

Civilian-Military Coordination

Overview

During crises, countries can deploy their own military or civil defense organizations to respond to the needs of the affected population. Bilateral support to crises-affected states can also be provided through the international deployment of foreign **Military and Civil Defense Assets (MCDA)**. The MCDA, as defined in the [1994 Oslo Guidelines](#), are any relief personnel, equipment, supplies and services provided by foreign military and civil defense organizations for international humanitarian assistance.

When humanitarian organizations are also involved in the response, it is essential that humanitarian actors are able to operate in the same space without compromising the civilian character of humanitarian assistance.

Description

The use of MCDA should be considered as a last resort. In the event that IOM considers engagement with state military or civil defense organizations or MCDAs, it is important that the matter is discussed at the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) as it may have implications on the actual or perceived neutrality, impartiality and independence of the humanitarian community as a whole, particularly in complex emergencies.

The United Nations Humanitarian Civil - Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) is a framework that aims to enhance a broad understanding of humanitarian assistance and guide political and military actors on how best to support the response. It is a key component of OCHA's functions in a country. UN-CMCoord facilitates interaction between civilian and military actors with the aim of adhering to the humanitarian principles, minimizing inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursuing common goals. UN-CMCoord helps to develop context - specific guidance based on internationally agreed guidelines - and establishes humanitarian civil-military coordination structures. The framework is essential in complex emergencies, where the involvement of MCDA in humanitarian assistance may have serious consequences and could impact the perceived or actual neutrality, impartiality and operational independence of the overall humanitarian effort.

Coordination mechanisms are designed to suit the context of the country in crisis and thus vary from one response to another. It is important that IOM coordinate closely with OCHA and HCT to ensure that all civil-military coordination is carried out consistently within the framework agreed upon by the HCT.

For situations in which IOM is considering providing support to non-UN security forces for programmatic reasons in line with the Organization's Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF) and its commitments to the rights, dignity, and well-being of migrants, please see the page on the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy (HRDDP).

Links

- [Civil Military Coordination guidance on the Humanitarian Response website](#)

Contacts

For more information on civil-military coordination, contact the Preparedness and Response Division:
prdc@iom.int.

References and Tools

- [Oslo Guidelines: Guidelines On The Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets In Disaster Relief \(Nov 2007\)](#)
- [UN Civil Military Handbook \(2015\)](#)
- [UN-CMCoord discussion on Humanitarian Interaction with National Militaries](#)

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