

Enlisting expertise: Exploring the climate security gap in peace operations

Understanding how climate change creates risks and opportunities related to local conflict dynamics and the delivery of international assistance are core competencies for all actors engaged in peace operations. Climate security expertise has become a crucial proficiency but deploying organisations are not yet able to meet the demand for expert staff and calls for qualified applicants do not garner sufficient response. Climate experts and peace and security experts still tend to work in separate domains - a bridging is required to find and keep staff with the necessary capacities.

A roundtable session¹, hosted by the Crisis Management Centre (CMC Finland), Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) and Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF), looked into what expertise is needed, exploring ideas for how to find, train, and deploy qualified personnel to the field. A variety of stakeholders from deployment agencies, national governments, international organisations, and personnel on missions discussed what has been working so far and advised on best practices going forward.

Key takeaways:

1. Climate, peace and security and international missions

Understanding how climate and the environment affects peace and security dynamics is important in international missions. Climate change and environmental degradation risk and alter livelihood possibilities and affect peace and conflict dynamics locally and regionally. Peace operations need climate security analysis to understand these changing dynamics. There is also a growing need to reduce emissions and pollution created by international missions, which typically operate in locations where the local population's own environmental footprint is very small.

Each peace operation is different depending on its mandate and location, which affects what the mission and its climate security or environmental advisers can and should achieve. Missions may look for positive entry points around local climate risks and work with partners around them. Cooperation may be carried out regionally as for example the Office of the Special Envoy of the SG to the Horn of Africa does regionally in East Africa.

The EU CSDP framework currently allows missions to focus, depending on mandate and area, on environmental crime, confidence building around natural resources or climate security analysis. Environmental aspects can also be included in construction and capacity-building projects. Overall, there is a need for awareness raising on the climate, peace and security nexus in local contexts for mission staff. Internally EU missions are also carrying out technical tasks such as footprint calculation and reduction plans, similarly to the "Greening the Blue" framework within the UN.

Recommendation from the panel:

- International organisations could share expertise and look for synergies in their climate, peace and security work. This can be a way to enhance their impact as well as tackle a potential shortage of personnel resources around climate security work.

¹ <https://berlin-climate-security-conference.de/en/enlisting-expertise-exploring-climate-security-gap-peace-operations>.

2. Climate, peace and security experts bring added value

The climate, peace and security theme is broad and entails a wide range of related tasks that should be covered in missions. Environmental Advisors in EU crisis management missions have a variety of different tasks, from footprint data collection and technical assistance on measuring environmental threats to the health of mission members and peace and conflict analysis. As it is challenging to find staff who had expertise in all of these topics, possible alternatives have been explored at headquarters level. In addition to the Environmental Advisor position, other roles relevant to climate, peace and security could be shared and mainstreamed in the work of other positions. Each EU mission also has environmental focal points among their staff. In addition, it would be beneficial to understand the climate, peace and security agenda in several other positions (logistics, project management – as well as leadership roles).

In the UN context, the panel discussed the possibility to train other staff such as reporting or project management officers on the climate, peace and security agenda to advance skills of mission personnel instead of recruiting new staff. Another way to conduct climate, peace and security work in the mission is through mainstreaming the agenda in the mission's regular reporting.

Recommendations from the panel:

- Possibility to use short-term visiting experts for fact-finding or highly specialised environmental tasks (e.g. legal drafting, energy optimisation) in the missions, allowing Environmental Advisors to concentrate more on conflict analysis, capacity-building and awareness-raising tasks.
- An Environmental Engineer position to work together with the Environmental Coordinator at the CPCC would help to coordinate the technical footprint related tasks among missions and provide better support to environmental advisors without any pre-knowledge in this area.
- Train existing staff on climate, peace and security agenda for greater impact.
- Mainstream climate security into operational planning documents and job descriptions at all levels, to ensure missions and personnel incl. managers have the mandate to act.
- Further suggestions included sharing lessons between missions and peer-to-peer networks.

3. Calling for dialogue between researchers and practitioners

The panel also discussed the role of research to support missions in the climate, peace and security agenda. As practitioners do not have resources to conduct large risk assessments or research themselves, they rely on and benefit from existing research. The panel welcomed access to clear and concise research and policy papers for the use of practitioners. Brief research papers would also be useful in the planning phase of new missions; also, research could feed into the formulation of mission mandates.

The panel also called for more dialogue between researchers and practitioners for mutual learning and sharing of knowledge and ideas. The issue of confidentiality of mission documents was, however, also raised.

Recommendations from the panel:

- Practitioners to take advantage of research papers that have been produced in the mission context.
- Clear and concise research and policy papers for the use of operations.