

HUMAN SECURITY (RE)CONSIDERATION BY NATO

Abstract:	<p><i>NATO has an interesting history in dealing with the Human Security concept and its derivatives. In a non-formalized past, we have considered various efforts in planning and conducting operations as proving the spirit of Human Security: the effects-based approach to operations and the comprehensive approach, the counterinsurgency philosophy, civil-military cooperation (CIMIC), and NATO support to civil emergencies.</i></p> <p><i>However, this is not close even to the arguments on the "right to intervene", or the "responsibility to protect", allowing the use – as a last resort – of the hard power in extreme cases of people endangered by their governments, failing to protect citizens from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. For this, we have the illustrative case of Libya, where NATO had a major stake in the crisis resolution.</i></p> <p><i>Currently, the Human Security paradigm is present in NATO's theory and practice, focused on several main lines of effort, in areas NATO conducts operations, missions, or activities.</i></p> <p><i>The paper further inquires about the interpretation of Human Security in NATO and its operationalization perspective.</i></p>
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Introduction

The civilian population has always been a collateral victim in wars across history, and even deliberately targeted, as its safety and security, or manipulated pressure vector (capacity to determine internal political changes favorable to the enemy) are being leveraged to serve strategic and operational objectives. This reality is once again demonstrated by Russia's war in Ukraine.

Anyway, NATO's concern on the protection of civilians is much older¹, even though the human security framework for this issue is first addressed at the 2019 Leaders' Meeting in London, where the Allies agreed to increase the focus on human security aspects and develop new roles for NATO in addressing challenges in this spectrum. Further, various working groups have discussed the subject, to culminate with its inclusion in the NATO 2030 debates and, ultimately, in the new strategic concept.

Recently, in October 2022, the North Atlantic Council approved the Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles², outlining an ambitious human security agenda based on the UN multi-sectoral approach that addresses cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of the people.

The human security concept has its roots back in the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)'s Human Development Report³, which is further framed by different schools of thought until reaching a structured description as *freedom from fear*, *freedom from wants*⁴, and *freedom to live in dignity*⁵.

Freedom from fear focuses on the primacy of protection of individuals from violent conflicts⁶. However, the experts often associate violence with other forms of social, economic, and political inequity⁷, in their attempt to offer a realistic and manageable analytical approach. Thus, operating in terms such as: "emergency assistance", "conflict prevention and resolution", "and peace-building", but also with key components of their incumbent agenda, is the origin of a real revolution in the interpretation of the idea of state sovereignty in balance with the individuals' rights - the concept of "responsibility to protect".

On the other hand, the *freedom of wants*, as a primary condition of human security (the "extended" concept), starts from the premise that famine, disease, and natural disasters kill more people than wars, genocide, and terrorism together⁸.

¹ Alexandru Kis, *NATO și securitatea umană*, Editura Universității din Oradea, Oradea, 2012

²[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_208515.htm?selectedLocale=en-:~:text=NATO%20will%20continue%20to%20take%20a%20human%20security,especiall y%20individuals%20in%20situations%20of%20vulnerability%20or%20marginalisation%3 B,\(12.09.2022\)](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_208515.htm?selectedLocale=en-:~:text=NATO%20will%20continue%20to%20take%20a%20human%20security,especiall y%20individuals%20in%20situations%20of%20vulnerability%20or%20marginalisation%3 B,(12.09.2022))

³ <http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr1994/chapters/>, (19.10.2022)

⁴ UNDP, *Human Development Report 1994*, chap. 2, p. 24, http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1994_en_chap2.pdf, (12.11.2022)

⁵ UN Secretary-General Report, "*In Larger Freedom: Towards Development Security and Freedom for All*" (2005), <http://www.un.org/largerfreedom/contents.htm>, (12.09.2022)

⁶ Human Security Centre, *Mini Atlas of Human Security*, http://www.miniatlasofhumansecurity.info/en/files/miniAtlas_human_security.pdf, (12.09.2022)

⁷ <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=24&Itemid=59>, (12.09.2022)

⁸ *Idem*

Freedom from wants promotes the comprehensive analysis of the aspects affecting the quality of life, in correlation with development goals and *good governance*.

The *freedom to live in dignity* means access to civil and political rights: the inherent right to life; protection from torture or acts of cruelty, unlawful arrest, or detention; the right to the presumption of innocence, and a quick and fair trial; the right to free suffrage, to privacy, freedom of expression, association, and assembly. This warrants, as well, economic, social, and cultural rights - access to food, health, education, and social protection, the right to work, to participate in the community's cultural life, and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and its applications. Dignity, as a dimension of human beings, assumes the absence of any form of deprivation: hunger, ignorance, incapacity, disability, and disease. People should be able to protect themselves from any form of discrimination, insecurity, abuse, and injustice. Moreover, they must be able to actively attend to the democratic processes that will affect their lives and future as individuals¹.

Further, the article will seek to clarify how and to which extent NATO addresses human security aspects in its policy and military involvement.

NATO and the “responsibility to protect”

The 2001 ad-hoc International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) is the reference point for outlining the *responsibility to protect* (R2P) concept, which promotes the primacy of individual safety, welfare, and dignity, even eluding the state's authority when this becomes itself a threat to the security of its citizens². State sovereignty theoretically became a conditional prerogative imposed by the social contract.

From this perspective, assuming that the national interest of a state should be congruent with the collective interest of its citizens, the authority's inability to preserve the security of the population leads to the obliteration of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of that state, beyond any question on ethical issues³. In practice, humanitarian intervention raises the debate over two situations: the right vs. the obligation to intervene, separating the humanitarian reasons from political grounds.

The 2005 UN World Summit unanimously adopted R2P and included its basic principles in paragraphs 138 and 139 of the resulting document⁴. The two paragraphs reaffirm the state's responsibility to ensure the protection of its

¹ Alexandru Kis, *Op. cit.*

² ICISS Report, *The Responsibility to Protect*, International Development Research Council, Ottawa, 2001, <http://www.iciss.ca/report2-en.asp>, (12.09.2022)

³ Cecil Anthony, John Coady, *The Ethics of Armed Humanitarian Intervention*, U.S. Institute of Peace, Peaceworks No. 45, August 2002, <http://www.usip.org/pubs/peaceworks/pwks45.html>, (17.09.2022)

⁴ <https://www.globalr2p.org/what-is-r2p/-:~:text=The%20Responsibility%20to%20Protect%20%E2%80%93%20known,cleansing%20and%20crimes%20against%20humanity>, (12.09.2022)

population from a series of mass atrocity crimes¹, by themselves or with international assistance. Failure leads to a collective, decisive, and timely action, under the UN Charter.

As the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect shows, R2P has been invoked in more than 80 UN Security Council resolutions concerning crises across the Globe.² But, as A. Caranti observes, the problem is “*who should intervene in case of gross violations of human rights?*”³.

Having a look on NATO’s engagement in Libya, despite the criticism⁴ of the UN resolution 1973/ 17.03.2011⁵, it was an opportunity to answer the call of human security principles, as the U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, stated in her speech at the London Conference on the Libyan issue (“*a voice in government [...], freedom from violence and fear, the chance to live in dignity...*”)⁶. NATO’s involvement in implementing the UN resolutions on Libya was not surprising, due to the proximity (and the recurrent security implications) and it is demonstrated capabilities to address the complex crisis, creating the necessary conditions to coordinately initiate the integrated efforts of stabilization and reconstruction, in partnership with governmental or non-governmental international organizations⁷.

However, the war in Syria, the political turmoil in Egypt, and the opposing parties’ skirmishing in the “dictatorship-free” Libya have demonstrated the limits of the “responsibility to protect” doctrine in matters of political coherence and envisaged effects. Furthermore, the most critical point is its potentially speculative nature – if we think of the political discourse on the “Russian world” (recently formalized in Russia’s foreign policy⁸), where post-Soviet state borders are defined purely conditional, based on the Kremlin’s satisfaction with the well-being of ethnic Russians in the former soviet states⁹.

¹ Genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing

²<https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/un-security-council-resolutions-and-presidential-statements-referencing-r2p/>, (12.09.2022)

³ Andrea Caranti, *Responsibility to protect, NATO and the problem of who should intervene reassessing the intervention in Libya*, in “Global Change, Peace&Security”, Vol. 29. No. 3, 2017, pp. 293-309

⁴ <https://mepc.org/commentary/un-resolution-libya-conflicted-middle-east>, (12.09.2022)

⁵<https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf?OpenElement>, (16.09.2022)

⁶ Hillary Clinton, *Hillary Clinton’s remarks at the London Conference on Libya*, 29 March 2011, <http://www.voltairenet.org/article169184.html>, (11.10.2022)

⁷ Alexandru Kis, *NATO și securitatea umană*, Editura Universității din Oradea, Oradea, 2012

⁸ Reuters, *Putin Approves New Foreign Policy Doctrine Based on 'Russian World'*, Sept. 5, 2022, <https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2022-09-05/putin-approves-new-foreign-policy-doctrine-based-on-russian-world>, (12.09.2022)

⁹ Center for Strategic & International Studies, *The Russian World in Moscow’s Strategy*, August 22, 2016, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russian-world-moscows-strategy>, (12.09.2022)

Anyway, the UN resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 September 2012 reiterates the human security notion as “*distinct from the responsibility to protect and its implementation*” and states that “*human security does not replace state security*”¹. Thus, compared with R2P, human security became a soft power manifestation based on national ownership, where governments can be supported by the international community.

Human security consolidation in relevant functional areas in NATO

Based on this reference, NATO outlined in its Human Security Approach and Guiding Principles the full respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and consistency with international law, based on a comprehensive approach (that engages international actors and the non-governmental sector). NATO’s people-centered efforts are oriented toward prevention and protection within several operationalized fields: “*combating trafficking in human beings; protecting children in armed conflict; preventing and responding to conflict-related sexual violence; protection of civilians; and cultural property protection*”², regulated by several dedicated policies and guidelines.

Moreover, it is fundamental to emphasize that for NATO, the current human security approach relates to “*risks and threats to populations where NATO conducts operations, missions, or activities*”³. Consequently, the related theory and practice are developed to analyze, mitigate, and respond to the encountered issues at the level of communities/ individuals, and are rather related to the operational strategy than the political discourse (preventing any recourse to human security grounds in justifying a military intervention).

Starting at the experts’ echelon⁴ and continuing at the leadership level in the Madrid Summit (June 2022), the discussions on human security have pointed out its centrality in the overall security picture. Human security is “*at the heart of who we are and what we do: an Alliance working together to protect our people and our values – freedom, equality, and human rights. [...] Taking a human security approach is the best way to achieve lasting peace and security*” – declared Jens Stoltenberg, NATO’s Secretary-General, at the high-level online conference on Human Security hosted by NATO on 25 February 2021⁵.

¹ United Nations, *A/RES/66/290 - Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 10 September 2012*, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/476/22/PDF/N1147622.pdf?OpenElement>, (11.10.2022)

² NATO, *Human security*, 18 July 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_366.htm, (21.09.2022)

³ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_181779.htm, (21.09.2022)

⁴ *NATO to step up work on Human Security Approach*, 26 February 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_181798.htm, (21.09.2022)

⁵ NATO, *A changing approach to security*, remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the conference on Human Security hosted by NATO, 25 February 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_181806.htm?selectedLocale=hu, (21.09.2022)

NATO's commitment culminated with the new strategic concept of integrating human security principles into the Alliance's core tasks, consigning the Alliance to address it in the broader spectrum of challenges related to stabilization and reconstruction in coordination with other international actors.

Thus, the comprehensive approach is extended to the human security fields assumed by NATO.

The **protection of civilians**, a paramount condition in military operations, is part of the planning considerations as a central human security-related reference and is based on the principles enfolded in the NATO related policy (adopted at the Warsaw Summit in 2016) and the operational objectives of the dedicated Military Concept (2018). Planning (and operational conduct) is based on the understanding of the operational environment, which includes nowadays a consistent human dimension (sometimes characterized as "human terrain", or "human environment"), with the aim to keep the civilian population away from military actions, in satisfactory conditions of survivability, and provide support to the local government to ensure a safe and secure environment¹.

Connected to the protection of civilians, **protection of the cultural property** is another factor of analysis in the operational environment, as an indicator of community identity protected by international law², and a landmark for post-crisis reconstruction.

Combating trafficking in human beings is a phenomenon that flourishes in crisis or war areas due to massive flows of refugees and displaced persons, making communities and individuals vulnerable in the face of stronger criminal networks. Based on the UN Protocol on Trafficking in Persons and the related NATO policy, the NATO Command and Force Structures act to prevent such activities through appropriate training provided to the units, support provided to the host country authorities, and cooperation and coordination with international organizations activating in this field.

Children and armed conflict, based on the NATO Military Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict and the directive "Children in Armed Conflict – A Way Forward" (2015), which delineates the grave violations incriminated by the UNSCR 1612 (attacks on schools and hospitals, access denial to humanitarian services, recruitment as children-soldiers, killing and mutilation, sexual exploitation, abduction).

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) based on the UNSCR 1820 on sexual violence in conflict and the subsequent NATO military guidelines on the prevention of, and response to, conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence, substantiated in a recent NATO policy on CRSV (June 2021).

¹ NATO, *Human security*, 18 July 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_366.htm, (21.09.2022)

² The 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its protocols

Notably, in this entire framework, a NATO definition of Human Security (or reference to an accepted definition, out of many available) is missing. Therefore, we do not have a projection of the ambition and the future extent of NATO involvement, excepting the already assumed roles and other obligations resulting from international regulations.

Additionally, the Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Centre of Excellence (COE) lists a series of shortfalls that may hamper the implementation of the human security concept, such as its vagueness (and difficult operationalization as a whole), lack of feasibility and inclusiveness, arbitrariness in pointing out clear criteria for threat qualification, lack of actuality (marking the shift of intra-state conflicts to international, state conflicts, hybrid warfare) and, ultimately, lack of need (if counting the array of institutions dealing with human rights, humanitarian development, liberty, etc. and their working framework, mostly based on the UN definition).¹ CIMIC COE concludes that NATO's human security approach is focused on four (political threats, community threats, health, and environmental threats)² of the seven threats the UN described as essential dimensions of human security in the global Human Development Report 1994 (missing threats, related to individual security, economic security, and food security)³.

Instead of a conclusion – towards a model of human security operationalization in NATO

CIMIC COE is NATO's champion in supporting standardization, developing studies, and supporting materials, delivering relevant courses for human security implementation, and supporting collective training. Based on the leading NATO concepts and directives, the Allied collective training (especially major joint exercises and those related to CIMIC, the main repository of the subject matter expertise) includes human security vignettes integrated into the scenarios and the trained situations, as an extension of the individual training solutions and self-development opportunities. This is an important facilitator for NATO commanders and staff at different levels to receive training and learn how to adapt the operational response in case of grave violations of human security principles⁴. This is the way NATO develops a complex approach to the large range of issues enfolded by human security, is further empowered by the lessons learned processes.

¹ CIMIC COE, *Human Security – A CCOE Info Sheet*, <https://www.cimic-coe.org/resources/fact-sheets/info-sheet-human-security.pdf>, (21.09.2022)

² *Ibidem*, p. 16

³ United Nations Development Program, *UNDP Human Development Report 1994*, <https://www.undp.org/publications/human-development-report-1994>, (29.09.2022)

⁴ NATO, *Human security*, 18 July 2022, in https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_366.htm, (29.09.2022)

However, the domestic legal frameworks, various perspectives on the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and NATO policies, and uneven harmonization with NATO's approach, critically diminish the human security echo at the national level, where the concept is – in most cases – missing as orientation, and even more as a common standard.

From this perspective, some Allies may present a particular value by delivering an implementation model that can be customized for a better understanding and adaptation as a mainstream reference for human security operationalization. The U.K.'s Joint Service Publication (JSP) 985/ 2021 *Human Security in Defense Volume 1: Incorporating Human Security in the way we operate*¹ is a perfect example that enfold a planning framework for human security and underpins various considerations in the execution phase. A necessary step forward is to develop a comparative study among similar publications across the NATO nations, to emphasize common denominators and analyze differences, retrieve best practices, and provide an enhanced integration algorithm. It should be anchored to a NATO-approved conceptual framework and its extension as part of the NATO comprehensive approach.

It is first a matter of dialogue within and outside the Alliance (especially with the UN and EU), if we can already identify as a future platform of interaction on this topic the supporting entities for human security conferences carried on in NATO. This is the right place to further define common positions, work to harmonize divergences, and identify focus areas for DOTMLPFI (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and interoperability) dimensions development, completed with a dynamic risk assessment from the perspective of emerging threats² to human security.

This endeavor is completed by SHAPE's involvement in providing awareness to the military commanders on the featured human environment and the role of human security in operational effectiveness. A first such approach is provided, in conjunction with LANDCOM (Allied Land Command), at the Focal Point Training Event in Sibiu, Romania, planned for November 2022³. Observations and lessons identified in this event will provide an enhanced picture of the training requirements in this area and will promote a structured approach to defining a complex educational program at the level of NATO.

¹ UK Ministry of Defense, *JSP 985 Human Security in Defense Volume 1: Incorporating Human Security in the way we Operate*, December 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1040257/20211209_JSP_985_Vol_1.pdf, (27.09.2022)

² United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Report 2022 - *New threats to human security in the Anthropocene. Demanding greater solidarity*, https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/ao/UNDP_AO_SpecialReport2022.pdf, (27.09.2022)

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