HUMAN SECURITY SEMINAR 2024 SUMMARY REPORT

The nature of war has changed dramatically in recent decades. Great power competition, terrorism, intrastate conflicts, cyber threats and climate change constitute real risks. They often have a direct impact on individuals and communities in ways that undermine prospects for peace, stability and sustainable development. The military is only one actor among others in today's crises. As a result, there has been a shift in thinking about approaches to security. One of the outcomes of this shift is the concept of Human Security, a multi-sectoral approach that puts people and their security needs at the center of the equation.

In order to support further development and practical application of Human Security, Eurocorps, as a force for the European Union and NATO, has hosted the second Human Security Seminar at its Headquarters in Strasbourg, following last year's successful event.

On October 1st and 2nd, 2024, members and experts from Eurocorps, the European Union, NATO, academia and NGOs discussed strategies and procedures for the practical application of Human Security from a NATO, EU and civil society perspective.

Both NATO and the EU are aware of the need to mitigate the potential negative effects of their military operations on the local population. Therefore, the seminar focused on two major aspects of Human Security: the development of NATO's Military Contribution to Human Security (MC2HS) and the European Union's role in responding to crises.

The following pages summarize the results of the presentations and discussions. This summary is intended to serve as an impulse and reminder for all participants as well as the wider circle of those who were invited to the event.

NATO's approach to Human Security and the military contribution

The first day of the seminar focused on NATO's military contribution to Human Security (HS). Speakers from NATO Headquarters in Brussels, the Finnish Defense Forces International Center (FINCENT), the Multinational Corps Northeast, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), PAX for Peace Civilians in Conflict and GLOBSEC presented different perspectives on HS and highlighted the relevance and challenges in the implementation of HS policies and concepts.

NATO'S HUMAN SECURITY APPROACH

Over the past two decades, NATO has developed concepts and policies on Human Security. These concepts were largely derived from the UN and adapted to a politico-military organization. A visible milestone in this evolution is the explicit mention of HS in NATO's most recent Strategic Concept (2022). This is the first time HS has been mentioned as such. NATO's interpretation of HS stems from its concept of Protection of Civilians, which requires a people-centered approach. As a result, HS considerations must be integrated into military planning from the very beginning. Desired effects may not be immediately visible, but could have a significant long-term impact, critical to mission success.

However, translating strategic HS policies into practice at the tactical level is a key question within the Human Security community. A first answer could be provided in the first quarter of 2025, when NATO's Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Center is expected to publish its report on integrating Human Security into NATO.

MILITARY CONTRIBUTION TO HUMAN SECURITY (MC2HS)

The targeting of civilians in conflict has become a pattern of operation by perpetrators of violence, whether those are state or non-state actors. The traditional understanding of protecting civilians, namely to keep civilians out of harm's way, is challenged by current crises and wars. As a result, the active protection of civilians must be incorporated into the conduct of war as an operational consideration. The military should include the deliberate targeting of civilians when assessing threats and strive to respond to it. Nevertheless, it will be a challenge for military forces to implement Human Security policies on the ground and to interpret them in practice.

THE NATO RESILIENCE – PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS NEXUS

Viewing resilience as a mere enabler for the military creates a major blind spot, as only part of the operational environment is then considered. The military's impact on civilians directly affects their resilience. If the basic needs of a society are disrupted, the population's support for resistance to violence will also be in decline. Therefore, the protection of civilians and resilience need to be seen in a nexus where each one impacts the other.

The military should begin to answer a number of relevant questions: What are the roles of the military with respect to resilience? Who gets involved in analyzing Human Security and Resilience? Who contributes to understanding the human environment? What resources are needed?

The larger operational picture must include the question of why an adversary deliberately targets the population and civilian infrastructure, with the consequence that the protection and support of the civilian population could lead to a shift of resources away from the main military effort.

HUMAN SECURITY AND RESILIENCE – INSIGHTS FROM A CORPS' PERSPECTIVE

At the 2016 Warsaw Summit, Allied Heads of State and Government agreed to strengthen NATO's resilience and to further develop the individual capabilities of their countries to withstand any form of armed attack. Many Allied nations have identified the following seven baseline requirements as being critical to national resilience, especially in the wake of the war in Ukraine: continuity of government and essential government services; energy supplies; the ability to deal effectively with uncontrolled movements of people; food and water resources; the ability to deal with mass casualties civil communications systems; and transportation systems.

The Multinational Corps Northeast has developed a resilience assessment matrix. This matrix adds an eighth requirement to the seven baseline requirements. Since NATO's current baseline definitions do not address individual resilience in society, "social or individual psychological capital" has been added.

MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS FOR HUMAN SECURITY IN 21ST CENTURY WARFARE

Current mindsets, and particularly those of NATO, which still thinks in traditional terms, are challenging the military and its role and capabilities in 21st century warfare. This is especially true when threats to civilians and civil society become a key feature of the adversary's warfare. Hybrid or gray zone warfare represents a call for new comprehensive approaches and concepts in military assessment, planning and operations. Therefore, there is a need for a closer linkage of the different branches for a proper and comprehensive analysis, for example a fusion cell of G2, G9 and G10. In addition, knowledge and awareness of cross-cutting issues and of Human Security as a cross-cutting task need to be streamlined. An example of such cross-functional Human Security integration is the SOP of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Italy.

The Finnish Comprehensive Security and Total Defense concept is a society-centered defense concept. It reflects the interdependence of civil and military defense capacities and capabilities. To assess the resilience and civil preparedness of a society, NATO's seven baseline requirements for resilience should be expanded to include an eighth requirement that reflects psychological or societal resilience to adversary information operations.

Military planners must integrate complex scenarios, especially in training and exercises, if the military is to be prepared for such hybrid challenges. Extended or immersive realities could be a helpful tool, since they allow the creation of such complex environments and scenarios.

Exercises could also provide opportunities if headquarters intended to be a secondary training audience (outside of a certification/evaluation situation) actively focus on HS as a training objective.

Beyond exercises, war games or tabletop exercises could create an environment where commanders and their staffs can openly discuss and elaborate on Human Security.

HUMAN SECURITY IN THE UKRAINE WAR – A CASE STUDY

The case of the war in Ukraine shows that Human Security is not perceived as a single ecosystem. Instead, it is labeled as a lower priority by the Ukrainian government and security forces. Civil society has limited leverage to advocate for Human Security. In light of the lessons drawn from the war in Ukraine, a number of recommendations can be made to NATO:

- HS policy needs to be operationalized for all levels and implemented in practice within the NATO force structure.
- HS needs to be integrated into the core tasks and core functions of the headquarters. Human Security and cross-cutting issues are not a question and a task that can be answered by the G9 branch only.
- NATO must improve cross-coordination in the development and practical application of HS within the force structure.
- NATO should go beyond adopting policies on HS. It should support multinational HS preparedness and a common understanding of approaches to HS.
- Realistic exercise scenarios need to be developed at all levels of command. These should include the civilian environment as a relevant dimension to create significant dilemmas for a commander.

STOLEN GENERATION – SYSTEMATIC VIOLATION OF UKRAINIAN FUTURE

Russia's hybrid war in Ukraine deliberately targets and abuses children. It is an attack on the social fabric of Ukraine in order to destroy social and national identity. Indoctrinated and severely traumatized children who have been abducted in the occupied territory of Ukraine are almost impossible to reintegrate into the Ukrainian society. In the long run, this strategy has the potential to shift borders because the population cannot be reintegrated into Ukrainian society and national identity.

GAZA WAR AND HUMAN SECURITY

The war in Gaza is a perfect example of the challenges of asymmetric warfare. Front lines are blurred and the protection of civilians becomes a major issue. One clear recommendation for military actors is: prioritize Human Security by integrating humanitarian protection into military planning. To ensure the safe passage of civilians and aid, armed forces must cooperate with humanitarian organizations. Compliance with International Humanitarian Law at all levels is a key requirement for all actors.

EU's approach to Human Security/Practical application of Human Security on the military tactical level

The second day was divided into two parts. The first part focused on the European Union's approaches to Human Security and its role as a crisis responder. Speakers from the University of Bristol, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) reflected on the evolution and current state of Human Security as an EU concept. In the second part, three working groups addressed the question of how Human Security can be operationalized and implemented in the military at the tactical level.

EU AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT (RESPONDER TO CRISIS)

The integrated approach - multifunctional, multilateral, participation of non-EU members, adaptability - is the guiding principle of EU crisis management operations. However, the structure and concept of EU crisis management operations could be perceived as symbolic. They are reactive rather than proactive, with implementation problems (pre-deployment training, procurement, CIMIC coordination) and limited capabilities. A key problem is the need for consensus among all EU Member States, which often hinders the development of coherent and effective mandates for CSDP missions, combined with problems of consistency, both internally and with external actors.

The EU does not have a formal concept of HS, nor institutionalized structures for it. But Human Security and the EU's approach to crisis management are strategically compatible. The integrated approach to security, where security as a concept goes beyond the state, reflects the nature of the EU as a supranational organization. It has a strong focus on civilian aspects of crisis management, including cross-cutting topics like Protection of Civilians, Women, Peace and Security (WPS), Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), Building Integrity, Conflict Related Sexual Violence and Combating Human Trafficking. Lately, this year, the EU has published guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), which give concrete guidance on practical implementation and operationalization of EU CAAC policy. Thus, the EU's integrated approach already includes Human Security as a core element, and a stand-alone HS concept would not fundamentally change the people-centered focus.

Human Security as a strategic narrative has not really worked because the vagueness of the concept has made it difficult to implement. Further common conceptual development has been hampered by the lack of agreement among Member States on Human Security as a concept. In fact, Resilience as a narrative has emerged and dominates current discussions and strategic thinking.

Human Security is an overarching principle of the EU's potential activities in the security sector reform. However, EU cooperation with authoritarian regimes poses a challenge to the EU's good governance policy. The focus may be on "regime security" rather than "Human Security".

The risk of violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights is inherent in the security sector. Therefore, in response to triggered violations in the context of EU third-party missions, the EU has implemented an IHL and HR due diligence policy.

NATO focuses on collective defense and deterrence. The EU has a strong civilian perspective on crisis response. With the Strategic Compass, the EU has developed a concept and an action plan that have shaped the EU's perception and perspective on security and defense, including both civilian and military means. However, defense and security strategies are national affairs. This hinders a common, effective EU strategy.

Since 2014, the EU has strengthened its cooperation with NATO. This ranges from cybersecurity to cooperation in exercises. Lessons learned from exercises have been instrumental in developing current structures and tools at the EU level, such as the European Union Military Staff (EUMS).

ROLE AND TASKS OF THE EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS

The Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) is the European Commission's department for overseas humanitarian aid and for civil protection. For its humanitarian interventions, DG ECHO usually funds operations through a wide range of partners, notably NGOs, UN agencies, and international organizations such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. DG ECHO has a strong presence in the field, with a network of some 450 staff in over 500 field offices spread across 40 countries. In addition to providing funding for humanitarian aid, DG ECHO is also in charge of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism to coordinate the response to disasters in Europe and beyond as a so called second responder.

During the discussions at the seminar, it became clear that the CIMIC and Human Security community is very interested in getting more insights and data from DG ECHO to better understand dedicated resources and response capacities. This will help to better assess crises and potential support to host nations.

On the other hand, DG ECHO has participated in a number of NATO exercises, lessons-learned and best practice events in order to help answer the question of how to reach the beneficiaries in a conflict scenario on the territory of the EU. In particular, the NATO STEADFAST exercise series has been of great help to DG ECHO, allowing it to obtain a better understanding and preparedness for such scenarios.

WORKING GROUP 1: "HUMAN SECURITY (HS) AND ADVERSARY THREAT MITIGATION"

The key question for this working group was "how to deal with an opponent or perpetrator of violence that does not respect International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Law of War or Human Security principles". The entry point for the group discussion was the question of the differences between state and non-state actors and, relatedly, response options to threats and violent actions. Response options to state actors show a wider spectrum, especially for the international community, than response options to non-state actors.

For own preparedness and to have appropriate response options, the planning process is key (space, time and resources are relevant factors), as it provides a risk assessment for IHL and HS violations by the opponent or perpetrator of violence as well as response options.

The assessment can lead to a clustering of the kind of violations with deducted response options. As a result, response tools (kinetic, non-kinetic) can be developed as preventive or re-active measures. Therefore, the own mandate provides the framework within given Rules of Engagement.

Depending on the mandate, assessment and given resources, own response activities can be either preventive/pro-active measures, e.g. STRATCOM, IO activities, Resilience to Civil Protection, or re-active measures guided by the five Rs: Recognize, Report, Respond, Record and Refer.

Kinetic activities can lead to collateral damage, with influence on the reputation, popular support (HN and TCN), and finally on the military objectives on the tactical, operational and strategic levels.

Challenges are time, space, resourcing, prioritization, coordination with civilian/humanitarian aid, status of civil preparedness and level of resilience, reputation and image and the collaboration and coordination with different actors.

Opportunities can be reputation (STRATCOM), international support, credibility (weakening the opponent, strengthening HN GOV/Authorities, local population and society, re-assurance of own troops and mission), and popular support (HN and TCN).

WORKING GROUP 2: "HS AND RESILIENCE (THROUGH CIVIL PREPAREDNESS)"

Each EUBG mission will vary depending on size, scope and area. In general, within the European theatre, emphasis must be put on all 7+1 aspects of Resilience, with additionally at least two elements of Human Security: Protection of civilians and Cultural Property Protection. Other aspects of Human Security or Cross Cutting Topics shall be considered only if necessary.

Within the other possible areas of operation for EU-led battlegroups, more Human Security aspects must be taken under consideration, especially the cross-cutting topics of Building

Integrity, Children in Armed Conflict, Combat Trafficking of Human Beings and Conflict Related Sexual Violence.

Having all above in mind, CJ9, within any operation, should take into account the following tasks:

- Combine and integrate Human Security aspects within the CJ9 assessment line
- Develop indications and warnings on all Human Security aspects
- Develop proper measurement of HS and its impact on the mission
- Include HS aspects into the planning and mission execution process.

WORKING GROUP 3: "HS AND PREPARATION, PLANNING AND EXECUTION"

Any potential operation, whether it's crisis response or collective defense, will require extensive coordination capabilities. These will cover a wide range of areas at multiple levels, directly affecting manning, training, transportation, communications and command post design, in order to provide full connectivity between military and civilian counterparts.

More efforts are needed to involve civil organizations as participants in workshops, seminars, training and exercises to improve knowledge and prepare for better coordination with non-military actors. Learning and training should be linked to the civilian environment whenever possible.

Even in a peacetime environment, awareness of the human environment is paramount. A 360-degree awareness of potential crises is only possible if the expertise and knowledge of civilian partners is systematically integrated into a headquarters' knowledge development processes.

The most complex scenarios are military operations in urbanized areas. Increased implementation of HS considerations in situational awareness and execution (collateral risks vs. tactical effects) is required due to interactions with the remaining civilian population and environmental and cultural protection challenges. Due to this complexity and the speed at which the situation changes, the need to mitigate, de-conflict and improve information operations will be at a maximum.

Every staff needs to already implement HS aspects during training, in peacetime. To facilitate and promote this type of HS integration, the G7 (training), G9 (civil-military cooperation), G5 (future planning) and G3 (current operations) branches could be the custodians of a cross-functional staff effort under the leadership of the command group. An initial starting point for improvement and additional expertise would be to involve relevant NMAs in each step of the train-plan-execute cycle.

Summary

The wars in Ukraine and Gaza clearly demonstrate that Human Security is a mission-critical factor. Although NATO clearly defines Human Security and translates it into operational and strategic guidelines and policies, there is a significant lack of practical approaches and tools for implementing HS at the tactical level. At the EU level, this situation is aggravated by the fact that there are no specific Human Security concepts. Instead, HS is considered and anchored in the integrated approach. This discrepancy between the different Human Security concepts of NATO and the EU can lead to challenges in implementation and responsibility assignment, especially for Eurocorps as a force for both the European Union and NATO.

There is a need for further discussion among Human Security practitioners in established forums such as the Human Security Seminar, due to the large gap between theoretical HS concepts and the tactical level, where there is a strong lack of guidelines and tools for practical application. A reflection on practices and practical examples will not only involve Eurocorps staff. It will also involve other NATO Force Structure headquarters and the civilian Human Security community.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In light of the discussions and suggestions that arose during the seminar, and according to the feedback in the post-seminar survey, there are a number of specific conclusions and recommendations for Eurocorps and tactical headquarters within the NATO Force structure as well as for the Human Security community. Participants supported the need for a permanent forum where the practical implementation of HS at the tactical level can be further developed. In addition, there is a need to improve training opportunities and to systematically integrate Human Security into headquarters structures. The following Conclusions and Recommendations should be considered and acted upon:

- At present, whether Human Security is a relevant cross-functional issue and how it is structurally implemented depends on the personality of the Command Group and the mindset of the staff.
- The creation (search) of training opportunities would improve HS integration in the staff (G7).
- Systematically integrating HS into the Mel/Mil scripting is therefore recommended (G7).
- The development of analysis capabilities and cross-functional synergies must be improved (G2/G3/G5/G9/G10).
- Human Security needs to be further developed as a cross-functional effort to support deeper integration of HS at the tactical level (HQ), reflected in related SOPs and SOIs.

- Armed forces need to be trained and committed to respecting International Humanitarian Law and the modus operandi of humanitarian actors (HQ + units).
- There is a need for tools to bring HS to the attention of commanders and to integrate it to their tactical considerations (HQ).
- The promotion of a mutual understanding between the different civilian and military organizations will support the practical transfer of HS policy to the field. Therefore, the maintenance and development of the network between the Eurocorps and its military and civilian partners and stakeholders is crucial (G9).
- To enhance mutual understanding and break down cultural barriers, opportunities should be created for military and humanitarian organizations to conduct joint workshops and training exercises prior to operational deployments (HQ).

According to the discussions that took place during the seminar, , the perception of Eurocorps' Command Group and the internal and external feedback received from those attending the seminar, Eurocorps Human Security Seminar is considered to be established as an annual event.

Therefore, the next HS Seminar is scheduled for October 2025.

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