

CPS Cluster Meeting, 7 December 2021

Present at SIPRI: Luc van der Goor, Stephanie Blenckner, Pauline Poupart, Evelina Cristofano, Meray Maddah, Timo Smit, Amal Bourhrous, Shivan Fazil, Ian Anthony, Claudia Pfeifer, Frederic Daudon, Fei Su, Martina Selmi, Johanna Eliasson

Present online: Lena Kappelin, Issaka Souaré, Alan Zebek, Virginie Baudais, Dylan O'Driscoll, Jair van der Lijn, Sepideh Soltaninia, Frank Esparraga, Noel Kelly

Report back from SMT

- Training for Programme Directors and line managers will be restarted as soon as possible.
- The Employee Engagement Workshop is planned for late January. It will look at drivers for engagement, such as values and purpose, mental and physical wellbeing, employee-manager relationship, fairness and safety, tools to do the job, learning development and work environment.
- Online internships will be continued during the pandemic. It is important to take mentorship of the intern into account.
- SIPRI is exploring the possibility of hosting guest researchers in 2022.
- Update on proposals for the Strategic Grant:
 - o Some projects originally planned for 2021 have been carried over to 2022 for planning/staffing reasons, for example the Peace Operations and Conflict Management project on Women, Peace and Security.
 - o Two proposals will undergo further review:
 - China/Asia: Project on Afghanistan post-departure of Western troops.
 - MENA: Continuation of the governance project, with a focus on three additional countries.
 - o Other projects have been put on hold due to limited funding.

Staff updates

- Final suggestions for promotions this year will be discussed in the next SMT meeting.
- Presentations for a Senior Researcher for MENA are being held.
- Interviews for Senior/Researcher on Women, Peace and Security for Peace Operations and Conflict Management have started.
- PADs have been finalized. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact Luc.

Updates from:

Operations

- Reminder from Lena to keep Maconomy deadlines in mind and to ensure that all suppliers have submitted and dated their invoices to the correct fiscal year.

Outreach

- Stephanie shared some points that are good to keep in mind when thinking about forthcoming updates to the CPS pages on SIPRI's website. In-depth discussions will take place next year, but some points shared were:

- The webpage is based on reader interest. The research pages are structured in three layers; (1) research area, (2) research theme, and (3) research initiative.
- Some research output might overlap with other research areas/themes/initiatives. The CPS pages might thus have cross-referencing and representation from other clusters, and vice versa. Staff is welcome to familiarize themselves with what other pages you identify your research with. Further improvement on cross-referencing by guidance from the research authors was discussed.
- Communications colleagues will assist in working on the texts, to optimise them for the website.
- Additionally, staff is encouraged to make use of their staff bio page.

Armament and Disarmament

- The SIPRI Top 100 Arms Producers 2020 had a successful launch.
- Recruitment of new Programme Director for Weapons of Mass Destruction is underway.
- The DUAT programme is recruiting.

Peace and Development

- Call for proposals for the 2022 Forum will close on 23 December, but will be processed first in January. Potential session leads are encouraged to discuss with Martina and Simone before submitting.

Team highlights

MENA

- A series of papers on governance in Lebanon and Iraq is being finalized to be published on 14 December.
- The team is working on a budget for the USAID project to start next year.

SWAP

- The result of the latest fieldwork in Mali was presented in Segou last week.
- A report and policy brief for the project with CORDAID in Mali and Niger is underway. The project seeks to assess what role civil society could play in engaging with security issues.
- An EU grant for a 36-month project, with a consortium led by the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding and with the Danish Refugee Council has been accepted. The implementation phase should be starting in mid-February or March.
- A project meeting with the Swiss corporation on humanitarian protection mechanisms in three regions of Mali was held this week. The project should start in January.
- On 16 December, the team will give a briefing to the Swedish MFA.
- On 17-18 February, a joint event with the French Embassy will be held on the agenda of the AU-EU Summit.

Peace Operations and Conflict Management

- The team is preparing for the Yearbook entry and data launch next year.
- Two dialogue meetings within the New Geopolitics of Peace Operations Initiative were organised in Geneva. One was on peace operations and environmental degradation and recourse scarcity, the other on epidemics and pandemics. Papers on each of the topics are being finalized. A final report on the project is planned for next year.
- The EUTM-Mali paper by Virginie is being finalized.

- The team is waiting to receive several cases to be used in the report on EU Civilian Missions engaged in SSR activities.
- Timo published and presented his paper on the Civilian CSDP Compact. A workshop originally planned for mid-December has been postponed to early February.

European Security

- A recent Hungary roundtable resulted in the Centre for European Studies expressing interest to investigate the role of the European Partnership in security matters.
- Following the SSC, Ian has received original copies of the bilateral confidence building measures between Belarus-Ukraine and Belarus-Poland. These could be used for work on confidence building measures in Europe.
- Conversations on working on naval risk reduction in the Arctic have started.
- A project on strengthening global regime on the use of chemical weapons is to be carried out. In January, an online roundtable focused on nuclear terrorism and the risk of chemical weapons used by non-state actors is planned.
- The next Turkey Roundtable take place early 2022 and will focus on the external dimensions of Turkey's internal politics.

China and Asia Security

- An application to Vetenskapsrådet was unsuccessful. MSB instead reached out to express interest for the proposal on cyber security, so the proposal will be updated and submitted to them.
 - o Lena: Applications to Vetenskapsrådet and Formas are often unsuccessful, unless there is strong involvement from a Swedish university or based on a 'Sweden-centric' topic.
- Two 6-month project proposals have been submitted to the Embassy of China; one on China's and Sweden's approach on security challenges in the Arctic; the other on energy and EU-China cooperation in the MENA region.

SSC 21 recap

The session leads of the SSC 21 shared key takeaways from their sessions. More in-depth discussions can be held during the cluster away day, currently planned for late January or early February 2022. Lessons learned by the SSC organizing team could also be discussed in the future, to ensure that we organize hybrid events in a good way.

UN peacekeeping operations and parallel operations: Protection of civilians in a crowded field

- The session discussed UN Peacekeeping Operations such as EU and AU missions, Barkhane, Wagner group, deployed in parallel with other missions.
- Some discussants meant that 'the more boots on the ground, the more impact'. Others said that of these missions are making the situation worse. For example, in CAR, the Wagner group makes the human rights situation worse or increases cooperation challenges, according to some.
- Different operations have different mandates, interests, and understandings of what protection of civilians means, which also makes coordination more difficult. The host government has an important role in coordinating the efforts of the different operations.

Sustainable strategies for the protection of civilians in conflict locations

- The panel looked at protection of civilians from a functional rather than institutional perspective.
- Progress in top-level documents is not reflected on a national level. The introduction of the necessary elements in training doctrine and exercises on a national level is a priority, which is a next step.
- Plans for protection of civilians increasingly stress a federated approach, linking multiple actors. At the same time the non-governmental sector is increasingly seeing cooperation with the military as a negative factor.
- The OSCE was discussed in terms of the need to amplify how to organize real-time monitoring of a conflict zone with consensus from participating states.
- There was discussion on the need for a horizontal focus on protection of women in conflict. Nine countries have now joined an initiative of preventing sexual violence in conflict, which could be followed up on.
- There is a thorough rethink of security assistance following the Afghanistan withdrawal, mainly in the United States. Focusing on how the US is approaching security assistance is another topic worth drawing upon.

Escalation thresholds in an era of 'muscular competition'

- The session focused on escalation dynamics in this time of geopolitical competition with a focus on Belarus.
- Existing dialogue frameworks are not being used. When they are most needed, bilateral avenues are deliberately closed.
- There are competing narratives that tend to oversimplify and presents a narrative favourable to the presenter. The institutions should take a more balanced perspective, ie OSCE, are increasingly marginalized or taken completely out of the picture when it comes to crisis management.
- The rapid militarization of the Belarus crisis was discussed as well as the horizontal linkages geographically and in the sense that military dimension is now just one aspect of crisis, taking into account the use of irregular migration, threats to cut off gas supplies etc.

Urban warfare and the protection of civilians: Mosul, a case study

- The session spanned into an interesting debate on humanitarian actors, military actors, and the value of life.
- There is a need to understand the local dynamics before beginning any kind of military operation, making effort to understand the realities on the ground.
- An important takeaway was the idea that protections of civilians is something you need to take on for a longer period of time—before, during and after.
- Using interpretation during the session was good in terms of inclusion, but relatively labour intense and added a layer of complexity to the technical logistics.

Gray zone conflicts and the absence of institutional mechanisms

- Gray zone activities and hybrid warfare is here to stay and could intensify in the coming years. Crafting proportionate responses is challenging, because they cannot be viewed as linear but rather on a spectrum. Institutional mechanisms that cover all the relevant missions would be difficult to agree on, but rules can be developed for specific areas.
- Several panellists were reluctant to express their views, especially in relation to China and the South China Sea.
- The team already submitted a proposal on South China Sea to the Australian MFA this year. The proposal with MSB on cyber issues could carry forward the discussion on hybrid warfare.

Civilians under attack: The Liptako-Gourma region of the Western Sahel

- One presentation covered a joint SIPRI-Danish Refugee Council study. The others looked at the situation of forcibly displaced people, challenges posed to humanitarian organizations in having access to them, and challenges to coordinate with governments.
- Challenges to do with how civilians or the humanitarian organizations can maintain neutrality vis-a-vis armed actors who may be active in the regions of the operations.
- It was useful to have preparatory meetings both internally and with the speakers to get familiarized with the webinar environment.
- Good feedback from participants – the varied experiences of the speakers was specifically appreciated.

AOB

- A short weekly cluster-wide discussion could be reinstated. This time could be used to discuss recent developments, specific events that week, and concrete issues that are of interest to the cluster. Previously, it was held after the Monday staff meeting.
- A cluster away day is planned for early next year, in person at a Stockholm venue if regulations allow.