

**STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL
PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

Research Staff Collegium

Date: 24 October 2025 at 9:30

Location: Conference Room

Minute-taker: Karen Hagen

Minutes

The RSC agenda covered:

- Reporting back from the Governing Board meeting
- Nomination for new Board members
- Update on the process ahead for the RSC and discussion on RSC input to the research agenda
- Update on the Stockholm Forum 2026
- A.O.B.

Reporting back from the Governing Board meeting (Charlotta)

- This year's October meeting was the only in-person Governing Board (GB) meeting, held over three days (instead of the usual two) as part of cost-saving measures agreed last year.
- The Board also met online in May and will meet online again in December.
- **Day 1: Monday, Oct 6 – Informal Workshops and Formal GB Session**
 - Morning – Part I: Informal workshop
 - Introduction and opportunity for Board members to get to know SIPRI's leadership.
 - Discussion on how the Board and SIPRI can work together more effectively: relevance of meeting materials, engagement between meetings.
 - General takeaway: strong interest and willingness from Board members to be more engaged and supportive, both formally and informally.
 - Morning – Part II: Joint Discussion with the SMT
 - Discussed how to best translate SIPRI's strategy into concrete work in light of global shifts (research, funding, outreach).
 - Afternoon – Formal GB Meeting
 - Presentation of the Director/Deputy Director report and update on the finances.
 - Overall reflections were positive, particularly regarding the transition process and the Institute's management through recent challenges.
 - Board stressed the need for continued work to address long-term structural issues.
 - Initial discussion on Board member nominations (continued on Day 2 & Day 3).
 - Evening – Formal Dinner at Steninge Castle
 - Hosted by Per Taube; first visit to the venue for the GB.
 - Served as an opportunity to introduce GB members to key stakeholders.
 - Attendance included:
 - Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee

- State Secretary for Civil Defence (representing the Government)
 - Senior officials from the MFA, Sida, FBA, UI, AMC
 - Private sector representatives: Håkan Buske (FAM), Annelie Karlsson (Family Business Network), Ylva Wessén (Folksam)
 - Participants left with greater knowledge of and interest in SIPRI.
 - Follow-up meetings with several private-sector and government participants have been scheduled for Stefan, Charlotta and Karim.
 - Charlotta stressed the importance of maintaining these relationships.
 - Upcoming Foreign Affairs Committee visit on Wednesday, 22 October.
- **Day 2: Tuesday, Oct 7 – Union Meeting, Feedback, and Public Event**
 - Key feedback from staff (as reported by unions):
 - Improved workplace atmosphere.
 - Positive recruitment processes and transition period.
 - Need to address the vacancy in GAD.
 - Improvements in salary review and other processes.
 - Continued concern about finances.
 - Need for clearer definition of the SMT's role and mandate.
 - Desire for stronger staff involvement in strategic thinking
 - Additional points raised in discussion:
 - It was stressed that the Swedish cooperation model is unfamiliar to some GB members, requiring repeated explanation of roles and decision-making processes.
 - Importance of ensuring GB candidates understand governance roles during the onboarding process.
- Afternoon – Public Event
 - Venue: Museum of Eastern Antiquities.
 - Over 80 participants attended (embassies, think tanks, civil society).
- **Day 3, Wednesday, Oct 8 – Staff Workshop and Board Composition Discussion**
- Morning – The workshop was well received; constructive discussions and good participation.
- Afternoon – Board Composition and Nomination Process
 - Board may have 7–9 members plus the Chair. The Board currently has seven.
 - Two mandates expiring in spring 2026:
 - Radha Kumar (cannot be extended again)
 - Heng Chee Chan (eligible but has indicated she does not wish to continue)
 - Future expirations:
 - Mohamed Ibn Chambas (Feb 2027)
 - Jessica Mathews (Dec 2027)
 - Informal conversations in the room on whether there should be automatic renewals.
 - No specific names for new Board members were discussed.
 - Emphasis on diversity: geographical, generational, sectoral (including corporate/foundation/economic backgrounds), gender, and expertise.
 - Some Board members tasked with exploring potential candidate areas.
 - Aim to take decisions at the December meeting; otherwise an extraordinary meeting may be required.
 - Karim and Charlotta underlined the readiness of the Board to engage more with SIPRI and that we should consider how best to leverage their expertise, for instance with

the research agenda and fundraising, through ad hoc topical engagements rather than more frequent formal meetings.

Nomination Process for New Board Members (Charlotta, Karim)

- Governing Board members are appointed by the Swedish Government for terms up to 5 years, renewable once, after nomination by the GB, RSC, and unions.
- Peter noted there are no formal written rules; the process depends on how the RSC wishes to approach it.
- Important to talk about what the Board is for, what are the expectations, and how much do we want them to be involved.
- Vincent and Siemon proposed a more systematic nomination process involving a survey to collect nominations and put together a short list
- Charlotta suggested using this round as a learning process before full formalization.
- Charlotta suggested including more younger people for a cross-generational outlook.
- Overall agreement with the need for diversity when it comes to age, but it was also stressed the importance of availability as younger people are in greater demand.
- Diego highlights the importance of prioritizing commitment over “brand” as that might be more useful, and potentially someone that has conducted peace research.
- Karim stressed that:
 - The Board has a governance and advisory role, not a management role.
 - The Board’s engagement is largely influenced by how SIPRI tasks and involves them.
 - Three key areas where SIPRI could use the Board strategically:
 1. As a sounding board for research and programmes.
 2. Support for fundraising and identifying funding opportunities.
 3. Access to networks and profile-raising.
 - Establishing a formal process would be useful, but inclusivity is more important than the level of formality.
- Recommended starting points:
 - Clarify expectations for the Board, both their governance and advisory role.
 - Identify required competencies and diversity needs.
 - Consider geographical and generational balance, academic vs policy backgrounds, and potential value from the corporate and philanthropic sectors.
 - A key criterion is commitment.
 - The D/DD to start the process by inviting staff to nominate possible candidates.
 - Consider setting up a small task force, as the RSC working committee has yet not been formed.

Update on the process ahead for the RSC and discussion on RSC input to the research agenda (Diego)

- RSC workshop outcomes
 - Inclusive process with significant staff participation.
 - The raw data that was collected through the form is available to anyone.
 - Consensus on a dual-track model for the RSC:
 - Research exchange and strategy reflection
 - Advisory input to the Director and Board

- Recommendations included establishing a working committee (4–6 members, 1-year terms, renewable once) with staggered rotation and representation from researchers, RAs, and observer positions from editorial, and operations.
 - Mandate of the working committee members: help prepare agendas, organize formats like breakout groups, publish meeting notes and work to maintain a safe and inclusive space.
 - Important to have recognition that the working committee is recognized as a contribution to the collective life of the institute.
- Risks and mitigation
 - Risks: meeting fatigue, role confusion, low participation.
 - Suggestions: indicators to review effectiveness after six months.
- Next steps
 - The Director to invite for nomination to the working committee – to start an election process of one researcher from each cluster + one research assistant, to constitute a working committee of three researchers and one research assistant. Operations and Outreach would be invited to assist in the task force meetings, as appropriate.
 - Nominations due 8 December, thereafter an election will take place. The aim is to finalise the process and form the working committee by January–February 2026
 - SIPRI leadership emphasized the need to remain strategic, inclusive, and not overly formalistic. The DO can support the nomination process.
- Diego clarified that there is no information yet as for how much time needs to be dedicated for the working committee role.
- To discuss how the “revival” of the RSC (to play a more strategic role related to research) may affect other meeting structures at the Institute (e.g. MMM) Charlotta suggested a discussion in the Cooperation Group.

Update on the Stockholm Forum 2026 (Claire)

- Forum planned for 26–27 May 2026.
- Co-convened with FBA and Sida (similar contribution level expected and further negotiations on themes and subthemes may be needed).
- Early planning is underway; MFA has signaled interest in deeper engagement.
- Forum will be part of SIPRI’s 60th anniversary programme.
- Emphasis on ensuring adequate resourcing and aligning Forum sessions with SIPRI’s strategic priorities.
- Claire to launch internal consultation (brainstorming) on themes and proposals and to send an email with previous themes at past Forums for background information.
- The Forum is funded through the strategic grant, which must be DAC-eligible. Whether every session is DAC-able is to be revised.

A.O.B.

- Next RSC meeting is 5 December, 10.00 – 11.30, ten days before the next Board Meeting.
 - A topic to be discussed: A first task for the RSC involving research.