STOCKHOLM FORUM
on Peace and
Development **2019**

From Crisis Response to Peacebuilding:
Achieving Synergies

14–16 May 2019
Stockholm, Sweden

WHAT IS LEGITIMATE STABILITY? DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERCEPTIONS

INSTITUTIONAL LEAD

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

MODERATOR

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OVERVIEW

This session explored the stabilization interventions of external actors, such as international non-governmental organizations and peace operations, to strengthen the provision of security and justice in order to contribute to legitimate stability. It looked at how such interventions influence renegotiation of the social contract between local authorities, other non-state actors and the local population, and affect inclusiveness and representativeness.

FOCUS AND OBJECTIVES

The session focused on the discrepancies and similarities that exist between international actors' aims and the local population's needs and expectations in peacekeeping missions. It aimed to analyse risks and opportunities that arise from these differences and similarities for peacekeeping missions.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The main convergence between the aims of international actors and the wishes of the local population is that both see a necessity for the state to take on a central role in achieving stabilization. The main point of debate then becomes what is understood and meant when speaking about the state. The state should not be equated with the government. This becomes particularly important when aiming to set up missions with a people-centred approach. At the same time, missions need the state's consent and work within the framework of international institutions.

Besides the state, informal structures play an important role in processes of stabilization. These coexist and are interrelated with the formal structures, which create complex, hybrid systems. Internal conflicts within the society, informal structures, hierarchies, local stakeholders, norms and alliances need to be taken into consideration when trying to bring changes to the formal state structures in efforts to stabilize the country. A main risk is that neither the formal, state structures nor the local, informal structures should be idealized.

The main differences between international actor's aims arise in different threat and security evaluations as well as the mandates that different actors have. Whereas international actors tend to focus on armed groups as infringing on security for the local population, the local population formulates everyday security concerns that relate also to crime and social insecurity.

In terms of the local population's wishes concerning peacekeeping missions, there is a gap between the limitations that peacekeeping missions face and the extremely high expectations of the local community as to what they can achieve. This can be understood as a need to better convey to the local population what a peacekeeping mission can achieve, what its mandate means and what limitations missions have more generally.

Processes matter. It is often about how things are done to stabilize rather than what is done. In particular, inclusiveness and equity of processes are important.

Finally, creating stability cannot be only seen as a technical problem with technical solutions. Any policies put in place for stabilization will have a political backdrop, particularly in the post-conflict settings in which peacekeeping operations work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- For a people-centred approach, involve the local population from the beginning, throughout the mission and in the debates around ending missions.
- Undertake more research on local perceptions, expectations, needs and wishes.
- Refrain from idealizing 'the local'.

Anna Penfrat
@Anna_EPLO

Last day of the #sthlmforum! Great discussion on the differences between local and international perceptions on legitimate #stability organised by @SIPRIorg and @Cordaid

8:23 AM - May 16, 2019

See Anna Penfrat's other Tweets

Screen capture taken by screenshot.guru on Thu, 16 May 2019 08:23:49 GMT.
Permalink: twitter.com/Anna_EPLO/status/1128938965103456256

Peter van Sluijs
@petervansluijs

Full house at #SthlmForum discussion about local and international preceptions of legitimate stability @SIPRIorg @Cordaid #peacebuilding #stabilization #Monusco #Minusca

5   8:28 AM - May 16, 2019

See Peter van Sluijs's other Tweets

Screen capture taken by screenshot.guru on Thu, 16 May 2019 10:42:42 GMT.
Permalink: twitter.com/petervansluijs/status/1128940239775226368