

Research impact: making a difference

Evolving a new European response to conflict and disaster

LSE-led research gave Europe a new concept of human security that has helped to address global conflicts and emergencies

What was the problem?

Faced with escalating conflicts and natural disasters around the world, Europe needed to re-think how it could best respond to crises beyond its borders, especially in developing countries.

In particular, Europe needed a guiding principle for its response, one that would help to reduce violence, deliver humanitarian aid and restore civil society in conflict-ridden situations without resorting to classic military force.

An LSE led team proposed that notions of national security should be replaced with a new concept of 'human security', in which people rather than nations were viewed as the appropriate focus for protection.

What did we do?

In 2002, Javier Solana, then the European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, asked LSE Professor Mary Kaldor to convene a study group to develop proposals for the design of European security capabilities.

The study group initiated field-based studies of conflicts and response capabilities in Africa, the Middle East, the post-Communist world and South-East Asia, and also considered the role of international law.

In 2005, the Swedish Foreign Ministry asked the LSE team to investigate European Union responses to the Indian Ocean tsunami and whether these responses conformed to principles of human security. The following year, Professor Kaldor reconvened the team at the request of the Finnish Foreign Ministry, keen to take forward the doctrine of human security during Finland's Presidency of the EU.

The study team produced two reports for Javier Solana: *A Human Security Doctrine for Europe* (2004), known as the Barcelona report, and *A European Way of Security* (2007), known as the Madrid report.

Significantly, the research generated a new concept of human security based on extending the rule of law and public order beyond the borders of the EU. This concept differed from both the 'broad version' of human security espoused by the United Nations Development Programme, which focused on issues of development and material security, and the

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'narrow version' proposed by the Canadians, which linked human security to a 'responsibility to protect' in cases such as genocide and large-scale violation of human rights.

To achieve this new version of human security, the Barcelona report proposed a human security force of combined civilian and military personnel. The force would operate more like police than soldiers, governed by a set of principles that emphasised both law enforcement and human rights.

What happened?

The research has directly influenced the European (now the Common) Security and Defence Policy, both by stimulating Europe-wide debate about the nature of European security and by influencing the design of Europe's security capabilities. It has also had a direct impact on the security and defence policies of Sweden, Spain, the Czech Republic, Belgium and the UK.

Its reach has extended into space technology, assisting the European Space Agency in preparing a report, now formally adopted, on how future technology can advance the cause of human security. The report has already influenced the technology used in response to the 2012 Haiti earthquake, and is helping to shape the Agency's development of satellite imagery and communications relevant to conflicts and emergencies.

In response to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's call for a treaty on European security, Javier Solana again called on the study group to develop proposals for a 'human security architecture' governing relations between Russia and Europe. The group's third report, *Helsinki Plus: A Human Security Architecture for Europe*, was commissioned by the Spanish Presidency of the EU and delivered to President Medvedev and the EU's High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Lady Ashton.

"The concept of human security informs almost all operations the European Union undertakes, directly or indirectly."

Robert Cooper, former chief of staff to Javier Solana

Human security "will be progressively accepted by nations and by international organisations ... And will probably become the only concept of security accepted by our public opinion."

Narcis Serra, former Spanish Minister of Defence and Vice Prime Minister

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On a practical level, the research team was asked to develop a training module for the European Crisis Management Centre in Finland, designed to implant the human security doctrine into European security and defence missions. In 2008, Kaldor and others delivered a week's training for EU personnel destined for Kosovo — the first time military and civilian personnel had been trained together. The Centre subsequently used the module to produce a training manual to help prepare personnel for future missions, and over 600 participants have already been trained in human security.

Since then, a substantial body of evidence points to the significant and sustained impact at mission level of applying the human security doctrine in conflicts and emergencies. Human security has become a guiding principle for actual operations in situations as varied — and as challenging — as Chad and the Central African Republic (2008), Iraq (2008–9), Afghanistan (2007–10), Libya (2011), Somalia (2008 to the present) and Burma (2013).

Here are just three examples.

In Southern Iraq, the UK Commander of multinational forces explicitly adopted and applied a human security approach from August 2008 to April 2009. Violent deaths declined by some 80 per cent in the first three months as a direct result, by taking British soldiers off the streets unless they were accompanying Iraqi soldiers, removing weapons and arresting militants house-by-house and emphasising the situation's economic, social, political and cultural aspects. US Ambassador Ryan Crocker called the change a “radical transformation”.

Following Professor Kaldor's involvement in a conference on human security at Sandhurst, UK military officials used the “inspiring” concept of human security in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. Embedding the human security concept into training and deployment plans for UK commandos meant equipping them with “the mind-set and toolkit to look through the lens of the people”, instead of appearing as enemies — an approach credited in large measure for the success of the 2009 tour.

In Somalia, the European Union's anti-piracy mission has adopted an explicit human security focus designed to help isolated and remote communities badly affected by pirate activity, establish a licensing scheme to rebuild the local fishing industry and marginalise the pirates, instead of defeating them in traditional militarist fashion.

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