



Civil Society Dialogue Network Policy Meeting

The EU Human Rights Due Diligence Policy for Security Sector Support: Gathering Civil Society Input

Wednesday 1 February 2023 (9.15-11.30 CET)

Scotland House Conference Centre & Online
Rond-Point Robert Schuman 6, 1040 Brussels

Concept note

Background

In 2020, the European Union (EU) adopted its [Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2020-2024](#). Under the objective of 'Reinforcing a human rights and participative approach to conflict prevention and crisis resolution', the Action Plan includes a commitment to developing a human rights due diligence policy (HRDDP) 'to ensure that EU security sector support, including in the context of CSDP missions and operations, is in compliance with human rights law and international humanitarian law, where applicable'. The [Communication on the EU's Humanitarian Action](#) (2021) and the [EU Strategic Compass for Security and Defence](#) (2022) also emphasise the importance of developing a due diligence policy to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL).

Human rights and IHL due diligence involves exercising reasonable care when the EU provides support to the security forces of partner governments, including through the identification, assessment and mitigation of possible risks of adverse human rights impacts and of IHL violations. Decision-making should be based on and informed by due diligence processes as this can help to protect and to promote human rights and IHL – as well as to avoid legal, political or reputational risks for the EU in relation to its support to third party security forces.

As part of the EU's ongoing development of its HRDDP, this meeting will bring together EU officials and civil society experts working on these issues, particularly on how supporting actors from the security sector may affect communities in fragile and conflict-affected countries, to gather their input in view of finalising the policy and its related implementation tools.

Objectives

The overall aim of the meeting will be to gather the analysis and recommendations of civil society experts on how the EU should identify, manage and prevent possible risks of human rights and IHL violations associated with its support to the security sectors of partner countries. In particular, the meeting will serve to gather input and feedback on the issues and points that should be considered and included in the EU HRDDP and its related implementation tools. The discussions will explicitly address the gendered and age-related implications of these issues.

Format

The meeting will take the form of a facilitated round-table discussion under the Chatham House Rule.¹ It will be held as a hybrid (online and in-person) two-hour session.

Participants

The meeting will bring together about 25-30 participants, including about 10-15 civil society experts and officials from the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission (EC).

Language

The discussions will be held in English.

¹ Participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed (see: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/chatham-house-rule>).

Draft Agenda

09.15 – 09.30	Registration and welcome breakfast
09.30 – 09.40	Opening remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European External Action Service • EPLO
09.40 – 10.00	Presentation of the draft HRDDP
10.00 – 11.20	Interactive exchange with civil society on the draft HRDDP The following questions (and others) may be discussed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the most common risks for conflict-affected communities arising from the presence, actions and operations of international, national and local security forces? • What are the key elements that EU actors should consider when providing security sector support to partner countries? • How can the EU ensure that the rights and specific circumstances of all people, including women, children and elderly, minorities and refugees, are fully included in human rights and IHL risk assessments? • What are some of the concrete options for the EU to contribute to more human rights and IHL-compliant security forces? • How should the EU engage with civil society actors as part of efforts to ensure that national security forces supported by the EU (continue to) comply with IHL and IHRL?
11.20 – 11.30	Closing remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European External Action Service • EPLO
11.30 – 11.45	Coffee and tea

Civil Society Dialogue Network

The Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) is a mechanism for dialogue between civil society and EU policy-makers on issues related to peace and conflict. It is co-financed by the European Union (Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace). It is managed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), a civil society network, in co-operation with the European Commission (EC) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). The fourth phase of the CSDN will last from 2020 to 2023. For more information, please visit the [EPLO website](#).