
WORLD VISION AUSTRALIA

SUBMISSION TO

**THE SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
DEFENCE AND TRADE'S**

**INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT
IN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS**

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World Vision Australia

Submission to the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade: Inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations

Executive Summary

World Vision has worked in a variety of conflict and post-conflict settings over many years with a number of different peacekeeping operations. Respected analysts have argued, and our own experience would bear this out, that today's conflicts differ in important respects to those of earlier eras. Modern conflicts increasingly involve irregular militias engaged in protracted insurgencies, more so than States and regular armies. This poses significant challenges both to NGOs and to peacekeepers, not least because irregular forces tend to be less disciplined. Militia elements may not feel bound by peace-agreements and may not respect the notion of NGO-neutrality.

Winning the trust and confidence of local populations is therefore a crucial aspect of successful peacekeeping and post-conflict development. This requires peacekeepers who are highly-trained, professional, disciplined, well-equipped and with a high degree of cultural sensitivity and respect, language training, the ability to access and learn from local knowledge and the capacity to engage in participatory decision-making processes with communities. Here we make a number of suggestions as to how Australia's already well-regarded peacekeeping capacities could be strengthened, as well as some specific concerns that may warrant further investigation.

Key recommendations

- The NGO sector is increasingly engaging with militaries in humanitarian operations. Consequently, both parties should continue to engage in constructive dialogue and co-operation on programmes of mutual interest.
- Given the mutually-reinforcing relationship between poverty and conflict, Australian Government responses to address situations of conflict should include appropriate levels of humanitarian and development assistance to address the causes of conflict. Effective development assistance should be recognised as an investment in future conflict prevention and therefore a vital aspect of peacekeeping operations.
- Peacekeepers should receive enhanced training in cultural sensitivity, local languages, conflict resolution and participatory decision-making processes with local communities.
- Adherence to use of force orders on deployments and the use of only approved munitions by qualified and certified personnel should be strictly monitored and enforced.
- Both the ADF and the AFP are encouraged to continue to recruit from a cross section of Australians in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, linguistic background as well as skills and competencies.
- Australia should continue to engage in the UN Security Sector Reform process and take an active and sustained role in this debate.

1. Introduction

World Vision Australia (WVA) welcomes the opportunity to engage in the dialogue surrounding Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations.

World Vision is an international partnership of Christian humanitarian organisations operating emergency relief, development and advocacy programs. In 2006, World Vision operated in 97 countries, where more than 23,000 staff worked to serve over 100 million people in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, as well as in Indigenous Australian communities.

WVA is one of the largest offices in the World Vision international partnership, and in 2006 raised \$313 million. Of this, \$62.5 million in cash and commodities was raised specifically for emergency responses. WVA is engaged in humanitarian relief and development activities in 20 countries in the Asia Pacific region, assisting over 4 million beneficiaries.

World Vision is considered a key actor in the international humanitarian sector and has undertaken many operations conflict and post-conflict settings, often operating in the same space as UN peacekeepers.

WVA recognises the legitimate role the military plays in peacekeeping operations, and as a result, WVA is active in strengthening Civil-Military relations. Last year we participated in the Australian Command and Staff College's Excalibur exercise. The last week of the 6-week warfighting simulation exercise was devoted to post-conflict humanitarian concerns. WVA found the exercise a valuable experience, with numerous lessons for our civil-military engagements.

This submission will focus on five areas that World Vision considers key to any discussion on peacekeeping operations:

- Training and development of staff
- Some specific issues in relation to the Australian Federal Police
- Appropriate aid contributions
- The role of NGOs and CIMIC initiatives
- UN Security Sector reform

2. Modern Conflicts and Peacekeeping Operations

Much has been written recently about the changing nature of conflicts and peacekeeping in the last 40 years. A recurring theme is the shift from large 'industrial' regular armies facing off across a defined battlefield, to asymmetric warfare involving irregular, non-state forces, which are often indistinguishable from civilian populations, fighting protracted insurgencies.

One of the most insightful analysts, General Sir Rupert Smith (2005), former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe in NATO and former commander of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Sarajevo, has termed this new paradigm 'war among the people'. It poses significant challenges for military and peacekeeping forces.

In Smith's view, in the new era of 'war among the people', the objective is not outright military victory, but establishing certain political or strategic conditions which serve a political end (Smith, 2005, p. 277):

In seeking to establish conditions, our true political aim, for which we are using military force, is to influence the intentions of the people. This is an inversion of industrial war, where the aim was to win the trial of strength and thereby break the enemy's will. In war among the people, the strategic objective is to capture the will of the people and their leaders ...

In a peacekeeping, or peacemaking operation, the political end is the restoration of peace and the nurturing of an environment in which people feel secure, knowing their human rights will be protected. Uncertainty must be reduced to the extent that people feel able to get on with their lives – restoring relationships and traditions, planting crops, rebuilding houses, attending schools, learning new skills, investing in new businesses and so on. Winning the confidence and trust of the people therefore is not merely a means to an end. It is a key strategic objective in itself. This means that any actions by peacekeepers or peacemakers must serve, rather than undermine, this objective.

Winning the trust and confidence of the people requires forces which are highly-trained, professional, disciplined, well-equipped and with a high degree of cultural sensitivity and respect, language training, and the ability to access and learn from local knowledge. They also require a comprehensive understanding of their role in the broader context.

Australia is fortunate in having highly-regarded peacekeepers from the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP), and World Vision Australia has worked successfully with both bodies in both East Timor and the Solomon Islands. From our experience in other operations where Australian units are absent, we have observed that the relationship between Australian peacekeepers and the Australian NGO community in East Timor and the Solomon Islands is relatively advanced.

3. Training and Development of Personnel – General Issues

There have been significant efforts in the past decade to increase the skills of Australian peacekeepers in areas such as cultural sensitivity, adherence to international law, and CIMIC (Civil-Military Co-operation). This has included various initiatives where NGOs such as World Vision have engaged in training and other events to foster greater understanding between NGOs and the military.

WVA supports existing initiatives that increase the skills of ADF and AFP personnel as peacekeepers. WVA believes however, that this area can be strengthened, especially in regards to cultural awareness, accessing local knowledge, and participatory planning and decision-making processes with communities. NGOs such as World Vision could potentially help facilitate or contribute to these training processes.

World Vision applauds efforts to bring more women into the forces, and to seek greater diversity in the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of ADF and AFP members.

4. Australian Federal Police Engagement – Specific Issues

Increasingly the AFP is being deployed on peacekeeping operations. Current examples include the deployment as part of RAMSI to the Solomon Islands and the contingent to East Timor.

World Vision views this as a positive development, given the fact that law enforcement and the investigation of past crimes are often critical elements of successful peacekeeping operations. These activities should be undertaken by police units rather than the military. There is room for improvement however in all organisations – particularly in an era of rapid change and increased instability. Here we offer some suggestions for further investigation as possible areas of improvement, which have been raised in discussions by similarly concerned serving AFP officers.

Overall World Vision has a very high degree of respect for the AFP and the concerns raised below should not in any way been taken as detracting from that respect. World Vision believes that improvement in the following key areas would greatly increase the successful engagement of the AFP. Our views are supported by concerns highlighted to us by serving AFP officers. These concerns include:

4.1 Professional entry standards as the AFP comes under pressure to expand its operations.

World Vision's engagement with the AFP tells us that high professional standards and expertise are imperative for the deployment of skilled and effective personnel.

Concerns have been expressed to us by serving AFP officers about the weakening or waiving of psychological and/or intelligence testing for new recruits into particular branches such as the International Deployment Group (IDG) and also of admitting recruits who have worked in private security in Iraq or elsewhere, who may be unable to adequately account for their activities outside Australia. We are aware of at least one instance, for example, of an IDG Team Leader who was concerned about his potential deployment to a particular country where he had previously worked in mine security, because he had reason to believe that there may exist a warrant for his arrest there.

4.2 Munitions used in the Solomon Islands

Concerns have been expressed to us by serving AFP officers about the deployment of non-approved munitions in the Solomon Islands around the time of the riots in Honiara on 18th –19th April 2006. These included either 40 mm bean bag rounds or 40 mm foam rounds, 12 gauge bean bag rounds, CS Gas and possibly Stinger grenades containing rubber balls. We understand that these munitions were used by IDG members on 18th April 2006 in Honiara, despite them not being approved use of force options at the time under Commissioner's Order 3 (CO3). We further understand that on 19th April 2006, CO3 was retrospectively amended for a 28-day period to permit the use of previously non-approved munitions.

World Vision is concerned by the possibility and the perception that use of force options are being approved for use in overseas deployments which would not be approved in Australia. Any protocols that govern the use of force or rules of

engagement should adhere to international humanitarian law and should sit clearly within in the framework of the UN Charter. It may be that different use of force rules for the AFP are required to meet challenges not normally posed in Australia. But these should be transparently debated, justified, codified and approved, rather than existing use of force orders being retrospectively amended on what could be perceived to be an *ad hoc* basis.

4.3 Instructions on the use of less than lethal force

Any use of force in peacekeeping operations must comply with Australia's obligations under international law. AFP use of force orders prohibit shooting above the shoulders except in the most extreme circumstances, such as the threat of death or serious injury and when there is no other option. Likewise, if people are fleeing, they are unlikely to be posing an immediate threat, so shooting them in the back with bean bag rounds is not acceptable.

Concerns have been expressed to us by serving AFP officers who witnessed inappropriate, and possibly illegal information, given by an IDG Team Leader in the Solomon Islands during his presentation on the use of less than lethal force to members of the ADF and the New Zealand Police. The Team Leader concerned, who was not an AFP Operational Safety Trainer, reportedly informed participants that, from his experience in mine security in PNG, a person's neck was a good place to aim with a 12 gauge bean bag round, since this could render the person unconscious, and that shooting people in the back as they were fleeing was also acceptable.

World Vision is concerned by a number of aspects of this incident:

- That the training was given by someone not certified to deliver it.
- That some of the information provided was unacceptable at best and illegal at worst.

4.4 Weapons training and/or validation of weapons competencies for IDG members

Having worked in a wide variety of conflict settings with a range of peacekeeping forces around the world, World Vision has come to expect high standards in regards to the weapons training and competency certification of peacekeeping personnel.

We understand that members of both AFP National and AFP ACTP are required to have their weapons systems competency recertified annually. We would expect that similarly high standards would be required of members of the AFP and other police forces deployed under the IDG overseas. But concerns have been expressed to us by serving AFP officers about some IDG members using weapons overseas without having undertaken either the AFP approved training program, or if they were already qualified in their own police forces, the AFP validation programme to ensure their competency. If this is true, a tightening of procedures would seem to be appropriate.

4.5 Cultural sensitivity, language competencies and public order training

As mentioned previously in Section 3, World Vision regards cultural sensitivity, language competencies, and participatory decision-making processes as crucial ingredients for successful development and peace-building work. In our experience,

there is no substitute for understanding local customs and culture for getting at the roots of the causes of poverty and conflict. We are also aware from our own observations and from discussions with various peacekeeping forces and police services, that community policing and public order skills require specialised training and experience.

Concerns have been expressed to us by serving AFP officers about the adequacy of cultural sensitivity and language preparedness for international deployments. Some AFP members are reportedly having to resort to paying for their own language training at their own initiative. AFP members also expressed concern at some of the 'high handed' conduct they witnessed - with quite junior and inexperienced Australian police acting in a high-handed manner with much more experienced local police. Similar concerns were expressed to us about the number of Australian police deployed with limited community policing and public order training or experience.

Other agencies within the Federal Bureaucracy, and in particular AusAID and DFAT have extensive experience in and understanding of working in international, developing country and conflict contexts. In particular, these agencies have significant capacity to provide nuanced cultural awareness training. Both in the interests of whole of government cohesion and to enable the sharing of lessons learnt, World Vision would encourage significantly increased exchanges of information, training and staff between AusAID and DFAT and the ADF and AFP.

We recognise that some initiatives have been implemented along these lines (AusAID is employing seconded staff from AFP and ADF and has placed an AusAID officer within the AFP's International Deployment Group) and we strongly support increased exchanges of this kind.

5. Aid to Address the Causes of Conflict

There is growing evidence of strong, mutually-reinforcing links between poverty and conflict (Goodhand, 2003; Stewart and Fitzgerald, 2001, 2003; and Collier and Hoeffler, 2002). A 2004 report by World Vision International "*An Ounce of Prevention: the failure of G8 policy on armed conflict*" analyses the human, social and economic costs of sixteen conflicts. The report highlights the 'perfect storm' which conflict often produces: low human development, high indebtedness, disease, poor economic prospects, significant unemployment, ruined infrastructure and traumatised populations:

These countries suffer from concurrent and crippling consequences of past wars; factors which, left unaddressed, make them highly susceptible to future violent conflict. (World Vision International 2004:6).

The World Vision partnership has extensive experience working in conflict situations as diverse as Darfur, Colombia, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Afghanistan and Kosovo. A crucial lesson that World Vision has learned from working alongside peacekeeping operations is that when they are not matched by appropriate aid to address the causes of conflict, they will have at best a limited and short-term impact, and may indeed be detrimental to long-term humanitarian objectives.

The root causes of instability and conflict must be addressed if peacekeeping operations are to be ultimately successful. A WVA survey conducted in June 2006 (Romer, 2006) identified both widespread unemployment and government corruption as crucial factors in the Solomon Islands which contributed to the violence in Honiara. While these influences remain strong, violence is likely to flare up periodically. As Romer (2006, p. 3) remarked:

The general feeling among both nationals and internationals is that RAMSI provides security but not peace. As one local described it ‘the ash settles from the riots, but the fire continues to smolder underneath.’

In WVA’s view, the skill sets and mandates required to undertake peacekeeping, stability and law enforcement operations are not necessarily the same as those required to address the underlying causes of conflict and to prevent smoldering resentments from erupting in the future.

Peacekeeping operations should therefore be complemented by forms of assistance which can address these underlying causes and help resolve conflicts. This requires initiatives to address unemployment, rebuild infrastructure, reconcile opposing factions and so on. They should be undertaken by agencies who are specialists in these areas. WVA is concerned that these arduous and painstaking investments in future conflict prevention are often inadequately resourced and undertaken by bodies whose primary skill sets lie elsewhere.

6. Role of NGOs – CIMIC Initiatives

Much emphasis has been placed in recent years on developing and enhancing the CIMIC relationship between Australian NGOs and peacekeeping units, particularly, within the ADF. Exercises such as Excalibur, in which World Vision, along with other NGOs, participated in 2006, demonstrated the importance both groups place on CIMIC. Similar exercises in the future could be further enhanced by the increased engagement of NGOs in the initial planning process to make the engagement even more realistic.

To gain an even deeper understanding of CIMIC, it is important to note the difference in cultures in humanitarian organisations and defence forces. Whereas defence forces work in a strict hierarchy with typically a clear command and control structure, humanitarian organisations work in a more fluid environment with flatter structures and attempt to include the people we serve in decision making processes. Misunderstandings can often occur because of a difference in approach and time frames. The command structure of the military makes it capable of making important decisions very quickly, whereas for NGOs seeking to include communities in decisions which affect them, decision making can take longer.

The different approaches and modes of operation can be addressed if each side is more familiar with and accepting of the other’s way of doing business. In Pakistan, during the earthquake response, one army unit used a ‘civil liaison’ to work with the NGOs. This was a person who understood both cultures and thus was better able to facilitate dialogue, ultimately resulting in improved provision of humanitarian assistance. Where Australian peacekeepers are deployed, there is potential for them to play a larger on the ground role in fostering CIMIC initiatives.

From our recent experience in East Timor though, World Vision observed that some elements/individuals of the ADF itself were not familiar with the ADF's own CIMIC function. Consequently, certain parts of the ADF were engaging with civil society, which included NGO's. When we asked if and how they related to CIMIC, they did not seem to know of its function regarding their operations.

World Vision also acknowledges that increased training needs to be undertaken by staff within the NGO sector and is actively pursuing this.

7. UN Security Sector Reform

UN Security Sector Reform is part of the wider UN Reform process. A recent Security Council meeting on 20 February 2007 debated security sector reform and recognised the need for a comprehensive report for the Secretary General. This process would identify lessons learnt as well as core functions, roles and responsibilities of the United Nations systems including how best to co-ordinate with national and international activities.¹

World Vision encourages the Australian government, as a contributing nation to many recent peacekeeping operations, as well as a key regional actor in terms of training and support to regional forces, to continue to be actively engaged in the UN Reform process.

A key element of sustainable security involves strengthening institutions and processes and Australia has a large role to play in this area particularly with regards to regional bodies and operations.

World Vision notes that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's 2007 work plan highlights increased co-ordination between the Office of Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) regarding integrated missions. This is an important dialogue given concerns about the "coherence agenda".² Specific concerns for World Vision relate to command structures of integrated missions and how they impact on the independence of the humanitarian actors.

In light of this reform process and current debates around the notion of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), World Vision encourages Australia to continue to actively engage in the international dialogue.

Paul Ronalds
Director of Policy & Programs
World Vision Australia
Phone: (03) 9287 2233.

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¹ Security Council 5632nd Meeting 20 February 2007, *Security Sector Reform in Post Conflict States Critical to Consolidating Peace*

² Donini and Minear, 2006, "Humanitarian Agenda 2015: Principles, Power and Perception"

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Acronyms

ADF	Australian Defence Force
AFP	Australian Federal Police
CIMIC	Civil-Military Co-operation
IDG	International Deployment Group of the AFP
RAMSI	Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands
WV	World Vision
WVA	World Vision Australia