



NATO OPERATIONS: ENHANCING THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN SECURITY

Mohit Kumar Singh Sengar¹, Prof. Bharti Das²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Defence & Strategic Studies, University of Allahabad

²Professor & Ex. Head, Department of Defence & Strategic Studies, University of Allahabad

ABSTRACT

Since the 1990s, NATO, a major force in international military operations, has put a special emphasis on protecting civilians. Conflicts still result in misery, though, and international organizations like the African Union and the UN struggle to put this protection into action. In order to take into account the evolving nature of war in NATO's view of human security, the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept asks for a transition away from substantial military engagement. NATO is aware of the fundamental and varied objectives of safeguarding people; yet failing to do so might result in state collapse, prolong cycles of conflict, and exacerbate internal tensions. The Protection Ladder idea can aid military planners in comprehending their roles and operational tiers in protecting civilians.

IED attacks on civilians by Islamic extremists are more likely when foreign forces are involved in conflicts. ISAF's counter-IED actions aim to minimize casualties to civilians, however military personnel require instructions on how to protect people while conducting operations. To solve humanitarian challenges, military forces should cooperate with NGOs and civic society. Protection must be provided, and domestic and international human rights law must be upheld. These laws must be observed and broken with consequences. To shield citizens from bodily harm, proactive measures like patrols and threat neutralization are required. Planning, execution, and training at all levels are necessary for effective protection tactics, and NATO must embrace ongoing policies and tools to guarantee protection.

KEY WORDS: ISAF, Organizations, Knowledge, Criminals, Conflict etc.

INTRODUCTION

One of the main goals of the majority of global military operations is to safeguard people. Yet conflicts all around the world still cause suffering to people. With different degrees of effectiveness, NATO has prioritized civilian safety in its missions throughout the 1990s. Other international organizations, such as the United Nations and the African Union, also take a similar track in this respect, therefore NATO is not alone in this strategy to continue to priorities and face difficulties in putting into practice the protection of people. This is partially because various organizations have varied perspectives on civilian protection based on their goals, resources, and operational zones. Enhancing NATO's operational knowledge of civilian protection is to better reflect expectations of civilian protection and the specific hazards that must be avoided (Heard, 2022).

The core text for NATO's strategic adaptation and future development is the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept. In order to debate the idea of human security and its applications at NATO, around 40 specialists from diverse professions attended a conference titled "Human Security and the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept: Knowledge, Insights and Lessons Learned." In order to reflect shifting conflict dynamics, the conference emphasized the need to adapt the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) and change the narrative away from military involvement. These results will serve as guidance for the

Human Security Unit and NATO Policy Planning Unit (Heard, 2022).

For more than 70 years, NATO has been dedicated to preserving the independence and security of its members. However, issues with shared security have changed as a result of the targeting of people in conflicts and the exploitation of their safety for military purposes. By putting NATO's ideals of individual liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law into action, a human security strategy improves operational performance and contributes to long-term peace and security (Kfir, 2015).

Human Security

In the age of rising hazards, protection of people from ubiquitous threats has taken centre stage in both intellectual discussion and legislative debate. However, there is no accepted notion of human security in discussions of mainstream social science, which results in a small number of quantitative indicators and data sources. Social science theory has not yet offered a complete vision of human security, despite political theorists' attempts to establish a notion based on human growth and rights (Newman, 2017).

Armed organizations frequently put more emphasis on profiting from conflict than on actually winning, which results in "forever wars" that violate both international humanitarian law and human rights law. Such wars need for



a sophisticated, long-term, economic, political, and military program to put an end to the fight and minimize violence. This strategy calls for civilian-led initiatives, such as safeguarding people, keeping tabs on peace accords, providing humanitarian space, and apprehending war criminals. Interventions in human security are conducted under civilian control and with a mix of civilian and military forces (Dagi, 2002).

The Defence of Civilians through NATO

Politico-will is more important than military power in protecting civilians. It could be necessary for nations that provide troops to make difficult choices over whether to sacrifice the lives of their soldiers for the safety of people. There have been failures during transitions on both the part of military and civilian players (Martin et al., 2012). We know from experience that overall mission success may be difficult without a comprehensive strategy for maintaining stability and peace, including the protection of civilians.

Military planners must create a coherent plan for the military action in order to intervene in a specific war. There are two ways that protecting civilians might become a goal of military operations. NATO has knowledge of both. First, an operation's primary goal may be to protect people in order to avoid widespread violence being committed against a section of the population. This may be done for political or moral reasons. NATO was heavily involved in both incidents, using air power to enforce no-fly zones and attack military targets in Serbia and Libya. While the action in Libya had a UNSC mandate, the operation in Kosovo did not (Europe, 1997).

As NATO's International Security Assistance Force demonstrated in Afghanistan, where civilian protection was prioritised six years into its mission as security and kinetic operations grew, civilian protection is frequently a component of bigger military operations. This is despite the fact that it was not explicitly part of the mission's stated objectives. Operations whose primary objective does not specifically state that civilians must be protected typically have a different primary objective, such as counterterrorism or counterinsurgency (Hardt, 2016).

Civilians expect to be safeguarded during a conflict, no matter the justification for intervention. While they frequently have a good awareness of who has the ability to offer security and protection, they are not always able to distinguish between those who have hurt them. People would support whoever can give security, as was the case in some parts of Afghanistan, in the absence of protection supplied by NATO, for instance (LENART, 2022). Due to growing civilian losses from both their own actions and those of their foes, according to research by CIVIC (2009) and others, crucial strategic terrain and civilian support was lost. ISAF made improvements to its tactics to protect civilians, but it was too late; numerous people continued to be killed by other parties, such as when anti-government groups used IEDs to attack foreign objectives.

In this instance, the sheer presence of foreign forces enhanced the likelihood that IEDs would inflict more harm on people in some locations than they would in regions where they were not present. Unfortunately, this circumstance is typical of the ideological divide in many organizations that are now supposed to defend civilians. Protection of civilian's implementation involves comprehension, expertise, and training on how to really accomplish this mission on the ground. In general, there is a dearth of advice for national, regional, and international military professionals on how to better safeguard civilians during military operations. Planners struggle to "build the plane while flying" due to the absence of direction. This presents a particular problem for missions whose primary objective is to safeguard people because lost lives cannot be retrieved. Failure is likely without a well-developed ideology and the capacity to put one into practice (Medcalf, 2012).

Civilians have a right to the complete range of protections, including the supply of basic requirements, the enjoyment of human rights, and enabling circumstances. All of these things cannot be done by a military force alone. It must comprehend what protecting people imply and determine where in the greater protection area it might be most useful (Sayle, 2019). The military force must be aware of potential dangers and have the tools necessary to combat them in order to properly defend. Other unarmed performers are unlikely to be able to fulfill this particular role since it is unique. Other crucial protection-related duties are played by actors like NGOs and civil society, such addressing humanitarian issues. While a military force will primarily be concerned with physical defence, there may be times when it decides to work with allies on other fronts, such as in providing logistical support for the provision of essentials. To fully use these assets, effective communication with partners that are committed to protecting civilians is essential (Häussler, 2007).

Protection of civilians in armed conflict is further defined by the UN as: "Protection of civilians in armed conflict (POC), whereby all parties to the conflict are responsible for ensuring that the civilian population is respected and protected."

Other international and regional organisations, including the UN and AU, utilise a different interpretation of civilian protection than NATO currently does. Although NATO hasn't adopted a specific concept of civilian protection, in previous conflicts it has prioritised defending the populace from their own acts. Different interpretations of "protection" in a setting where various players collaborate can devastate even the best-laid protection schemes (Verhelst & Trifunovska, 2022).

International Human Rights Law & National Laws

Applying domestic legislation and international human rights law is the first step in providing protection. The protection that citizens receive from their government and other actors is also based on them. The principal enforcers of these laws are often the police and gendarmerie (Nazemroaya, 2012). By forbidding direct targeting and severe incidental civilian



damage, international humanitarian law (IHL) and refugee law seek to safeguard civilians from armed conflict. They urge anyone involved in the war to take steps to protect people. When conducting combat operations, militaries that uphold IHL injure civilians less (Hillenbrand, 1977). But many armed actors either ignore IHL or prefer not to. IHL violations must be recorded and penalised. Despite a military operation's best efforts, using force, frequently in self-defense, can have negative effects on civilians. The armed force must reduce this "incidental harm," look into it, and deal with it. The bulk of civilian casualties are caused by those who attack people specifically. A proactive use of force against criminals is frequently necessary to protect civilians from physical violence. Examples of such proactive measures include patrols, presence near vulnerable groups, and threat neutralisation (Stekić, 2018).

Physical Protection in Practise

Military strategists, commanders, and troops must all adopt a certain attitude if civilian protection is to be a key component of operations. To guarantee that everyone is aware of the idea and why it is essential to a mission's success, it must be embraced as strategy and policy and educated across the chain of command. Unarmed individuals are unable to perform the function of a military force, which must comprehend dangers and have the resources to combat them in order to defend successfully. Protection occurs before, during, and after every phase of a military action (Martin, 2017). An effective protection strategy requires planning, implementation, and training at all levels. For NATO to be successful in protecting civilians, strategy, preparation, and training are essential before operations. The effectiveness of NATO in safeguarding civilians depends on the adoption of permanent policies and instruments in Afghanistan. The proactive aspect of defending civilians is the area where advice is most deficient, and NATO and other organisations have had difficulty making the role operational (Akuffo, 2011).

Genocide, ethnic cleansing, regime crackdown, post-war retaliation, community strife, predatory violence, and insurgency are the seven possible challenges that NATO may confront. To accomplish effective physical protection, ongoing evaluations of the culprits' danger level are needed. In various locations or during various stages of a fight, many scenarios could play out concurrently. Using military action to defend people will need a variety of proactive measures, such as assisting in the supply of humanitarian goods to reduce (Friesendorf & Müller, 2013).

The risk of military force harming civilians during protective operations must be reduced through civilian damage reduction. By using civilian damage reduction practices, tools, and policies, this can be accomplished. Advanced planning and tactics are necessary to assess collateral damage, adopt rules of engagement, train forces, acquire non-lethal weapons, ensure strict targeting practices, and set up data tracking and analysis systems. This can lead to more

lives saved and improved protection strategies (de Hoop Scheffer, 2007).

An essential component of ISAF's comprehension of and response to civilian suffering in Afghanistan is the Civilian Casualty Mitigation Team (CCMTT). It keeps track of civilian behavior, security perception, territorial control changes, the provision of humanitarian aid, and perpetrator capabilities. It is vital to weigh the suffering of civilians against what may occur if the offenders were to succeed and no protection measures were taken (Destradi, 2014). All situations of injury to civilians caused by one's own forces should be thoroughly examined, and any cases where international law has been broken should be dealt with through the proper legal processes.

CONCLUSION

As the capacity to defend people continues to be a crucial capability, NATO must improve its planning, preparation, execution, and evaluation capabilities for future missions, particularly in defending civilians. NATO will continue to take a human security approach based on values like being people-centered, dealing with the effects of conflict, emphasizing prevention and protection, respecting regional customs and social norms, adhering to international law, upholding the neutrality of humanitarian actors, upholding state sovereignty, and cooperating with relevant parties. To ensure that its efforts are known both within and publicly, this ambitious objective will be conveyed consistently and often. It is a priority for extra financing. In its operations, NATO will also take public diplomacy into account. This involves emphasizing the development of execution skills, whether for tactical or strategic military purposes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Strategic Concept should specifically include NATO's ideals, especially its support for human rights and a world governed by laws. It should emphasize proactive and preventative action while tying human security to its primary objectives. For operational effectiveness and mission accomplishment, it is essential to put the safety of people first. NATO troops should be able to operationally apply and implement the strategic direction for human security. To accomplish these objectives, NATO's conception of human security must be expanded.

REFERENCES

1. Heard, K. (2022, January 1). *Human Security and the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept*.
2. Kfir, I. (2015, January 1). *NATO's Paradigm Shift*.
3. Newman, E. (2017). *Can human security ideas ever be truly "critical"?* *European Journal of Human Security*, 1, 27-38. <https://doi.org/10.5937/ejhs1701027n>
4. Dagi, I. D. (2002, September 1). *Human Rights and International Security: The Challenge for NATO in the Mediterranean*. *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 13(3), 119-134. <https://doi.org/10.1215/10474552-13-3-119>
5. Martin, M., Kaldor, M., & Serra, N. (2012, January 1). *National, European and Human Security*. Routledge.



6. Europe, U. S. C. C. O. S. A. C. I. (1997, January 1). *Report on Human Rights and the Process of NATO Enlargement*.
7. Hardt, H. (2016, December 14). *How NATO remembers: explaining institutional memory in NATO crisis management*. *European Security*, 26(1), 120–148. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09662839.2016.1263944>
8. LENART, P. (2022, August 2). *NATO COMMAND STRUCTURE TRANSFORMATION AFTER 2014*. *National Security Studies*, 25(3), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.37055/sbn/152590>
9. Medcalf, J. (2012, December 1). *NATO*. Simon and Schuster.
10. Sayle, T. A. (2019, January 1). *Enduring Alliance*.
11. Häussler, U. (2007, January 1). *Ensuring and Enforcing Human Security*.
12. Verhelst, A., & Trifunovska, S. (2022, May 20). *North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)*. Kluwer Law International B.V.
13. Nazemroaya, M. D. (2012, August 25). *The Globalization of NATO*. SCB Distributors.
14. Hillenbrand, M. J. (1977). *NATO and Western Security in an Era of Transition*. *International Security*, 2(2), 3. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538722>
15. Stekić, N. (2018). *The 4th International Academic Conference on Human Security – “Human Security and New Technologies.”* *European Journal of Human Security*, 2, 93–96. https://doi.org/10.18485/fb_ejhs.2018.2.5
16. Martin, M. (2017). *Human security: Present and future frontiers*. *European Journal of Human Security*, 1, 9–26. <https://doi.org/10.5937/ejhs1701009m>
17. Akuffo, E. A. (2011, June). *Human security and interregional cooperation between NATO and the African Union*. *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 23(2), 223–237. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14781158.2011.580962>
18. Friesendorf, C., & Müller, T. (2013). *Human costs of the Afghanistan war*. *Journal of Regional Security*, 8(2), 137–152. <https://doi.org/10.11643/issn.2217-995x132ppf34>
19. de Hoop Scheffer, J. (2007, January). *Nato is not Laundry Detergent; Nato is a Unique Political and Military Organization*. *Security Index: A Russian Journal on International Security*, 13(2), 11–14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19934270.2007.9756499>
20. Destradi, S. (2014). *Regional Powers and Security Governance: ISAF Withdrawal, Regional Competition, and Domestic Norms in India’s Afghanistan Policy*. *Asian Perspective*, 38(4), 565–587. <https://doi.org/10.1353/apr.2014.0025>