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The Role and Position of NOROBS in the Context of Norway's
Contribution to Civilian Peacemaking, Peacekeeping
and Peacebuilding

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of Norway's Contribution to Civilian Peacemaking,
Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding**

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Introduction

Norway has positioned itself as a prominent supporter, both politically and financially, of international humanitarian, development, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding initiatives. One of the support mechanisms that Norway has developed in this context is civilian standby rosters, and these rosters have given Norway the flexibility to not only support international missions with political and financial support, but to also provide human resources, that can administer and implement the programmes needed to operationalise these international missions.

Within this context, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) agreed to establish the Norwegian Standby Capacity Programme (NORCAP) in 2009. The purpose of NORCAP is to provide an overarching framework within which to administer several civilian humanitarian, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding related rosters operated by the NRC. The NORCAP agreement recognises the growing importance to Norway of the deployment of civilian experts to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions, and introduces a new specialised civilian standby roster for the deployment of civilian observers, called NOROBS.

NOROBS – a Strategic Norwegian Civilian Expert Capacity

Norway has contributed civilian experts over the last two decades to United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations, and is currently contributing experts for the Joint Monitoring Teams in the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). Norway has also contributed civilian experts to EU crisis management missions, for instance to the EU Monitoring Mission in the Western Balkans (EUMM). And Norway has taken the lead in and is contributing to observer missions, such as the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM), the International Monitoring Unit (IMU) in the Nuba Mountains in Sudan and the Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH).

However, from the perspective of the rosters operated by the NRC, these civilian peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding deployments were undertaken on an ad hoc basis, as something special and peripheral to the main civilian deployment effort, which was primarily the provision of support to humanitarian operations.

The establishment of NOROBS recognises that the deployment of civilian experts in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions could become as central to Norway's interests and identity going

into the future, as its association with supporting humanitarian and development deployments have been in the past.

In the original NORCAP agreement, NOROBS was envisaged as a roster for the deployment of civilian observers, based on the ongoing need to provide experts to the TIPH mission, as well as similar deployments in the past and potential deployments in the future. However, the current debate around civilian capacity in the UN and other arenas extends beyond ‘observer’ roles and missions, and therefore this report uses of the term ‘civilian experts’ and refers to the needs of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations.

NOROBS represents a new opportunity for Norway to engage constructively in crisis and post-conflict situations with a dedicated capacity to contribute trained and experienced civilian experts with a broad range of specialised professional skill sets, including weapons monitoring and inspection, conflict resolution and mediation, security sector reform, gender, political analysis, reporting and advise, sexual exploitation and abuse, civilian protection, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation, among others.

NOROBS is, however, not the only roster that the Norwegian Government has established to address the growing need for civilian experts in the peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding field. As a result of the ad hoc manner in which the need for such experts has come about, a range of different capacities were developed over the years, including NORDEM, the Norwegian Rule of Law Pool, the CIVPOL Pool and the Defence Security Sector Reform Pool. These different capacities do not necessarily represent duplication, but there is potential for overlap and inefficiency if they are not managed in a more coherent manner.

Findings and Recommendations

Based on the scoping study conducted for NOROBS, and drawing on the lessons learned from international comparative experience, recommendations for the design and operationalisation of the NOROBS roster are made at the following levels: (1) the design and operationalisation of NOROBS, (2) coordination at the national whole-of-government level, and (3) consolidating arrangements between the MFA and rosters.

Level 1: The Design and Operationalisation of NOROBS

In the original NORCAP agreement, NOROBS was envisaged as a roster for the deployment of civilian observers, based on similar pre-

vious deployments and the ongoing TIPH mission. As this study has pointed out, however, the current debate around civilian capacity in the UN and other arenas extends beyond ‘observer’ roles and missions.

Recommendation 1: NOROBS should broaden its scope beyond ‘civilian observer’ missions, and gear itself to serving the whole range of civilian expertise needs, from early warning and assessments, through peacemaking, stabilisation and peacekeeping, to peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction

NOROBS should be proactive in terms of the capacity it develops and offers to potential end-users. It should be active in a broad range of training and rostering networks and regularly liaise with its counterparts and potential end-users, to ensure that it is aware of the changing needs for civilian expertise, and so that it can adjust the capacity and skill set of the individuals in the pool accordingly. NOROBS should have the capacity, in close coordination with the MFA, to anticipate the needs of its clients and to offer individuals or teams that can meet such needs.

In the short- to medium-term NOROBS should focus on civilian experts in the fields of protection, gender, sexual exploitation and abuse, rule of law (RoL), security sector reform (SSR), disarmament demobilisation and reintegration (DDR), weapons inspection, post-conflict needs assessments, strategic and integrated planning, benchmarking, monitoring and evaluation.

Given the history of engagement between the NRC and the MFA, it should be noted that NORCAP may be perceived primarily as a humanitarian roster, and NOROBS as a pure ‘civilian observer’ roster. To this end, it may prove necessary to proactively engage with stakeholders and end-users, including especially those parts of the MFA responsible for peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions, to demonstrate the value and potential broader utility of the NORCAP and NOROBS rosters.

Recommendation 2: NOROBS should be proactive in its engagement with its counterparts, stakeholders and potential end-users, and develop roster capabilities based on the anticipated future needs of its clients. This implies that NOROBS should develop close relations with training and research partners as well as its client base

In particular, NOROBS may wish to develop the capacity to offer specialised integrated teams that consist of a number of individuals with

diverse but complementary skills. NOROBS has the potential to deploy specialised teams in areas such as Rule of Law (with NORDEM and the Norwegian Rule of Law Pool), Security Sector Reform (with the CIVPOL Pool and the Defence Security Sector Reform Pool), protection, gender, weapons inspection and monitoring, among others.

In addition, NORCAP is unique among national rosters in that it can call not only on Norwegians, but also on African, Asian and Middle-East experts on the roster, and this means that it can field teams that can combine technical and local expertise. NORCAP can also combine and link its NOROBS pool of civilian experts with a broad range of development expertise from the broader NORCAP pool, and this means that it can, for instance, offer a team of post-conflict assessment experts that can undertake an integrated assessment covering the developmental, security sector, rule of law, governance and political dimensions of the situation. NORCAP can also consider entering into an agreement with the Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning (DSB) that will enable it to deploy teams backed-up by the logistical support of the Norwegian Support Team, or with ICT support.

If the NRC has the ambition to not only respond to the demand for civilian expertise, but also to shape the nature in which that civilian expertise is utilised, it could consider developing NORCAP into a multi-functional capacity partner, that has, apart from its roster function, also the ability to train, undertake research and support the MFA and international institutions with policy development and advice on civilian missions.

Level 2: The National Whole-of-Government Level

Norway's civilian deployments to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions have been managed in an ad hoc manner to date. If one takes into account the range of capacities that have been established to date – NOROBS, NORDEM, the Norwegian Rule of Law Pool, the CIVPOL Pool and the Defence Security Sector Reform Pool – as well as the need to employ these capacities in a coherent manner to respond to the growing need for international civilian expertise, then the need for a more strategic and coordinated approach to Norway's civilian deployments becomes obvious.

Recommendation 3: Establish a national Whole-of-Government oversight mechanism for civilian deployments to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions

The MFA is the leading agency in this regard, as it is directly responsible for NORCAP and NOROBS, and funds most of the other rosters in this field. However, there is also a whole-of-government dimension, seeing that apart from the MFA, the Ministry of Justice, the Police Directorate, the Ministry of Defence, and other government agencies such as the DSB have roles and responsibilities in this regard.

It is recommended that the relevant government departments and ministries involved meet at least once a year at the level of Secretary of State, and perhaps twice a year at Director-General level, to consider all issues pertaining to the management of civilian deployments to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions, as well as relevant linkages to humanitarian and development deployments. Such meetings can take place either in the context of a larger ongoing whole-of-government process to manage Norway's engagement in international peace missions, or in its own right, and should be chaired by the MFA.

Recommendation 4: Establish a Norwegian network of civilian training, rostering and deployment actors

In addition to the formal governmental level, there would be value in regular meetings that bring all the actors together at the technical level. As there is a broad range of actors spanning governmental and non-governmental worlds, such a regular meeting is perhaps best organised as an informal network. Members of the network should include members of the NORPOOL¹ framework, non-government-mandated mechanisms (such as those operated by Save the Children, the Norwegian Red Cross and the Norwegian Church Aid), training centres, research institutes and other relevant actors.

The NRC, as the largest actor when it comes to civilian deployments, can be tasked to facilitate such a network as part of the NORCAP framework, but there should be a clear distinction between NORCAP as the convening agency that provides the secretariat services necessary to support such a network, and the management of the network itself.

¹ The Norwegian Government has developed and supported a range of civilian expert pools, databases and rosters, all of which can be said to form the Norwegian Crisis Response Pool (NORPOOL). NORPOOL is not an official roster framework, but rather an overarching concept used by the MFA to describe Norwegian civilian capacity mechanisms, including the Norwegian Rule of Law Pool, the Civilian Police (CIVPOL) pool, NORCAP, NORDEM, the DSB and the Defence Security Sector Reform pool.

Recommendation 5: Establish a coherent approach within the Norwegian MFA on civilian deployments by giving the responsibility to coordinate all civilian deployment arrangements funded and facilitated by the MFA to a State Secretary

What has emerged strongly throughout the conduct of this study is the need for a more coherent approach within the Norwegian MFA regarding the deployment of civilians, both in support of international observer missions and more broadly. NOROBS and the other civilian expert rosters supported by the MFA are important tools which can be utilised in support of Norwegian humanitarian and security foreign policy objectives and as crisis management tools, but these can only be used optimally if the deployment of civilians is managed in a strategic and coherent manner. A range of departments and desks are involved in the deployment of civilians, and each utilise their own budget lines and decision-making processes for deployments.

Level 3: Review Existing Arrangements between the MFA and Rosters

At present, the MFA provides support to NORCAP (including NOROBS), NORDEM, the Rule of Law Pool, the CIVPOL pool, the DSB rosters, and the expert rosters operated by the Norwegian Church Aid, the Norwegian Red Cross and Save the Children Norway.

Each of these rosters have a valuable history, institutional memory, institutional resources, linkages and networks. Together, they constitute a broad capacity that span the humanitarian, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding dimensions. If they are not appropriately coordinated, however, they are like to be negatively affected by overlap in roles and function, duplication and negative competition.

Recommendation 6: The MFA must take steps to facilitate a positive complementary and mutually supportive relationship between the various civilian expert rosters supported by the Norwegian Government

Norway is an important supporter, both politically and financially, of international peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. Norway is also a world leader in the area of civilian standby rosters, especially in the humanitarian field. With the establishment of NOROBS, Norway has the opportunity to consolidate the various peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding rosters that have been established via the MFA and other Ministries. This study has recommended concrete steps that can be taken to improve the strategic and coherent use of the rosters, including (1) the establishment of a na-

tional-level whole-of-government coordination mechanism, (2) the establishment of a working-level network of Norwegian organisations working on the training, rostering and deployment of civilians, (3) the establishment of a coordination mechanism within the MFA to ensure coherence and political direction across departments, and (4) developing a complementary and mutual supportive relationship between rosters.