



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

In association with



NGO-Military Contact Group Conference 2015

CHALLENGE AND INNOVATION: CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN A CHANGING WORLD

**Thursday, 26 February 2015
Lancaster House
Stable Yard, St. James's, London SW1A 1BB**

Rationale:

Civil-military relations in humanitarian response were increasingly in the spotlight in 2014. This is partially due to the collective humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) in the Philippines, and the current response to the Ebola epidemic unfolding in West Africa. In East Asia, the use of the military and other civil protection instruments is widespread and accepted by government and citizens alike in the face of natural disasters. In Africa and the Middle East, the discussions around civil-military relations in humanitarian response are more controversial, and often involve debates about the role of UN Peacekeeping Missions or foreign military interventions, as well as the upsurge in non-state armed actors. In addition, the need for applying innovation and taking good ideas to scale is something being driven forward by civilian agencies, military departments, academics and the private sector simultaneously, but not necessarily in a shared space.

The Role of the NGO-Military Contact Group

Any humanitarian actor operational in emergencies – whether connected with government, the military, NGOs, the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, the United Nations, or independent – must navigate difficult dilemmas and forge relationships. These relationships are seen most successful when based on realistic understandings of different actors' mandates, capabilities, and limitations. The NMCG in the recent past has played a pivotal role facilitating this; for example, civilian and military colleagues who have met at NMCG and trained together, later found themselves working together on the tarmac of Tacloban airport. Indeed, recent reviews of humanitarian responseⁱ have rated the role of civil-military relations as very important to the overall success of a response. The Overseas Development Institute has described initiatives such as the NMCG as 'crucial if agreement is to be reached over issues of responsibility and competence, and where constructive complementarity is possible (and, equally, where it is not).'ⁱⁱ

February 2015 is strategic to capitalise on learning from recent operations and approaches, while also preparing participants for opportunities ahead. Since the successful NMCG conference in 2011, new learning has emerged and dilemmas have been approached from various viewpoints. The time is right for NMCG to convene another conference with a wide group of experts to approach some of the challenges and opportunities we are facing today.

Expected Outcome of the Conference:

The conference aims to serve as the platform or hub for Europe's best civil-military thinkers, humanitarian practitioners and those working in crisis response more broadly. Using key questions, we will probe top speakers as to how to understand the complex humanitarian crises today, and how to best improve crisis response with concrete benefits for communities on the ground. Conclusions, debates and ways forward identified in each panel will be summarised in a conference note which will be widely shared and disseminated throughout the humanitarian, military, academic and governmental communities. The note will provide practical input and recommendations into the World Humanitarian Summit and the future UK's Strategic Defence and Security Review.

Timing	Session
09:30 – 09:50	Welcome and Keynote Speaker
09:45 – 10:30	Expert Speaker
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break
11:00 – 12:30	Panel 1: Civil-military interactions in state-centred humanitarian responses
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch
13:30 – 15:00	Panel 2: Operations and dilemmas in conflict and fragile states
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 – 17:00	Panel 3: Innovation in response
17:00 – 17:20	Closing Speaker

Registration opens at 09:00

Photo identification will be needed for access to Lancaster House

Sessions	Speakers
<p>Welcome and Keynote Speaker 09:30 – 09:50</p>	<p>Introduction: Paul Arkwright, Director of the FCO's Multilateral Policy Directorate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rt Hon. Mark Francois MP, Minister of State for the Armed Forces
<p>Expert Speaker 09:50 – 10:30</p>	<p>Introduction: Amelia B. Kyazze, Chair of the NMCG, British Red Cross</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diane Corner, UN Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General – Political and Protection, MINUSCA (Central African Republic)
Coffee break 10:30 – 11:00	
<p>Panel 1: Civil-military interactions in state-centred humanitarian responses 11:00 – 12:30</p> <p>What precedents are set in current humanitarian operations where the state is in control, and are these the right lessons to apply to other crises?</p> <p>Are we ready for the complex challenges, such as future mega-disasters, or defeating the Ebola epidemic?</p>	<p>Chair: Rudolf Müller, Deputy Director and Chief, Emergency Services Branch, OCHA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brig. Alastair Aitken, Commander 77th Brigade, Ministry of Defence • Andy Hill, Civil-Military Relations Expert, DFID • Vickie Hawkins, Executive Director, MSF-UK • Josef Reiterer, Chief, Civil-Military Coordination Section, OCHA
Lunch 12:30 – 13:30	
<p>Panel 2: Operations and dilemmas in conflict and fragile states 13:30 – 15:00</p> <p>What are some of the challenges when working in places with active non-state armed actors and serious protection concerns, including sexual and gender based violence?</p> <p>How is this playing out in live contexts such as in Mali, the Central African Republic and the Middle East?</p>	<p>Chair: Sorcha O'Callaghan, Head of Humanitarian Policy, British Red Cross</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou, Deputy Director and Academic Dean, Geneva Security and Policy Centre • Col. Pascal Facon, Deputy Commander of the Joint Force and Training Headquarters • Patrick L'Hôte, Head of Operations for Central and Southern Africa, ICRC • Chris Loughran, Director of Policy & Evaluation, MAG International • Dr. Philip Lancaster, Lead IHL trainer, EUTM Mali

Coffee break 15:00 – 15:30

Panel 3: Innovation in response

15:30 – 17:00

Do we have the right tools and analysis to understand emerging trends and threats?

Do some innovations go too far or have unintended consequences?

Chair: **Dr. Joanna Macrae**, Head of Humanitarian Policy Team, and Head of Humanitarian Evidence & Innovation Programme, DFID

- **Stewart Herron**, Development, Concepts and Doctrine Centre (DCDC), MOD
- **Dr. Ben Ramalingam**, University Of Sussex
- **François Grünewald**, Groupe URD
- **Flemming Nielsen**, MapAction Trustee
- **Rachel James**, Deputy Head of the Joint Secretariat, Conflict Stability and Security Fund

Closing Speaker

17:00 – 17:20

- **Mike Adamson**, Chief Executive of the British Red Cross

Format:

The sessions are made up of panels of speakers with adequate time for questions and response from the audience. Discussion of challenges and approaching dilemmas will be encouraged. The question and answer sessions will be strongly chaired to conclude with aspects of best practice, lessons learned or ways forward in civil-military relations to be captured in the conference summary note. The conference will take place under Chatham House rules.

About the UK NGO-Military Contact Group

The UK NGO-Military Contact Group (NMCG) was established in 2000 – an idea that emerged from a two-day conference between military actors and NGOs convened by Oxford Brookes University. The NMCG aims to improve and strengthen communication between non-governmental aid organisations (NGOs), the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, the British Armed Forces and relevant government departments, such as the Department of International Development, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

The British Red Cross assumed the Chair of the NMCG in 2006. The NMCG has now expanded to over 60 regular members and has connections with the UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination Consultative Group. Over the years the group has addressed some of the major humanitarian operations and dilemmas of our times, such as humanitarian space in Iraq, stabilisation operations in Afghanistan, civil-military coordination in Haiti, and civilian protection in Syria.

The NGO-Military Contact Group meets quarterly to discuss current humanitarian operations, as well as sharing policy and doctrine, often in early stages of development.

Membership

Organisations and individuals who are interested in joining the NMCG can do so by expressing their interest to the Chair in writing. They should explain what their relevant background is to the issues related to NMCG, and how they or their organisation can contribute to and benefit from the discussions. Organisations should be operational in humanitarian emergencies.

Consideration will be given to whether the organisation or individual is well-engaged in civil-military debates, the added value of the new member, and the overall numbers and balance of membership of the NMCG. In order for the NMCG to serve as a neutral, convening platform, there needs to be balance between government, military, NGOs and the Red Cross Movement. There are also a small number of independent members.

Conferences

Every 2-3 years, the British Red Cross, in association with the FCO, organises a conference on a related civil-military theme. The conference is an opportunity for people to come together in a spirit of open-mindedness and goodwill, while recognising that profoundly different perspectives will remain. Participants from these organisations are rarely in the same room, let alone on the same panel – so the conferences are fairly unique experiences. Because civilian and military actors work from different philosophical bases, they tend to have their own meetings, conferences, trainings and evaluations – which leads to very different working cultures and different working languages.

In 2011 the Conference theme was Civil-Military Relations in Natural Disasters: New Developments from the Field. There were specific panels bringing out experiences from Haiti and Pakistan. The final summary note of the conference and the keynote speech, delivered by Dr. Hugo Slim, have been influential in the literature of civil-military relations and humanitarian response more widelyⁱⁱⁱ.

In 2009 the Conference theme was Stabilisation and Civil-Military Relations in Humanitarian Response, with a strong focus on Afghanistan^{iv}.

ⁱ For example ICAI's review of DFID's response in Haiyan: <http://icai.independent.gov.uk/reports/rapid-review-dfids-humanitarian-response-typhoon-haiyan-philippines/>

ⁱⁱ Svoboda, Eva (2014); The Interaction between humanitarian and Military Actors: where do we go from here? ODI: April 2014. <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8929.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Available here: <http://www.redcross.org.uk/en/What-we-do/Protecting-people-in-conflict/Improving-understanding-between-the-military-and-humanitarian-organisations>

^{iv} <https://cms.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Protecting-people-in-conflict/-/media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/Protecting%20people%20in%20conflict/NMCG%20Conference%202009%20Report.pdf>