

## 4.6 Civilian Assistance Tasks by the Military

### 4.6.1 In Extremis

In very rare situations, military forces may be the only actor in a position to provide direct humanitarian assistance to affected people, due to security concerns or other access restrictions that prevent civilian actors from carrying out such operations.

Direct humanitarian assistance operations should only be conducted by military forces as a last resort, and only in extremis, i.e. where needs are immediate and life-threatening. However, in certain circumstances, military actors may have a legal obligation to provide medical care or other types of life-saving assistance. Obligations can depend on whether the military forces belong to the host nation, whether there is an armed conflict, and whether the military forces belong to a party to the conflict. If the forces are peacekeepers, their obligations will be defined by their mandate. If there is no armed conflict and the military forces do not belong to the host nation, obligations will depend on the agreement they have with that state. It is critical to develop plans for such a contingency. The plan should include humanitarian actors' coordination with the relevant military forces, guidance on what the military forces should and should not do, as well as the development of a rapid transition plan to re-establish principled humanitarian action.

#### Case Study: Civilian Assistance Task by the Military, Iraq, 2014

In August 2014, forces of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) attacked Sinjar in Iraq's Nineveh Governorate, forcing 200,000 civilians from the city and surrounding villages to evacuate. 50,000 Yazidis fled into the Sinjar Mountains with the support of Kurdish forces. Under siege by ISIL, the Yazidis became trapped in the mountains without food, water or medical care.

On 5 August, Iraqi helicopters started delivering water and food to the stranded, however this was not sufficient. Initially US Government ordered its forces to airdrop emergency supplies (food, water and medical supplies) to the displaced. British, French and Australian air forces joined the effort, resulting in a combined 16-aircraft air drop operation over a seven-day period. At the same time, U.S. airstrikes were conducted in the Mount Sinjar area from 9 August to force ISIL forces to withdraw and open a corridor for Kurdish forces to reach the displaced. The siege was declared broken on 13 August. 5,000 to 10,000 people remained in the mountains, for fear of returning to their homes.

### 4.6.2 Quick Impact Projects

Military actors may seek to establish rapport with civilian actors and the civilian population to support military objectives, e.g. enhance the acceptance of troops, seek intelligence or ensure support of local communities. Humanitarian actors will acknowledge and observe these activities to avoid duplication with their own.

**Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)** are small-scale, low-cost projects that are planned and implemented within a short timeframe. QIPs are funded through the Commander's budget or linked to a stabilization plan supported by coalition governments. The objective of QIPs is to build confidence in the mission, the mandate or the peace process. This can include the involvement of uniformed personnel or components, such as engineers or veterinary surgeons.

The activities are designed to benefit the population and are likely to be infrastructure support, provision of equipment, short-term employment-generating projects, non-recurrent training activities and workshops. They are unlikely to be collaborative with humanitarian actors or line ministries and may therefore be considered *ad hoc* and of little assistance in the longer term.

While close coordination is necessary, where the project have humanitarian or developmental elements, a clear distinction is necessary. Peacekeeping mission QIPs that relate to development and humanitarian assistance cannot be carried out without the consent of the HC. The CMCoord Officer must maintain close dialogue with Civil Affairs Officers and the HC, to ensure that QIPs complement and do not undermine humanitarian efforts.

Civic action, civil affairs, QIPs, reconstruction, and other military activities can be an integral part of a military strategy, for example to win hearts and minds. Similarly, military support may be indispensable in some situations, to deliver life-saving assistance. It is one of the most difficult tasks of a CMCoord Officer to promote an approach that takes into account these realities and safeguards distinction at the same time.

### Case Study: International Security Assistance Force QIPs in Afghanistan

QIPs have been promoted in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), the NATO-led security mission in Afghanistan, as a positive way to encourage dialogue and acceptance between authorities at the sub-national level and civilians and military actors. In reality, reports have been received of local stakeholders being frustrated by wells built in wrong places or in places where women and girls were put at risk, or where NSAGs targeted or threatened locals using the facility. Other reports suggest that schools were built without the consent of local line ministries or in the absence of teachers. Military planned QIPs are often carried out in total isolation from the NGO and INGO communities who have the comparative advantage and technical background to plan such activities.

Sustainable and relevant QIPs need careful examination and contextual understanding, particularly in contexts of short-term deployments with high troop turnovers and lack of capacity, for project monitoring and evaluation.

Lessons learned have shown that QIPs could have been delivered better and cheaper by humanitarian aid organizations. QIPs must be properly planned and coordinated with humanitarian actors, and should include maintenance, capacity building and technical support so that they do not put locals at risk and waste funding.

## Chapter 5: UN-CMCoord Disasters in Peacetime

Building on the concepts described in previous sections, chapter 5 describes how to share information, plan and divide tasks following natural, technological and environmental emergencies in times of peace. In this chapter, the main interlocutors are national and international military. It elaborates on:

- Basic definitions pertaining to natural and technological disasters in peacetime.
- Specific considerations for CMCoord assessments in natural and technological disasters in peacetime.
- Identification of the appropriate CMCoord strategy.
- Establishment of a sustained dialogue with military forces.
- Establishment of mechanisms or platforms for information exchange with military forces and design of coordination arrangements.
- Coordination of Foreign Military Assets (FMA), including Requests for Assistance (RFA).
- Development and dissemination of context-specific guidance for interaction with military forces.
- Critical areas of negotiation and advocacy.
- Other potential CMCoord tasks, e.g. in-country and pre-deployment training and preparedness activities.

This chapter includes multiple case studies and tips drawn from recent operations.

The last section includes considerations on how to adapt approaches in a disaster that occurs in a complex emergency setting.

### 5.1 Disaster Response Preparedness and Planning

#### 5.1.1 Basic Concepts

The first responders in any emergency are disaster-affected people and their community-based and local organizations. The affected state has the primary responsibility to provide protection and life-saving assistance to people affected by crises. In recent years, the