recognized, complementary frameworks for civil-military coordination: humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) and UN-CIMIC.

**UN-CMCoord** is the United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) concept on humanitarian civil-military coordination. Discussed in more detail in Lesson 2, UN-CMCoord is “the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals”.<sup>10</sup>

The key coordination elements in natural disasters and complex emergencies are information-sharing, task division, and planning. The five CMCoord tasks are:

1. Establish and sustain dialogue with military and other armed actors;
2. Establish mechanisms for information exchange and humanitarian action with military forces and other armed actors;
3. Assist in negotiations in critical areas of interaction between humanitarian actors, military forces, and other armed actors;
4. Support the development and dissemination of context-specific guidance for the interaction of the humanitarian community with the forces and other armed actors; and
5. Observe the activity of military forces and other armed actors to ensure that distinction is maintained and to avoid negative impact on humanitarian action.

**UN-CIMIC** is a military staff function that facilitates the interface between the military, police, and civilian components of a United Nations mission, as well as between the military force and all other civilians in the mission area. Although UN-CIMIC is not a civil-military operations doctrine, its core principles are to:

- Facilitate the integration of joint, multicomponent efforts;
- Provide a key link from the military to the civilian and police components of a mission as well as mission partners such as humanitarian and development actors, host-State military and local populations; and
- Produce civil and civil-military analysis in conjunction with military operations and in support of achieving the mission mandate.

10) OCHA, *UN-CMCoord: United Nations Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination: Guide for the Military, 2.0*, 31 May 2017, 53. Available from: <[https://reliefweb.int/report/world/un-cmcoord-guide-military-20-101-series-enarres?\\_gl=1\\*zv8iiw\\*\\_ga\\*MTc1MTQ30Tc1My4xNzA5OTMzMzMTg1\\*\\_ga\\_E60ZNX2F68\\*MTcxMjE3NTE3Mi4xNi4wLjE3MTIxNzUxNjAuMC4w](https://reliefweb.int/report/world/un-cmcoord-guide-military-20-101-series-enarres?_gl=1*zv8iiw*_ga*MTc1MTQ30Tc1My4xNzA5OTMzMzMTg1*_ga_E60ZNX2F68*MTcxMjE3NTE3Mi4xNi4wLjE3MTIxNzUxNjAuMC4w)>.

UN-CIMIC is conducted by military staff and contingents in peace operations at the operational (mission or national HQ) and tactical (sector or battalion HQ) levels. Coordination encompasses activities undertaken and/or facilitated by military components of United Nations integrated missions across the full spectrum of United Nations peace operations, particularly as part of integrated assessments, analysis, planning, execution, and monitoring and evaluation. In support of this larger mandate, UN-CIMIC personnel take on the following core tasks:

- Developing an up-to-date and accurate comprehensive civilian operational picture. UN-CIMIC supports the establishment and maintenance of a coherent, real-time, operational understanding of the civilian situation in the mission area to support planning and operations efforts for the mission;
- Providing analysis, early warning, risk, and threat assessment of the civilian operating environment by developing a civil-operational estimate (CIV-OES) at operational (Force HQ) and tactical (sector HQ/battalion HQ) levels. It identifies risks and opportunities in the broad spectrum of civil-military interaction in United Nations military peace operations, primarily for the military component;
- Contributing to overall planning efforts by developing the CIV-OES in close collaboration with respective military branches, United Nations Police (UNPOL), mission components, and in coordination and collaboration with integrated mission partners;
- Identifying risks and opportunities, providing mission leadership with an enhanced understanding of trends and changes in the civilian operational landscape and associated risks and opportunities with respect to the safety and security of host-State civilians;
- Coordinating and liaising to share, gather, verify, and analyse information on the civilian operational environment;
- Supporting mission QIPs, which are small-scale, quickly implementable projects intended to benefit local communities;
- Facilitating requests for support needed to alleviate human suffering or for humanitarian support from humanitarian actors; and
- Requesting support from the humanitarian/development actors to United Nations military components.

While not a UN-CIMIC function or task, civil assistance is a support function that includes three types of related activities undertaken by the military component of a United Nations integrated mission:



*A large number of both uniformed and civilian staff serving with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) have responded to the COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Beni in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and received their vaccines. 05 June 2021. UN Photo by Micheal Ali.*

- Provide life-saving supplies/assistance if no other political authority or humanitarian/development actor has the access or ability to do so in a timely and effective manner to eliminate the threat of loss of life;
- Support the civilian population and authorities or carry out community support projects, which are often related to physical infrastructure repair/rehabilitation. These are designed to help fill gaps in partner or local capacity that would otherwise risk the loss of public confidence in the peace process (e.g., QIPs); and
- Support, in the operational context of alleviating human suffering, humanitarian and development actors, only upon request, limited in time and space, within military means and capabilities, and only as a last resort.

At the tactical level, United Nations field mission military formations plan and conduct civil disturbance control jointly with other components, and United Nations manoeuvre battalions are mandated to plan and conduct civil engagement through engagement platoons by the 2020 *United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual*, which will be discussed in Lesson 7.

National civil-military approaches and styles may be adapted by TCC/PCC contingents as long as they conform with or do not contravene the principles of peace operations, the laws and principles on the use of force, and especially UN-CMCoord and UN-CIMIC policies and guidelines as they apply to the mission mandate and situation at hand. One of these areas, as mentioned, is the avoidance of stand-alone CIMIC projects.

### **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) civil-military cooperation (CIMIC)**

NATO civil-military cooperation is often considered the most referenced civil-military enterprise worldwide and the template for many national civil-military concepts and doctrines within and outside NATO. It is motivated by the need to ensure the efficient synchronization between the instruments of power by applying a comprehensive approach in which CIMIC plays a key role in synchronizing military and non-military activities by establishing liaison with relevant non-military actors. United Nations civil-military coordination is motivated by the need to maximize coordination between the military and civilian components of an integrated mission, between the military component and the rest of the United Nations system, and between the military component and other external and internal civilian actors.

For NATO, CIMIC supports behaviour-centric and comprehensive approaches in ensuring the synchronization of military and non-military capabilities, capacities and resources in order to reach converging effects. In particular, CIMIC contributes to the understanding of the operating environment and synchronizes military and non-military action through its core activities civil factor integration and civil-military interaction (CMI). CMI is a general term for “activities between military NATO bodies and non-military actors to foster mutual understanding that enhance effectiveness and efficiency in crisis management and conflict prevention and resolution”.<sup>11</sup>

An integral part of all NATO core tasks, NATO CIMIC is “a military joint function that integrates the understanding of the civil factors of the operating environment and that enables, facilitates and conducts civil-military interaction to support the accomplishment of missions and military strategic objectives in peacetime, crisis and conflict.”<sup>12</sup> Compared to UN-CIMIC, it emphasizes the principle of civilian primacy with respect to civilian tasks (but not with respect to military tasks).

11) NATO, *NATO Standard AJP-3.19: Allied Joint Doctrine for Civil-Military Cooperation*, Edition B, Version 1, Ratification Draft, September 2023, 16. Not available in open sources; however, summaries and further information are available from: <<https://www.cimic-coe.org>>.

12) NATO, *NATO Standard AJP-3.19*, 6.

It does, however, embrace the United Nations approach to human security, integrating human security principles into all of NATO core military tasks. Its concept of “military contribution to human security (MC2HS)” includes: protection of civilians (PoC), combating trafficking in human beings (CTHB), building integrity in operations (BIIO), children in armed conflict (CAAC), cultural property protection (CPP), and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). Along with women, peace and security (WPS) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), NATO CIMIC doctrine identifies all of these as “cross-cutting topics” for all military operations. Promoting civilian resilience also plays large in NATO CIMIC.

NATO’s approach to military operations is also “people centered, protection and prevention oriented, accounts for local customs, consistent with international law, respects the humanitarian space, respects sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and engages with relevant actors. Consideration of the comprehensive safety and security of populations will be embedded into all stages and levels of NATO operations, missions, and activities.”<sup>13</sup>

Instead of the CIV-OES process, NATO CIMIC’s civil factor integration (CFI) encompasses the identification, analysis, and assessment of civil factors of the operating environment to contribute to the military decision-making process. NATO CIMIC supports the staff gender advisor (GENAD) by contributing to the analysis, assessment and understanding of civil factors as well as applying the gender perspective to the CFI process in understanding how men, women, boys and girls are differently affected by military operations and activities. In similar fashion to UN-CIMIC, NATO contributes to intelligence indirectly through CFI.

For NATO, CIMIC is both a joint function and a staff function (whereas UN-CIMIC is only a military staff function). The core CIMIC activities are CMI and CFI, conducted by CIMIC capabilities that include: the CIMIC theatre element (CIMIC TE) that supports the operational level headquarters; CIMIC staff elements and liaisons attached at various levels of command; CIMIC units including battalions, companies, and platoons; and CIMIC functional specialists to provide expertise in public infrastructure and facilities, rule of law, etc. to assist with civil-military planning or conduct CIMIC projects. These may not always be military personnel.

NATO CIMIC principles include:

- Sovereignty of host nations.
- Civil primacy for non-military tasks.
- Understanding of non-military actors and respect for their autonomy in decision-making. This understanding should include both informal and formal actors.
- Clear distinction between the role and function of military actors and non-military actors, especially those operating under the humanitarian principles.
- Proactive interaction with all relevant non-military actors, activities and continuous and effective communication with correspondent non-military counterparts at local, regional, national and international levels.
- Interaction based upon mutual respect, knowledge of respective roles, trust and transparency.
- Promotion of cooperation, mutual information sharing in accordance with existing NATO policies procedure, security agreements and unity of purpose as a desired method to achieve overall aims, objectives and end state.

In addition to CIMIC staff officers in command groups at joint task force, operational, and tactical levels, NATO maintains its Multinational CIMIC Group, which is essentially a multinational CIMIC battalion which integrates civil

13) NATO, *NATO Standard AJP-3.19*, 2.

considerations into NATO operational planning, supports stabilization and reconstruction, conducts CIMIC advisory missions in Eastern Europe and Africa.

NATO also maintains a CIMIC Centre of Excellence (CCoE) in the Netherlands that serves as the training and doctrine centre for NATO CIMIC to help develop and deliver doctrine and operational guidance on CIMIC planning and CIMIC techniques, as well as training for NATO CIMIC officers, specialists, and units. It maintains some very useful online civil-military courses, as well as producing a periodically updated *CIMIC Field Handbook*.<sup>14</sup>

## **African Union (AU) peace operations and civil-military coordination**

The United Nations Security Council is responsible for international peace and security, however cooperation with regional organizations in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Latin America helps the United Nations carry out its responsibility more efficiently and effectively than it could on its own. Such cooperation also builds local capacity and ownership, helping prevent future conflicts. Three considerations explain the importance of regional approaches to peacemaking, peace operations, and peacebuilding:

1. Conflicts are rarely isolated within State borders;
2. Those who are closer to the problem are often in a better position to understand and influence it; and
3. Their proximity ensures that they have a long-term interest in its outcomes.

The most important regional relationship for the United Nations is with the AU. African capacities are an important resource for United Nations peace operations. In the twenty-first century, African countries contributed approximately 50 per cent of all uniformed United Nations peace operations personnel, 60 per cent of its international civilian peace operations personnel, and 80 per cent of its national peace operations personnel. United Nations support is also a critical enabler for AU peace support operations, as the United Nations has provided some form of support to all AU peace operations to date. The United Nations is also an important exit strategy partner for the AU, as many AU peace operations to date have been handed over to the United Nations once sufficient stability has been achieved. The effectiveness of the United Nations and AU peace operations is interdependent on several levels.

The AU has the right to intervene in a Member State under certain grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity, and threats to legitimate order to restore peace and stability.

It is highly likely that an AU Special Political Mission will be found alongside any United Nations peace operation in Africa. Likewise, a United Nations Special Political Mission and/or Support Office will likely be found alongside any AU peace operation. This is true especially since the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2719 in December 2023, which provides for UN financial support to AU-led peace operations. United Nations and AU CIMIC officers and others responsible for coordination and liaison tasks need to be familiar with each other's organizations, as the United Nations and AU are likely to be in some form of strategic partnership in any operation in Africa.

## **AU coordination structures and processes**

The AU Commission acts as the secretariat for AU political structures. The Commission is led by the Chairperson of the AU Commission (the AU counterpart of the Secretary-General).

14) NATO, CIMIC Handbook. Available from: <<https://www.handbook.cimic-coe.org/>>.

## The African Standby Force (ASF) »

Launched in 2003, the ASF plans to provide for five sub-regional standby arrangements, each up to brigade size, which will supply the AU with a combined standby capacity of 15,000 to 20,000 troops. Each regional arrangement will include between 300 and 500 military observers who are trained and ready to deploy on 14 days' notice, a police standby capacity of at least 240 individual officers and two company-strength police units (gendarmerie), and approximately 60 civilian experts. The ASF should enable the AU to deploy two complex peace operations simultaneously.

A centrally managed roster of civilian specialists will also be available in mission administration, human rights, humanitarian operations, governance, and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR).



*Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (right) meets with General Sékouba Konaté, African Union High Representative for the African Standby Force, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. 30 January 2012. UN Photo by Eskinder Debebe.*

The Peace and Security Council (PSC) is the highest decision-making body in the AU and is responsible for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflicts. The PSC has the sole authority to mandate and terminate AU peace operations. The Chairperson of the AU Commission is responsible for the overall planning and management of AU peace operations. The Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD), situated within the Political Affairs and Peace and Security Department (PAPS), is responsible for the day-to-day management of AU peace support operations.

The mission-level or operational management structure will be informed by the mandate of the mission. It typically consists of a Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission (SRCC), one or more Deputy SRCC, a Force Commander, a Commissioner of Police, various heads of substantive civilian components, and a Head of Mission Support. The exact number of civilian personnel, their seniority, and the structure of the various civilian components will be informed by the mandate and scope of the mission.

The office of the SRCC has the overall responsibility for the multidimensional coherence and coordination of the mission. It has the capacity to coordinate all elements of the mission's mandate and is supported by a senior mission management team. AU peace operations have a CIMIC cell in the Force Headquarters, as well as a Sector Headquarters of similar size and function as United Nations peace operations. AU peace operations generally use the same CIMIC policy and approach followed by the United Nations (UN-CIMIC).

## Relationship to United Nations civil-military coordination

The essential difference between the NATO approach and similar activities undertaken in the United Nations context is that United Nations peace operations have an integrated military, civilian, and police mandate and mission structure. The civil-military relationships between components of the peace operation and between the peace operation and the rest of the United Nations system are largely predetermined by the organizational structure of the specific United Nations peace operation. In the case of both UN-CIMIC and UN-CMCoord, the focus is thus on how best to manage the coordination of an established United Nations system.

CIMIC in NATO doctrine is motivated by the need to establish cooperation between the military force as a separate legal entity and external (to NATO) civilian role players in the same area of operations. United Nations peace operations are motivated by the need to maximize coordination among their own multidimensional components and

### African Standby Force Mission Scenarios »

1. AU/regional military advice to a political mission;
2. AU/regional observer mission co-deployed with United Nations mission;
3. AU/regional stand-alone observer mission;
4. AU/regional traditional peacekeeping force for Chapter VI and preventive deployment missions;
5. AU complex multidimensional peacekeeping mission with low-level spoilers, an enduring feature of many current conflicts; or
6. AU intervention, e.g., genocide situations where the international community does not act promptly (peace enforcement).

establish cooperation between the United Nations peace operation and other actors in the peace operations area. As the same United Nations system actors deploy together on most missions, there has been more room to establish system-wide policies and mechanisms that can be used in a range of actual missions.

One of the most obvious differences between civil-military cooperation (as it is used in NATO CIMIC) and civil-military coordination (as it is used in the United Nations context) is the use of two different words, “cooperation” and “coordination”. **In the United Nations context, cooperation is viewed as the strongest relationship that can exist between civilian, military, and police components.** It is seen as a relationship where the component partners agree to synchronize their policies and activities to undertake joint action, but usually only under special conditions, for a limited time, and for a specific purpose, for example, during an election. Under normal circumstances, a less intense relationship is preferred. The minimal form of this relationship is coexistence, especially in the humanitarian context. This normally implies that the parties to this relationship exchange information, come together for coordination meetings, and occasionally undertake some form of joint activity, for instance, a humanitarian convoy with a military escort. Whether in open cooperation or only limited coexistence, some degree of coordination is necessary. Coordination in the United Nations context is, therefore, on a scale from cooperation in its maximum state to coexistence in its minimum state.

Nevertheless, there are some complementarities, if not compatibilities, among AU, NATO, and United Nations civil-military approaches. These major international players all recognize the complex landscape that impacts their approaches to civil-military coordination, the simultaneous nature of everything from conflict prevention to conflict management to peacebuilding, and the need for comprehensive, collaborative, and coordinated approaches. The key for any civil-military practitioner in international peace operations is to become familiar enough with these various approaches to facilitate greater interoperability in general while protecting the integrity of numerous multilateral, regional, and national organizational partners working for a common purpose.

In many ways, civil-military coordination as a mindset is the application of common sense. **Civil-military coordination, at any level, is inherently thinking globally while acting locally and strategically while acting tactically.** Given a more global and strategic understanding of civil-military coordination, mostly in human security terms, it becomes clear that civil-military coordination is not just a matter of linking strategy and tactics,



security and development, and hard and soft power. It is a matter of how to organize and mobilize human capacities. Instilling a shared public service ethic among junior as well as senior police, paramilitary, and military leaders helps harness these capacities, temper poor peace operations personnel behaviour, and improve comprehensive coordination and the civil-military relationship over time, facilitating self-sustainable peace.

For those looking for a deeper and broader analytical framework on comparative civil-military approaches, there is the study, *Civil-Military What? Making sense of conflicting civil-military concepts*, referenced in Appendix B. Much like this course, this conceptual mapping guide not only benefits military professionals learning to engage with civilian actors but also provides civilians insights into civil-military coordination from the military perspective.

## Some Civil-Military Coordination Rules of Thumb »

- » Civil-military coordination is more a mindset than a skill set.
- » Build relationships and promote dialogue among unlikely partners.
- » It's not about us; it's about them.
- » Civilianize — work by, with, and through external civil partners.
- » Support the establishment and expansion of “humanitarian space”, try to “do no harm”, and consider military assets as a “last resort”.
- » Fill gaps and reduce redundancies.
- » “Their game plan is our game plan.”
- » Localize — promote local ownership and build local capacity and confidence.
- » Provide assistance more indirectly than directly.
- » Manage your expectations, the expectations of those you work for and with, and the expectations of those you are helping.
- » Perception is often reality.
- » Actions (or inactions) speak louder and longer than words. When performing assessments, ask, “Who is doing what, when, where, how, and why?”
- » Your measurements are part of a bigger picture.

## End-of-Lesson Quiz »

1. Which of these statements is true?
  - A. Civil-military coordination is a form of public affairs.
  - B. Civil-military coordination is a force multiplier.
  - C. Civil-military coordination is about achieving a system-wide impact on the conflict a United Nations peace operation is attempting to transform.
  - D. Civil-military coordination is about “winning hearts and minds”.
2. The military’s role in civil-military activities is ideally \_\_\_\_\_.
  - A. indirect
  - B. leading
  - C. humanitarian
  - D. direct
3. Why is “winning hearts and minds” not an aim of civil-military coordination?
  - A. It is short-sighted and limits the aim and effect of military and peace operations.
  - B. It reinforces rather than reduces local dependency on military forces.
  - C. It risks the perception that the force is taking sides in the conflict.
  - D. All of these
4. Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations provides for:
  - A. Enforcement powers
  - B. The use of disproportionate force
  - C. Zero use of force
  - D. Use of force even against threats that are not serious.
5. Which is a key principle in the success of a United Nations mission?
  - A. Legitimacy
  - B. Use of indiscriminate force
  - C. Knowledge of the local language
  - D. None of these
6. Civil-military coordination:
  - A. Is not inherently strategic.
  - B. Is not inherently integrative.
  - C. Is the theoretical civil-military relationship in undemocratic military institutions.
  - D. Is not inherently about “winning hearts and minds”.
7. Which of these is NOT an operative principle of civil-military coordination?
  - A. The primacy of military authority
  - B. The primacy of civilian authority
  - C. The military is supporting and not supported.
  - D. The military as an enabler
8. What is the most important regional partnership for the United Nations?
  - A. The African Union (AU)
  - B. The European Union (EU)
  - C. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
  - D. The Arab League
9. Which is NOT a core UN-CIMIC task?
  - A. Facilitating the integration of joint, multicomponent efforts
  - B. Providing a key link from the military to the civilian and police components of a mission as well as mission partners such as humanitarian and development actors, host-State military, and local populations
  - C. Establishing military authority early and everywhere
  - D. Producing civil and civil-military analysis in conjunction with military operations and in support of achieving the mission mandate
10. In the United Nations context, which is the strongest relationship between civilian, military, and police components?
  - A. Cooperation
  - B. Coordination
  - C. Coexistence
  - D. They are equal in strength but have different methods.

*Answer Key provided on the next page.*

## End-of-Lesson Quiz »

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### Answer Key »

1. C
2. A
3. D
4. A
5. A
6. D
7. A
8. A
9. C
10. A